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"America" in 18th Century British and French Satire

Robinson Crusoe[1]*,* one of the most popular work of literary fiction of the 18th century[2], tells the story of a British plantation owner who is shipwrecked and marooned on a remote island in the Caribbean in 1659. Robinson Crusoe gradually learns about and dominates the strange American landscape in which he finds himself, through (in the words of another famous "British" expatriate) "virile independence, unthinking cruelty, persistence, slow yet effective intelligence, sexual apathy, practical and well-balanced religiosity, [and] calculating dourness," becoming "the true prototype of the British colonist just as Friday […] is the symbol of the subject race.[3]" Crusoe's encounter with Friday, a native of the mainland whom Crusoe immediately subjugates through violence, is the beginning of the end of his ordeal. Crusoe is impressed with Friday's physical prowess and his appearance, which compares favourably with that of "the *Brasilians,* and *Virginians*, and other Natives of *America.*[4]" Crusoe learns to converse with Friday both out of necessity and in order to civilize/Christianize the savage and rid him of his cannibalism (which appears as an obsessive preoccupation of Crusoe's), learning about himself and his beliefs in the process[5]. Seven years later Jonathan Swift would also have great success writing a satirical story of another young middle-class Englishman, (like Crusoe, his parents' third son), whose yearning for adventure gets him shipwrecked (repeatedly) in strange lands, where he must learn new languages and understand foreign political and religious life in order to survive, returning home with

[1] The original title of the book which has become known as *Robinson Crusoe* was *The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner: Who Lived Eight and Twenty Years, all alone in an un-inhabited Island on the Coast of America, near the Mouth of the Great River of Oroonoque; Having been Cast on Shore by Shipwreck, wherein all the Men perished but himself. With an Account how he was at last as strangely deliver'd by Pyrates. Written by Himself*. It was first published in London in 1719

[2] Suarez, 2016: 32

[3] Joyce, 1912[2000]:174.

[4] Defoe, (1719[2007]: 173, original italics)

[5] "in laying Things open to him, I really inform'd and instructed my self in many Things, that either I did not know, or had not fully consider'd before; but which occurr'd naturally to my Mind, upon my searching into them, for the Information of this poor Savage" (*ibid.* 185). For the narrative of Crusoe's initial encounter with and description of Friday, and the establishment of their relationship see pp.169–187.

a new perspective on his country of origin. In Gulliver's fourth voyage, he encounters a repulsive and terrifying race of people who go about naked, speak in unintelligible gibberish, and are distinctive for their lack of social organization and licentious sexuality—all characteristics associated with indigenous Americans during the 17th and 18th centuries[6]. These Yahoos stand in stark contrast to their neighbours, the magnanimous and rational Houyhnhnms, an apparently more highly evolved species who enslave and control the Yahoos through physical violence. *Gulliver's Travels* has been read as both a parody of *Robinson Crusoe* and as "a response to an ongoing and emotionally supercharged colonial history."[7] Indeed, when Gulliver first arrives in the land of the Houyhnhnms, he follows a path, "hoping it might direct [him] to the Cabbin of some *Indian.*"[8]

Both *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver's Travels* were also popular in France, the nation with which England shared the most literature.[9] But they were far from the only popular works of fiction there figuring interactions between European and American characters. In 1703, a French soldier-turned explorer, Louis Armand, Baron de Lahontan, published a two-volume account of his travels in North America between 1683 and 1692, to which he appended his *Dialogues curieux de l'auteur et un sauvage de bon sens qui a voyagé*, a series of fictional conversations between himself and a Huron called Adario about religion, laws, medicine, and marriage. Adario is a particularly important example of the well-established literary trope of the "*bon sauvage*[10]" who stands in contrast to the corruption of European

[6] On nakedness/clothing as a marker of the difference between Europeans and Americans, see Nyquist, 2013: 232–236 and Sayre, 1997: 144–147; on language as the same, see Pagden, 1993: 119–120; on social organization, see Motsch, 2001: 56–57; on sexuality, see Sayre, 1997: 105–106 and Pagden, 1993: 141.
[7] Hawes, 1991: 209, 188–189. The original title of *Gulliver's Travels* was *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World. In Four Parts. By Lemuel Gulliver, First a Surgeon, and then a Captain of several Ships.*
[8] Swift, 1726[2002]: 190, original italics.
[9] Suarez, 2016: 34–35: "From the booksellers' perspective, a translation of a good Continental novel was both less expensive and a better publishing bet than a mediocre, original work in English. Nearly 18 per cent of all novels first published in Britain between 1750 and 1769 were translations, with French being far and away the predominant language for these source texts. […]From the middle of the century onwards, works by prominent English novelists were rapidly translated into French and German. […]By the middle of the 1770s, the Continental market for English books—with novels clearly the most fashionable of such commodities—was sufficiently vigorous to induce the powerful Parisian publisher Charles-Joseph Panckoucke to travel to London prospecting for translations."
[10] Pagden writes that "almost every *bon sauvage* of Canadian origin created by succeeding writers owes something, and frequently everything, to Adario (1993: 121).

society. Lahontan writes himself as a stooge whose arguments for a European way of life are consistently knocked down by Adario's good sense. In Françoise de Graffigny's 1747 epistolary novel, *Lettres d'une Peruvienne*, an Inca princess abducted by the Spanish and rescued by the French tells of her disorienting experiences adapting to a society that is as alien to her as the New World was to the first Europeans who visited it. Lahontan's Adario is survived by the eponymous protagonist of Voltaire's 1767 *L'Ingénu*, a story about young man from a Huron community whose travels in France provide the occasion for satire when the good-natured, sincere hero is unable to comprehend French social, political, and religious norms. And there are echoes of Adario in Orou, the Tahitian who tries to explain his people's sexual mores to a French Almoner in Diderot's *Supplément au voyage de Bougainville*, which appeared originally in the journal *Correspondance littéraire* in 1772.

All of these texts make extensive use of Europeans' beliefs about America and Americans (and the literary tropes that grew out of them) in their fictions. All of these texts (except *Robinson Crusoe*) make some critical, arguably satirical, comment on the society in which they were produced. And all of them (except for Diderot's *Supplément*) were translated and sometimes retranslated into French or English within a few years of their publication. These are the texts in which the natives of two of the 18th century's three major colonial powers were asked to reflect on the problems of their society through the lens of America, and frequently through the eyes of Americans. They are texts in which "the travelling stranger functions as a catalyst to elicit the contrasts between [Europe and America]"[11] The discovery of America posed radical challenges a European tradition of "the dependence of all knowledge upon textual interpretation and exegesis" using a cannon that made no mention of the vast continent, at a time when this tradition was under threat from "Baconian empiricism, Cartesian scepticism, and, later, Galilean physics."[12] The colonization of America played an enormous role in

[11] Palmeri, 1996: 242.; for a review of 18th century "satirical travellers," see Dalnekoff, 1973.
[12] Pagden, 1993: 12

changing the ways Europe understood itself; these texts, which employ ideas about the Americas for social criticism, are both evidence of and a force driving these changes. The broad questions with which I want to approach these texts are: how did French and English authors put their beliefs about America and Americans to work in satirical projects or for satirical aims? Which aspects of European society are satirized using ideas about and tropes related to the New World? Which of these ideas and tropes are employed in the satires? And how does America as an idea facilitate the satirization of Europe?

But first, why satire? Why ask how the New World figures in this form of writing in Europe rather than, say, the popular press or dramatic tragedy? Perhaps more to the point, especially because my corpus includes both archetypal satires and texts that are rarely if ever discussed as such, in what sense am I using "satire," and how does this lens provide a coherent view of my corpus?

My impression is that literary scholarship has largely given up the search for a fixed, one-size-fits-all, pan-historical definition of satire, certainly as a genre, and that this is probably a good thing.[13] It seems more common to discuss satire as a mode: a kind of writing rather than a kind of text. The most important difference, it seems to me, is that writing can be characterized as being in the satiric mode without precluding its characterization in other ways, and modal characterization does not have to apply to an entire work.[14] While it might come at the expense of terminological precision, the shift in focus from genre to mode broadens the scope of satirical criticism by recognizing that satire can be present in a text only occasionally, by turns, and that a work does not have to be most aptly described as "a satire" in order to be satirical. It also makes the criticism of satire more flexible, by allowing critics to "cover much more material that has been associated with some notion of satire without pre-empting questions of form."[15] In fact, I find Motsch's characterization of the travel narrative—"less a

[13] Duval and Martinez, 2000: 181; Griffin, 1994: 4; Condren, 2012: 377, 390, 393; Marshal, 2013: 3
[14] Fowler, 1982: 106–107
[15] Condren, 2012: 394

genre as such than a hybrid textual structure accommodating a variety of discursive modes, often in transformation" and "one human practice among others[16]"—useful for thinking about satire as a mode of writing. Motsch describes this approach to travel writing as "pragmatic," the same term used by Hutcheon,[17] whose view of satire as ironic social criticism strongly informs my own.

Approaching satire not as genre or class of text, but rather as a way of writing, an attitude or an operation of literature, allows me to selectively focus on the relevant passages of my texts without needing to interpret each work as a whole, or to fit my corpus into a generic universe. But we still need some sense of how or why a text is or is not satiric to profit from reading it as such. Definitions and characterizations of satire vary primarily in terms of their restrictiveness or inclusiveness (the rigor with which they apply certain criteria rather than the criteria themselves or their relative importance). My preferences tend towards the inclusive end of the spectrum. I am more interested in seeing what we can learn from and about texts by treating them as satire than I am in delimiting the field of the satiric. Despite the notorious difficulty of defining satire, literary scholarship always describes it, if not necessarily in these terms, as referential and normative: satire always provides some critical commentary on some part of the world.[18] By "referential," I do not mean that satirical texts merely include references to things, as all texts do, but that referentiality is part of the ethos of satire, part of its satire-ness. We always speak of a satire *of* some "contingent subject matter,"[19] and the satirist always takes some position with respect to this subject matter, generally that it needs to be removed or reformed. There is no satire for satire's sake; it is always doing or trying to do something, regardless

[16] "moins un genre en soi qu'une structure textuelle hybride, accomodant des modes discursives variées et, de plus, des modes souvent en transformation"; "une pratique humaine parmi d'autres" 2011: 216–217
[17] *ibid.* 217; 1981: 140
[18] Marshal, 2013: 2–3; Duval and Martinez 2000: 212; Hutcheon 1981: 146. For a discussion of referentiality in satire, see Griffin, 1994: 115–123. Even the most hard-nosed deniers of the importance of "historical particulars" for satire admit that it operates reference as a textual gesture. The hyper-formalist Bogel, for example, states that "the originating moment of satire is the satirist's perception of an object that exists anterior to the satiric attack" (2001: 2)
[19] Condren, 2012: 388

of how ineffective or counterproductive its critical or reformative agenda might be[20]. Condren et al. emphasize the referential and normative nature of satire when they describe it as "an essentially intentional [category]—an attack on some irritating aspect of the world"[21] and define it as "the critical impulse manifesting itself in some degree of denigration"[22]. Bogel as well as Duval and Martinez theorize satire as implying three principal components: the satirist, the object, and the reader, with the assumption that the satirist and the reader are aligned against the object, some form of which exists outside the text.[23]

Satire satirizes some pre-existing material. It also operates at least in part by appropriating other pre-existing material. Weinbrot's definition of Menippean satire—"a form that uses at least two other genres, languages, cultures, or changes of voice to oppose a dangerous, false, or specious and threatening orthodoxy[24]"—emphasizes its normative and referential nature as well as its tendency to adopt, borrow, and appropriate. Condren argues that a productive approach for understanding satire is to compare satire to "neighbouring concepts" such as parody, lampoon, and burlesque.[25] It is significant that these three terms all refer to forms of writing that imitate or appropriate others, that "[break into traditional genres and subgenres]," in Duval and Martinez' words.[26] And satiric reappropriation is not merely parodic: satire does not only imitate to criticize or comment on the form it imitates:

[20] Griffin, 1994: 149–160; Duval and Martinez, 2000: 249–250
[21] 2008a: 279
[22] 2008b: 402
[23] Bogel, 2001: 2; Duval and Martinez, 2000: 184. This does not mean, of course, that real readers always do align themselves with the satirist, but that even skeptical readers "agree implicitly that the 'reader position' projected by the satiric mode is one in which there is a fairly simple assent to the satirists ethos and values, that we are expected to endorse both judgment and judge" (Bogel, 2001: 13)
[24] 2005: 6
[25] 2012: 387
[26] "la satire cherche à faire effraction dans des genres et sous-genres traditionnels" (2000: 23). All translations from the French, except where otherwise noted, are my own.

> When satire takes over another literary structure, it tends not just to borrow it, as when a cuckoo finds another bird's nest for its eggs, but to subvert it […] and (more like a body-snatcher) to direct its energies toward alien ends.[27]

So satire is an appealing concept for my project because it is an overtly instrumentalizing form. Satire is a way of taking our beliefs about the way the world is and using them to make an argument about the way the world should be. The texts I have chosen to focus on borrow from travel writing and ethnography, not to communicate anthropological, ethnological, or geographic knowledge, but to expose what the satirists see as the flaws of European culture and society. My hope is that these texts will show something interesting about the patterns of thinking and the ideological underpinnings inherent in 18th century France and England's forms of writing and knowing about the Americas, precisely because these forms are in a sense peripheral to the satires themselves, and thus have to be assumed and fixed by the satirists. Hutcheon, following Philippe Hamon and Catherine Kerbrat-Orecchioni, notes the generic and ideological competence required of readers to understand irony, which she sees as constitutive of satire: generic competence to recognize deviations from rhetorical and literary norms, the "institutionalized heritage of the language and the literature"; and ideological competence to understand irony in terms of "the knowledge shared between speakers and the society to which they belong."[28] To criticize French society through the eyes of a Peruvian woman, Graffigny had to read early modern texts about Peru and offer a portrayal of a Peruvian; the commercial success of the texts I am studying, both in their home countries and in translation, suggests that their portrayals of Americans resonated with their European readers, whose understanding of Peru was derived from other literary and discursive representations of it.

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[27] Griffin, 1994: 3

[28] "l'héritage institutionalisé de la langue et de la littérature"; "[le] savoir partagé des locuteurs et de la société à laquelle ils appartiennent" 1981: 150–151

In fact, in studying the texts of my primary corpus as satire, one of the aims of my project will be to describe allusions, citations, parodies, and any intertextual relations between the texts I am studying and other texts that they use as models. Some of these models are other satires. I have already noted the debt that Voltaire and Diderot owe to Lahontan for their satirical *bon sauvages*. Swift's crudeness and pillorying of intellectuals is reminiscent of Rabelais, and Graffigny's epistolary novel giving a foreigner's perspective on France rides the coattails of Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes*. Comparing my corpus with its satirical models will, I hope, help me describe the rhetorical strategies my texts use to satirize their targets[29], but I am even more interested in how my texts borrow from travel literature, ethnography, and other texts representing the New World and the European experience of it. Swift parodies sailors' jargon as it appeared in a 1669 publication called *The Mariner's Magazine*. He also draws from the *New Voyage 'Round the World* (1697) by William Drampier, the English privateer and explorer who rescued Alexander Selkirk, the Scottish castaway who is supposed to have inspired Robinson Crusoe. Graffigny learned about Peru in Garcilaso de la Vega's *Comentarios Reales de las Incas* (1609). And Diderot's *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville* overtly announces itself to be a commentary on the explorer's travel narrative. These texts provided the conceptual resources Europeans used to reshape their understanding of their world and of themselves. The satirical use of concepts from and about the New World is part of this reshaping.

But so far our definition of "satire" does not extend far beyond "critique." How, specifically, does satire instrumentalize pre-existing material to comment critically on the world? After referentiality and normativity, the next most common criteria for the definition of satire is some form of humour or ridicule, and it is probably a safe assumption that humour or mockery is a component

[29] For example, do my texts merely caricature counterarguments (those supporting the satirical target), or do they elide them completely? (Duval and Martinez, 2000: 185) See also pp 190–240 for a longer discussion of rhetorical figures and strategies typical of satire, such as grotesque description, unflattering metaphorical comparisons, the trope of the *mundus inversus*, and the use of fragmented narrative.

of a layperson's understanding of satire. This element is less common in academic definitions than we might expect, however (not even Weinbrot, whose stated aim is "to diminish the number of works called Menippean satires so that the genre who ate the world can be put on a diet," includes it.[30]). Condren claims that "making some ethical point, or displaying some moral seriousness has indeed been a more reliable guide to satire overall than the exhibition or provocation of humor,"[31] and I agree. Humour is not a dependably stable feature of texts—different texts are funny to different people at different times—and the notion of ridicule or derision, divested of humour, leaves us essentially with condemnation or contempt, which is already part of our understanding of satire. How might we understand satirical criticism without relying on a concept as slippery as humour?

The genre to which satire seems to be most frequently compared is parody. Hutcheon proposes that we should understand both parody and satire in terms of irony. She emphasizes that irony must be understood both semantically—as the "mark of difference of signification, or antiphrasis. As such, [irony] operates paradoxically, by the structural superposition of sematic contexts (what is said/what is to be understood)"—and pragmatically—as "signifying an evaluation, almost always pejorative."[32] Irony not only implies two signifieds within the same signifier, it indicates that one of the signifieds is to be preferred over the other: "Irony is at once an antiphrastic

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[30] 2005: 303

[31] 2012: 391. He explains: "What, then, of satire as the use of ridicule? Once again, this is not essential. Irony stops well short of ridicule but can be sufficient to identify a satiric edge to something, such as the well-known opening sentence of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813): "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife". Where ridicule is important, its relationship to humor is also slippery. Satire can ridicule, often viciously, but the use of ridicule may not be co-extensive with provoking a sense of the ridiculous. That is, ridicule may either be intrinsic, or it may be a desired response to the satire. Mattingly's reading of Machiavelli's *Prince* depends precisely on that easily overlooked distinction: Machiavelli does not ridicule, but for the *Prince* to be satire, he must have intended his audience to laugh at Cesare Borjia. Joseph Hall (1574–1656) wrote *Satires* that are not the slightest bit funny (though I may have missed something); but the targets are presented to the reader as worthy of ridicule, his own tone as harsh or sour (Hall: 1824 [1597]: xciii–xcviii). It is the dyspepsia expressive of moral a ront: Hall was a young man in want of ecclesiastical advancement." (*ibid.* 389)

[32] "Sur le plan sémantique, l'ironie se définit comme marque de différence de signification, à savoir comme antiphrase. Comme tel, elle se réalise de façon paradoxale, par une superposition structurale de contextes sémantiques (ce que l'on dit/ce que l'on veut faire entendre) : il y a donc un signifiant et deux signifiés." 1981: 144 ; "une signalisation d'évaluation, presque toujours pejorative" *ibid.* 142.

structure and an evaluative strategy implying an attitude of the author-encoder with regard to the text. This attitude allows and requires reader-decoders to interpret and evaluate the text that they are reading."[33] If we take antiphrasis as irony operating at the level of the word or phrase, parody and satire can be understood as irony operating at the level of the text or utterance. Parodies and satires are texts that signify something other than and in addition to "what they say," the surface-level meaning of their content, and express an evaluative (normative) attitude towards their signifieds. This does not mean, of course, that real readers always or necessarily endorse the position adopted by the satirist. But that even skeptical readers "agree implicitly that the 'reader position' projected by the satiric mode is one in which there is a fairly simple assent to the satirists ethos and values, that we are expected to endorse both judgment and judge."[34] Minimally, as Duval and Martinez note, the reader "must adopt, at least for a moment, the aesthetic and ideological perspective of the satire to reconcile the apparent and the real meaning. Thus the decoding of the latent message is itself persuasive."[35] One way to think about satire as irony is that satirical texts permit "literal" misreadings that ignore their ironic/critical dimension—Lahontan's *dialogues* as an ill-fated but well-intentioned attempt to reform a savage, or the *Lettres d'une Peruvienne* as a narrative about a woman who had the good fortune to be adopted into French society and tragically failed to assimilate into it fully. The difference between parody and satire, however, is that parody refers to another text, while satire is "*extratextual"* in that its targets are almost always social or moral rather than literary.[36] This view is congruent with the metaphor proposed by Condren et al. of "the satirical fist of critical intent

[33] "L'ironie est à la fois structure antiphrasique et stratégie évaluative impliquant une attitude de l'auteur-encodeur à l'égard du texte lui-même. Attitude qui permet et demande au lecteur-décodeur d'interpréter et d'évaluer le texte qu'il est en train de lire." *Ibid.* 142–143

[34] Bogel, 2001: 13

[35] "Il lui faut donc épouser au moins pour un instant la perspective à la fois esthétique et idéologique de la satire en ajustant sense apparent et sens reel. Ainsi le déchiffrement du message latent est en lui-même porteur de persuasion." 2000:186

[36] Hutcheon, 1981: 144, original italics,

animating the parodic glove of formal reuse,"[37] which helps to distinguish between parody and satire when (as is very frequently the case) both are present in the same text, while still allowing for an empty glove (parody without critical intent) and a bare fist (satire without formal imitation).[38]

It is from this perspective—satire as a mode, rather than a genre, that ironically critiques some aspect of the social world, often by appropriating or imitating other literary resources—that I approach the texts I am studying as "satire." Treating satire as a mode allows me to examine, when necessary, only those parts of the texts that seem relevant for my project, without needing to impose a critical coherence on them (so one text can satirize different targets at different points). And treating ironic critique—instead of humorous critique, ridicule, or mockery—as constitutive of the satiric mode further broadens the ambit of the satirical to include, arguably, sentimental writing with a critical or reformative agenda, sentimental writing that exposes the flaws in a status quo by causing sympathetic characters, such as the Ingénu or Zilia, to suffer unnecessarily.[39]

But irony, as Hutcheon observes, requires generic and ideological competence—familiarity with a discursive code—on the part of both the author and the reader for the secondary signification to be encoded and decoded. This competence is relevant on many levels (there are many codes), but the code I am interested in could be described as Europeans' ethnographic and anthropological knowledge of the New World—everything Europeans believed about the Americas and the people that live there, including the ways in which they understand themselves by contrast.

European beliefs about indigenous Americans, their body of ethnographic knowledge, are the product of a gradual process of observing incomprehensible forms of life in the New World and reductively assimilating them into categories with which Europeans were familiar.[40] This involved

[37] 2008b: 401
[38] 2008a: 283
[39] For examples of sentimentality used for satire/social critique, see Romanovski, 2005: 154, 190, 214.
[40] Pagden, 1993: 11

abstracting whichever elements of American life were identifiable or intelligible away from their original contexts in order compare them to European life, dissolving difference with similarity and hiding the unfamiliar behind the familiar.[41] In addition, the particular often came to stand for the general, imposing homogeneity on heterogeneous ways of life.[42] The ethnocentric process of assimilating information by which Europeans came to understand the Americas is important to keep in mind for a few reasons. For Europeans, learning about the New World was a long, gradual process. As confused and wrong as 18th century beliefs about the New World may seem to us now (it was believed, for instance, that America belonged to an earlier period in time where pumas had not yet evolved into lions and where, similarly, the men had not yet evolved into civil beings[43]), they are a long way from the early accounts of the Fountain of Eternal Youth, giants, and dog-headed men.[44] It is interesting to me that the 18th century falls right in the middle of the West's discovery of a radically new, unheard-of continent, and our current perspective on history. It marks the beginning of claims, if disingenuous ones, to dispassionate observation,[45] something we now take for granted as an ethnographic norm. Europe's education about America was anything but disinterested. It happened through and because of colonialism. [46] Europeans were not primarily looking for knowledge when they observed this initially incomprehensible world; they were looking (variously) for gold, slaves, arable land, pelts, and/or souls to save. Americans and Europeans learned about each other as they

[41] *ibid.* 21
[42] "The desire to constrain the conception of the *sauvage américain* within a single, consistent formula prevailed over any sense of local differences and even over the importance of eyewitness observers' unique experiences" ; "Because the barriers of language and culture prevented most colonists from understanding the particular story behind the marriage of a native couple, they would describe the visible ceremony as representative of all weddings" (Sayre 1997: 106; 114).
[43] Pagden, 1993: 117
[44] *ibid.* 10–11; Sayre, 1997: 94
[45] Pagden, 1993: 83–87
[46] "For the merchant it was a matter of little immediate importance *whom* the Arab married. To the colonist and the missionary, however, it could be crucial. It was colonization which forced the 'savage' and the 'barbarian,' and with them the problem of the intelligibility of other worlds, fully upon the European consciousness." (Pagden, 1993: 13)

interacted in the context of colonialism and as their societies changed as a result of these interactions. As Pagden observes,

> [Adario's] society […], as the readers of the *Dialogues curieux* could not have failed to be aware, [was] in the process of being absorbed into a European one. His life, and his language, like the lives and languages of the other Amerindian peoples […] are themselves in the process of being colonized.[47]

The relationship between Americans and Europeans was unstable and complicated, even without the difficulties imposed on our understanding of it by historical distance. Finally, because early European ethnography is fundamentally interested, instrumental knowledge—a means to an end, not an end in itself—, it developed in certain ways instead of others. The demands of the colonialist project meant certain questions about the Americas were of more importance than others, and as a result of this, certain tropes and categories stand out as being more important, and are described in ways relevant to the intended use of the information. American peoples were described in terms of their size, political structures, and traditional alliances and enmities because this information is important for diplomacy, warfare, and commerce, and language and sexual- and kinship-relations had to be understood for missionaries to convert Americans to Christianity.[48] To understand how my satirists made ironic use of 18th century Europeans' code of ethnographic/anthropological knowledge related to the Americas, we will need to understand both the content and the form of the texts in which this code exists. Which ideas about America and Americans stand out in the travel literature and ethnography of the 18th century, and how do these texts present these ideas? This is a large and complex question, and what

[47] *ibid.* 139. See also Pagden, 1995: 165: "[Georges] Buffon had noticed what he assumed to be the existence of species in America which, while recognizably the same as those in Europe, were more fragile and smaller in size. On the basis of this (false) observation he concluded that, because of the ecology of the place, all life in America was smaller, less well formed, sexually less active, and less consistent in purpose than life in Europe."
[48] Defert, 1982: 14–15

follows will be a summary only of those aspects of travel literature and ethnography which currently seem most relevant to my primary corpus.

One of the most fundamental tropes about the New World is its temporal anteriority with regard to Europe. America and its inhabitants are seen as belonging to an older time, less evolved and developed than the time of Europe and Europeans[49]. Motsch explains:

> as the Western model of time is linear, a model of progress, the cultural difference perceived between Europeans and indigenous Americans are reduced to differences of chronology. Indigenous Americans and Europeans are on the same side of history, on the same evolutionary course, but at different points in time; they are out-of-sync. The difference between them has become measurable, but with a Western metric: the advancement of the arts and sciences, which is to say technological progress. It is then up to the indigenous Americans to make up for lost time.[50]

This consistent temporal/evolutionary scale facilitates comparison at the expense of eliding difference. It also means that American peoples tend to be defined negatively (in terms of what they lack). This negative definition is frequently communicated as a list or another iterative rhetorical scheme.[51] This practice of negative definition combined with the apparent temporal anteriority of America is extended to the ideological plane, where it results in two extremes: the Edenic golden age of the Noble Savage, who lives in uncorrupted simplicity, untroubled by the ills of civilization, and the nasty, brutish, and short life of the naked, godless, man-eating barbarian.[52] Either the savages lack Europe's

[49] Pagden, 1993: 14, 148; Nyquist, 2013: 228–232

[50] "comme le modèle occidental est un modèle du temps linéaire, du progès, les differences culturelles perçues entre Européens et Amérindiens seront désormais réduites à des differences de chronologie. Amérindiens et Européens se trouvent du même coté de l'histoire, dans le même movement de développement, mais à des époques différentes ; ils sont pris dans un déphasage. La difference entre eux est devenue measurable et la mesure est celle des Occidentaux, donc celle de l'avancement des sciences et des arts, c'est-à-dire du progès technologique. Il s'agira désormais pour les Amérindiens de rattraper ce retard." (2001: 77)

[51] Motsch, 2001: 150; Romanowski, 2005: 28; Nyquist, 2013: 257–274.

[52] Nyquist, 2013: 231. For a broader summary of European literary depictions of "savages," see Rubies, 2011: 104–109.

corruptions, or they lack its virtues. Most real depictions of Americans, however, fall somewhere between these two extreme positions, and the same ethnographic ideas and evidence can be recruited in support of either one. [53]

This network of tropes suggests certain kinds of questions with respect to my corpus. First, where and how might my texts present their American characters as being from an earlier time? How, for example, does Diderot's old Tahitian man represent time when excoriating Bougainville and the French for contaminating his way of life? Zilia and the Ingénu are both naïf—is this naïveté childlike and thus evidence of the im-maturity of their societies? Where and how are lists of negations used satirically, and does syntactic equivalence between items within a list imply an equivalent valuation of those items?[54] A nodding acquaintance with the texts of my corpus reveals that Friday and the Yahoos are depicted as "hard," while the Americans in the French texts are "soft."[55] But which rhetorical and conceptual resources are mobilized in the service of these depictions, and is there any correlation between these depictions and either the satirical target or the progressiveness or conservativeness of the satire? Finally, is the trope ever reversed, with Europeans presented (implicitly or explicitly) as less evolved or developed, or lacking things that Americans have?

Language and communication figure prominently in 18th century texts on America. This is unsurprising, both because Europeans had no choice but to learn American languages in order to survive in the New World, and, later, to ally themselves with, trade with, and convert the people they

[53] For example, Nyquist observes that "The relative youthfulness of non-Eurasian cultures has several, conflicting associations. A figure for the irrepressible vitality that is gradually extinguished by the wear, tear, and reduced vigor of age, youthfulness may have the positive valence of primitiveness. As a feature of the New World, and, later, of Africa, language relating to childhood or youth often suggests what is socially untouched or irreducibly natural[…]. Just as often, however, newness is associated with defective maturity or perpetual, involuntary childlikeness. In colonialist agendas featuring Christianity's civilizing mission, extra-European youthfulness provides occasions for educability and guidance, which, if resisted, necessitate disciplinary measures or, worse, the use of military force" (2013: 230).

[54] Duval and Martinez, 2000: 200

[55] Sayre observes that "During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Noble Savage was more popular among the French than among the English, in large part because the French colonists in North America had more interaction with, more dependence on, and therefore more sympathy for the Indians." (1997: 125)

found there, and also because of the predominant place that language occupies in Western thought in general. Still, all the texts in my corpus address the language barrier that exists between their European and American characters (whether through language learning, translation, or both), and I am interested in seeing whether and how this bears on their satirization of Europe. For example, Gulliver frequently demonstrates that he does not have the command of European languages that he thinks he does; does this or other features of the text undermine his translations out of the languages of the fantastical lands he visits? Lahontan's *Adario* and Voltaire's *Ingénu* both have a strong command of English and French; how does their education bear on their status as outsiders, and what does this mean for the critique of Europe in their respective texts? Furthermore, it was believed that Americans were unable to understand things for which their culture had no words, and that a consequence of this was that they were unable to conceive of abstractions because their supposedly primitive language only has words for things they can see and touch[56]. When this is the case, is it a lamentable cognitive limitation or evidence of a laudable pragmatic clear-sightedness? This trope is mobilized by both Swift, whose Houyhnhnms—unlike Europeans—have no word for a "lie,"[57] and by Voltaire, who has the Ingénu tell us that no Huron has ever converted to Christianity because there is no word in the Huron language for "inconstancy."[58] Where else is this idea, and others related to language, used for satiric critique?

Another feature of the texts I want to explore is the question narrative vs. descriptive modes of writing. Most of my texts (except Lahontan's *Dialogues* and Diderot's *Supplément*) are narratives in that they "tell a story," but few narratives consist entirely of a chronological presentation of events: authors must occasionally take space for "static" description of things or states of affairs (Gulliver, for example, frequently interrupts his narration to describe the manners and customs of the peoples

[56] Pagden, 1993: 126–129; Sayre, 1997: 193
[57] Swift, 1726[2002]: 199
[58] Voltaire, 1767[2009]: 49

he encounters, and the Ingénu's time in the bastille is spent primarily describing European literature). This is as true of prose satire as it is of ethnographic travel narratives. Observations about the New World were presented in two forms: as linear, chronological narration (such as a ship's log or the account of a conquest), or as an inventory or list of, for example, types of flora and fauna or religious practices.[59] However, during the second half of the 17th century and the first half of the 18th, as the European colonists' focus shifted from what to make of the peoples of the Americas to what to do about them, travel literature increasingly presents novel information in the form of an inventory, while the narrative mode was be used to provide entertainment and excitement.[60] Narrative writing often focuses on initial encounters[61], and describes particular individuals, as opposed to the "puralized, unnamed, and abstracted *sauvages américains*" of ethnographic description, in which the author tends to be much more self-effacing than in narration.[62] What kind of satirical work do narrative and non-narrative writing do in my texts? Zilia and the Ingénu act as "reverse ethnographers" visiting and describing a strange new world. How do their accounts of France mirror the narrative and descriptive habits of European ethnographers?[63] Are Europeans satirized differently, or are different European targets satirized, in particular, chronological writing and in generalized, atemporal description? Do narrative and descriptive writing correspond to the satirization of specific persons and institutions, on the one hand, and to general abstract vices, on the other (a distinction which was important in 18th century writing on satire)?[64]

There is also the question of the organization of the texts. Tables of contents are not ideologically neutral: the order in which information is presented bears on its valuation within the text

[59] Defert, 1982: 13;
[60] *ibid.* 17
[61] Pratt, 1992[2008]: 77; Motsch, 2001: 201 It will be interesting to compare the scenes of initial encounters between the Americans and Europeans in the texts in terms of their length and density of detail relative to the rest of the narration.
[62] Sayre, 1997: 110–111
[63] Simon, 2003: 31
[64] Gunny, 1978: 346–347. During the 18th century, "satire" was frequently understood as an attack on an individual, thus we have writers such as Voltaire and Diderot, whom we associate with satire, denouncing it (*ibid.* 334–335).

and corresponds to colonial "tactics of domination".[65] There is an implied relationship between topics that are presented together or contiguously, and the first and last topics treated by a text may occupy a privileged position. In *Gulliver's Travels*, Lahontan's *Dialogues*, and in the *Lettres d'une Peruvienne*, we can see a marked progression between certain themes or topics, usually corresponding to a satirical target (such as private property, or European sexual mores, or sociopolitical hierarchies); how does the organization of these texts bear on their satirical project? Are different ways of satirizing Europe available to *L'Ingénu* and the *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville,* which are less rigidly organized in terms of their themes?

Finally, I am interested in the rhetoric travel narratives use to establish their legitimacy. Fictional narratives in early modern Europe often mimicked travel writers' insistence on their sincery, undermining the credibility of factual accounts.[66] How and where do my fictional texts insist that their account is true? By appealing to the authority of the eyewitness or ostensive author? By appealing to the corroboration of other sources? By emphasizing the complicity between the author and eyewitness in second-hand accounts?[67] How is second-hand information presented?[68] Are these rhetorical appeals to validity used ironically or unironically? If ironically, do they contribute to the attack on a satirical target, or complicate it by satirizing the reader?

So far I have been writing about the "European" writing on the Americas as if there were no differences between the French and the English (and as if the Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, and Germans did not exist). But there are of course important differences between the French and English national and literary contexts, even if, as Festa observes, "much of this comparative history [of French

[65] Defert, 1982: 12; SAYRE?
[66] Sayre, 1997: 82–83; see also Pagden, 1993: 54–56
[67] Motsch 2001: 172; Pagden, 1993: 83
[68] Pagden notes that, in second-hand narrations, " 'I was told', 'I heard it from one who was there', 'he told me so', and similar 'utterance markings', are employed to retain as far as possible the illusion of the immediate personal contact with 'the real'." (1993: 80)

and English colonialism] has yet to be written."[69] Each country had a very different relationship with their North American colonies. The French colonies in North America were designed from the start as an extension of France, with policies designed to promote social, legal, and racial integration; British colonists, on the other hand, maintained a much more distant relationship with their mother country, and interbreeding would for them have been unthinkable.[70] As a result of this, Sayre writes, "French colonists journeyed farther into the continent sooner and knew more Indian nations better than did the English colonists."[71]

The corpus I am working with is too small and too lopsided (four French texts to two English ones) to permit much in the way of comparison between national literatures. Translation, however, may provide a way to approach this question, especially in light of the fact that the adaptation of translated works, both to make them more intelligible to readers by substituting references with which they would be familiar and to make them more stylistically and ideologically palatable, was common practice in the 18th century.[72] I want to investigate whether there are qualitative or quantitative differences between a text and its translation(s), and whether those differences can be explained in terms of the relationship between the France and England, or between the European colonizing nation and the American colonized subjects. For example, Adario and the *Ingénu* are Hurons. "Huron" is the European term for the Wyandot people—traditionally allied with the French against the English—and "the most common tribal affiliation for French portrayals of the Noble Savage." "Huron" and "Wendat" were sometimes used to refer to this group by French and English writers, respectively.[73] The English translations of Voltaire's *L'Ingénu*, while they leave the protagonist as a Huron, quietly

[69] 2006: 59
[70] Pagden, 1995: 127–128, 149–151.
[71] 1997: 3
[72] Dow, 2016: 90; Weinbrot, 2005: 210–216
[73] Sayre, 1997: xii. For a short discussion of this term illustrating the "complex contingencies [that are] bound up with the history of Europeans' names for American Indians," see (*ibid.*) x-xiii.

turn the Iroquois, traditional allies of the English against the French and Huron, into Mohawk or Cherokee when the text attributes cannibalism or brutality to these tribes. And one English translator provides a note claiming (wrongly), that "Under the name of Hurons, the French, when possessed of Canada, comprehended several nations, or tribes of Indians, found in the norther parts of America," presumably to distance the text from a people that the English would have found more threatening than the French.[74] Does the English translation of Lahontan's *Dialogues* fiddle with tribal affiliation in similar ways? Lahontan and Voltaire, both of whom spend time in England, wrote fairly Anglophilic texts, in which the English compare favourably to the French. Might the English translators have chauvinistically played up these Anglophilic aspects? Or might they have used the presence of England in these texts as an opportunity to satirize their own country? FIX THE NOTES IN THIS PRG

Two French translations of *Gullivers' Travels* appeared in 1727—a highly domesticating, *belle et infidèle* translation by the Abbé Pierre-François Guyot Desfontaines and a more literal, anonymous translation produced at the Hague a few months earlier. The greater liberties Desfontaines takes with the text to conform to French taste surely account for the greater commercial success of his translation, but both translators translated down the grotesque, the sexual, and the scatological in Swift's text. It will be especially interesting to see how this translation strategy affects the disgusting, savage Yahoos of the fourth book. And how does Desfontaines incorporate the "Noble Savage" myth in his sequel *Le Nouveau Gulliver, ou Voyage de Jean Gulliver, Fils du Capitaine Gulliver*?[75]

I have tried to outline the general and specific questions I want to bring to my corpus, and the approach I will take to answer them. But much remains to be done before this project can become a reality. Besides continuing to read about satire and irony to refine these concepts as tools for analyzing texts, I will need to continue to read about 17th and 18th century ethnography to make choices about

[74] The Huron and the Iroquois, especially, are depicted as bellicose and cruel by English and French writers, respectively (*ibid.* 262)
[75] Graeber, 2005: 15

which ideas and tropes from this body of literature are most relevant for me, and to understand better the different forms they take. I also need to decide how I will approach the extensive critical literature on all of my primary texts. However, I think the most important next step for me will be to compare my primary corpus to the travel narratives and ethnographic works on which they are based, to understand the specific ways in which my authors borrowed from these works in their satires.

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"As if part of him still dreamed within the book":
Critical practice and experiences of reading

How is it that literature can affect us — its readers — to the extent that it does? How do literary texts — broadly defined, encompassing not only books but also movies, television shows, podcasts, interactive fictions, oral narratives, and songs — come to exert so much power over us?

Toril Moi, in her book *Revolution of the Ordinary*, reminds us that the practice of literary criticism begins in the personal experience of the critic interacting with a text and coming up against a problem or point of confusion. If the critic assumes that they already have the answer, know better than the text, or have nothing to learn from the text, then criticism itself becomes pointless: "If the critic doesn't have a problem, if nothing really puzzles her about the text, she really has no reason to investigate it. A reading is an attempt to get clear on something" (2017, 182). Similarly, Mario Valdés speaks of the project of his "phenomenological hermeneutics" not as seeking a "correct meaning" but rather as finding ways to effectively communicate our subjective (and perhaps problematic) experiences of a text to others, as part of a broader critical conversation; as he says, "[t]his means that critics have the responsibility of informing their readers on how their interpretation was arrived at and, most important, must never claim that the sense that has been given is more than the best explanation the critic can provide of *his or her reading experience*" (1998, 77, my emphasis). The main point both Valdés and Moi are making is, I think, fundamentally sound: we are moved to write about the things we read because something about our experience of reading them requires further explanation or investigation. We "do readings" in the sense of academic "critical writing" because either *we* have questions or someone we talked to (or might hypothetically talk to) does, and writing is one important way that we have learned to think through these questions and reach, we hope, some kind of clarity. The act of reading and our relationships to the texts we read are of central importance to the practice of criticism; as Moi

observes, “whether I do a postcolonial or a feminist or a psychoanalytic reading, methodologically I do the same sort of thing: I read” (2017, 178). I am trying through my research, to understand both my own experiences of reading and how those experiences relate to my critical practice.

This paper intersperses three shorter notes — on speculative fiction, Miguel de Unamuno, and Gaelic — with four longer sections looking at key questions I hope to consider in greater detail in my dissertation: one on the relationship between “theory” and “fiction”; one on the nature of fictional characters and (by extension) worlds; and then two sample analyses, first of the theory of reading in Sofia Samatar’s *A Stranger in Olondria* (2013), as a practical illustration of my interest in the nature of reading, and then of the question of escape or escapism in Daibhidh Eyre’s *Cailèideascop* (2017), which draws attention to the relationship between reading and politics. The divisions between these sections are not sharp: there will, necessarily, be overlap between them; at the same time, the limited space available in the context of this paper means that every section is both highly compressed and only a beginning or outline of an argument.

A note on “speculative fiction”

Echoing Sami Schalk’s (2018) examination of the different but related ways that fantasy and science fiction function theoretically and politically, part of my project is to argue that, in spite of the protestations of theorists of science fiction,[1] the two genres are much more alike than they are often theorized as being. I will consider the utility of fantasy theory for reading science fiction below in my discussion of Daibhidh Eyre’s *Cailèideascop*, but the reverse is also true: Darko

[1] For example: “Commercial lumping of [fantasy] into the same category as SF is [...] a grave disservice and rampantly socio-pathological phenomenon” (Suvin 1979, 9); or “fantasy [...] estranges, or appears to estrange, but in an irrationalist, theoretically illegitimate way” (Freedman 2000, 17).

Suvin's "*literature of cognitive estrangement*" (1979, 4, italics original), for example, is as much an accurate description of fantasy — or, at the very least, of *some* fantasy — as it is of (*some*) science fiction; it's just that the particular mechanisms by which this estrangement is produced in fantasy are different from those of science fiction proper.

If theories of science fiction are weakened by their short-sighted insistence on the uniqueness and, in fact, *superiority* of science fiction, theories of fantasy are hampered on the one hand by a reliance on psychoanalytic theories of "the uncanny" or "the fantastic" that cannot adequately account for most genre fantasy (see, for example, Mark Bould's very satisfying deconstruction of Rosemary Jackson's *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* [1981; Bould 2002, 58-64]) and on the other hand by a strong tendency towards narratology and structural or formal analysis that focuses exclusively on the internal consistency (or lack thereof) of the fantasy text (Bould's reading of Tzvetan Todorov is again illustrative of some of the issues this approach entails [Bould 2002, 53-57]). Furthermore, theories of both science fiction *and* fantasy are limited by attempts to encompass the *whole* of each genre, in spite of theorists' individual preferences: Darko Suvin's description of the space opera subgenre of science fiction as "SF retrogressing into fairy tale" and "committing creative suicide" (1979, 8) is a particularly egregious example of the result, but even Farah Mendlesohn, who is up front about her personal preferences but attempts to set them aside, nevertheless admits, "I have not been able to keep this coloration entirely absent from the text" (2008, xvii), leading her, for example, to characterize all "portal-quest fantasy" as epistemologically and narratively "authoritarian" (13) for (apparently) foreclosing the possibility of any interrogation of the structure of the world.

In an attempt to avoid some of these pitfalls, let me be up front about my own approach and biases: first, like Schalk, I prefer the term "speculative fiction", which Schalk handily

"defines", in very broad terms, as "any creative writing in which the rules of reality do not fully apply, including magical realism, utopian and dystopian literature, fantasy, science fiction, voodoo, ghost stories, and hybrid genres" (Schalk 2018, 17), where "rules of reality" means "culturally and historically specific social narratives of the possibilities and meanings of bodyminds, time, space, and technology, as well as our constructed notions of what constitutes a 'real' disability, gender, race, and so on" (17). This broad umbrella definition lets me sidestep the nitpicking to which studies of genre fiction are so often prone. Second, on a more personal note, while I will make gestures towards "fantasy" and "science fiction" as entire genres, in the spirit of Unamuno I make no attempt to speak *systematically* or *comprehensively* about either; I will focus instead on a handful of specific texts that I personally like and think are worth discussing, and which are concerned with specific theoretical questions that interest me.

Theory and fiction

One of my fundamental contentions is that "fiction" can and should be approached as "theory". (I would argue that this is true, to varying extents, of *all* fiction, but I think it's especially true of speculative fiction.) This is not exactly a new claim. Barbara Christian, in her essay "The Race for Theory", says that her "method" emerges from the particular texts she is reading:

> So my "method," to use a new "lit. crit." word, is not fixed but relates to what I read and to the historical context of the writers I read *and* to the many critical activities in which I am engaged, which may or may not involve writing. It is a learning from the language of creative writers, which is one of surprise, so that I might discover what language I might use. For my language is very much based on what I read and how it affects me, that is, on the surprise that comes from reading something that compels you to read differently, as I

> believe literature does. I, therefore, have no set method, another prerequisite of the new theory, since for me every work suggests a new approach. (1987, 62, emphasis original)

In this frame, fiction itself suggests the ways in which we should read it: the language of fiction — and of creative writing in general — provides the (theoretical) terms for critical engagement with it. More recently, Toril Moi has explicitly suggested approaching "fiction" as "theory":

> The first time I tried to figure out what this [i.e., Stanley Cavell's injunction to "let the object or the work of your interest teach you how to consider it"] might mean in practice, with a novel, a play, a film, I was completely baffled. The only hint Cavell provides is to say that we usually have no trouble letting a work of theory or philosophy teach us how to read it. It finally dawned upon me that the right sort of reading will emerge if we simply let ourselves read literature or watch films in much the same way as we read theory and philosophy. (2017, 216)

While Moi's language is that of ordinary language philosophy and Christian's that of Black feminist criticism, the underlying argument is the same: in order to give the books we read their due, rather than approaching literature with our theoretical framework already in mind, we have to learn how to let literature guide our readings of it — at least in part, since the idea that we can do without our predispositions altogether is a New Critical illusion.

In Samuel Delany's terms, my argument is that rather than describing a specific, bounded group of texts, "theory" refers to a set of "reading protocols" (2012, 206) that we typically deploy when reading academic and/or philosophical texts but which, just as we "are free to discuss the 'poetic' aspects of texts usually read as novels" or "the 'science-fictional' aspects of certain texts generally considered mundane" (207), we can apply (or adapt) to texts that are generally considered "fictional" rather than "philosophical" (a category that is usually taken to imply

"rigorous", "systematic", "reasoned" argument, something most "fiction" lacks). Given this wider applicability of the "complex of reading protocols" (206) called "theory", I take the word "theory" to mean "anything I read that helps me think about anything else I read in a new, different, or more nuanced way" (understanding both "anything I read" and "anything else I read" in the absolute broadest terms, ranging from "a book" to "a conversation with an elderly Gaelic-speaker" to "the world I interact with, at large"). Or, reframed as something more like a protocol: "theory" is a reading practice that looks for tools and concepts for understanding texts and other things, people, situations, and structures in the world *beyond* the particular text that I am reading *as* "theory".

In practice, even someone drawing their inspiration from Christian or Moi (or Delany) is likely to identify the "theorists" whose work inspires them first, with the literary texts they consider as an afterthought — or, if they specialize in a particular writer, they may say "I work *on*" (and the choice of preposition is significant) "Marie de France, Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair, Goethe, Dickens, Unamuno, MacGill-Eain". Too many times I have described myself as working "on the early twentieth-century philosopher Miguel de Unamuno"; even now that I say I work on "the philosophy of fiction", Unamuno is the only theorist-writer-thinker I name explicitly — the rest are lumped together under the heading of "my corpus". To take my own work as an example, what would it mean to describe myself not as working *on* Unamuno but *with* Unamuno? And, to take a step further, to describe myself as working *with* Sofia Samatar, *with* Patricia McKillip, *with* Daibhidh Eyre, alongside Unamuno? Samatar, McKillip, Eyre, and other "writers" (as "opposed" to "theorists" or "philosophers") have shaped my thinking on the questions I am interested in — in different ways and to different extents, but all productively.

Where speculative fiction, in particular, is concerned, this is not a question only for academic readers: while Samuel Delany (rightly) cautions us against laying too much emphasis on

the idea that speculative fiction is (just) a "literature of ideas", he agrees that its ideas — or the language games it plays with them — *are* important:

> To say that science fiction is the literature of ideas is not to say that other fiction has no ideas, which would be a *bit* silly, but rather that the way in which ideas are organized in drama and in poetry and in mundane fiction is different from the way they are organized in science fiction. To appreciate the exact nature of this difference requires wide reading in both science fiction and literature. (2012, 117, emphasis original)

Delany's own fiction, perhaps most notably the sword and sorcery series *Return to Nevèrÿon*, whose chapters are prefaced with quotations from Foucault, Quine, Derrida, and others, provides an especially clear illustration of the point I want to make, which is that works of fiction, as much as our readings of them, have their own theoretical concerns. In a similar way, the preface to the first book of Anne McCaffrey's otherwise not "obviously" theoretical *Dragonriders of Pern* series makes explicit the theoretical problem with which it is grappling:

> When is a legend, legend? Why is a myth, a myth? How old and disused must a fact be for it to be relegated to the category: "Fairy tale"? And why do certain facts remain incontrovertible, while others lose their validity to assume a shabby, unstable character? (1968, xi)

Not all speculative fiction is quite as up front about its theoretical underpinnings as McCaffrey or Delany (nor should we think that we are limited by these authors' explicit theoretical questions), but all of it *has* some theoretical underpinnings — as do "mundane" fiction, poetry, and other varieties of literature, as Delany points out. Given this, why *not* read "fiction" as "theory"? In this respect, I align myself with so-called "postcritique" (see, for example, Felski 2015, 172-182, for a brief discussion of possible approaches to "postcritical reading"), but also with certain trends

already present in fantasy and science fiction criticism (see, for example, in addition to Delany, Yamazaki 2002, Carrington 2016, or, especially, Schalk 2018), encouraged by the evident theoretical orientation of many speculative fiction texts, towards reading texts as themselves productive of theory, rather than solely as its objects of analysis.

Miguel de Unamuno's work is a useful point of reference here precisely because several of his most important works directly undermine the division between "philosophy" and "fiction". Is *Cómo se hace una novela*[2] a novel? If so, it's not a very good one, marred as its minimal narrative is by long philosophical and political digressions. Is it a work of "theory"? If so, it's not always entirely clear what philosophical points we should take away from it, as the narrative elements and literary critical digressions distract us from its philosophical arguments. Rejecting a clear dichotomy between "fiction" and "theory" allows us to set aside (if not reject outright) the question of classification — we can think, also, of Delany's refusal to lay out a strict definition of "science fiction" (1999, 238-246) — and focus our attention on what the text *says* and (most importantly) *does* to us as readers of it and, through us, to the world in which we live, rather than on what label we should apply to it.

Characters and worlds

The question of the relationship between fiction and theory, where "theory" refers to something that reaches beyond a single given text, raises questions about how readers navigate the relationship between "fiction" and the "non-fictional" world in general. I focus here on how we

[2] The title of *Cómo se hace una novela* suggests some of the ambiguities at play in the text, comprehensible according to personal preference as "How to make a novel", "How a novel is made", "How one makes oneself into a novel", "How one makes a novel for oneself", and a few other possible variations.

read fictional characters, but questions about the nature of fictionality obviously extend beyond characters specifically. Miguel de Cervantes's *El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha* has inspired in readers from the Renaissance through to the twentieth century the feeling that its title character has a life beyond what Cervantes portrays on the page — leading Unamuno to assert that the *Quijote* "fue real y verdadera, y que el mismo Don Quijote, envolviéndose en Cide Hamete Benengeli, se la dictó a Cervantes" [was real and true, and that the same Don Quijote, shrouded in Cide Hamete Benengeli, dictated it to Cervantes] (1987b, 375).[3] Don Quijote is perhaps the archetypal example, but he is far from the only one: a sense that characters extend past the boundaries of the texts in which they reside has been common and pervasive among both readers (we can think of the phenomena of unauthorized sequels and, since the 1960s, fan fiction and the culture of media fandom) and writers. Authors themselves frequently make reference to a certain *willfulness* of the characters in the stories they're telling. To take just two examples:

> There is the case, so often recorded, of a writer beginning with some known or observed person, whom he works to reproduce, only to find, at a certain stage of the process, that something else is happening: something usually described as the character 'finding a will (a life) of his own'. What is then in fact happening? [...] It is often interpreted, while it lasts, not as 'creating' but as contact, often humble, with some other ('external') source of knowledge. This is often mystically described. I would myself describe it as a consequence of the inherent materiality (and thence objectified sociality) of language. (Williams 1977, 208)

> The people who inhabit my stories, inhabit my life. They have made a home inside me, inside the computer, on the page. The people who live in story are, like Native people

[3] All translations from Spanish, French, and Gaelic are my own.

> everywhere, struggling and dreaming, caught between the brutality of what we know, and the ugliness of what has been done to our people, our land. It seems as though I give these people choices — like the choice I make every day — to resist the ugly and go with the beauty. I say "it seems" because I never know what the people are going to do; they tell me. (Brant 1994, 122-123)

That even Raymond Williams, a committed Marxist critic, recognizes the vitality or liveliness of fictional characters as *something* other than puppets of the writers in whose works they reside attests to the strength of this sense of vitality among both writers and readers.

Nonetheless, this common intuition has generally been downplayed or dismissed in academic contexts. Lubomír Doležel, for instance, briefly discusses what he calls "pseudomimesis", the idea that a fiction writer is "a chronicler of fictional realms" whose existence "is assumed without being explained" — that is, the idea that fictional entities, both characters and worlds, are or become in any way external to their creators; "[a]s a theory of fictionality," he says, "pseudomimesis is vacuous" (1998, 9). Doležel's attitude is representative of theorizations of fictional worlds, which tend to be concerned with logic and semantics, assuming a logically possible and consistent[4] world that is extrapolated from the world of its author — which may not always allow the same range of possibility as the world of its *readers*, as Thomas Pavel notes (1986, 47). I have very little interest in retreading debates about the *logic* of fictional worlds; instead, I want to focus on the reader's relationship to the worlds of fiction and — most importantly — the entities (that is, fictional characters) that reside within them.

[4] Although there are exceptions to this assumption — Brian McHale, for example, notes that "there are many [logically impossible or inconsistent worlds] in postmodernist writing" (1987, 33-34) and makes an effort to account for them.

One interesting counterpoint to this strain of thought is Wolfgang Iser's *The Act of Reading*,[5] which suggests some useful terminology and concepts. One of Iser's central arguments is that "the meaning of a literary text is not a definable entity but, if anything, a dynamic happening" (1980, 22). The bulk of *The Act of Reading* is concerned with exploring the nature of this "happening", that is, how the interaction between text and reader — the "text-reader relationship" (166) that we call "reading" — works. Of particular interest to me in Iser's frame is what he calls "negativity", which refers to the "unformulated background" (225-226) suggested by a text but never explicitly expressed, the assumed "rest" of the fictional world that a text implies but does not show us. The visible features of negativity — what Iser calls "blanks" and "negations" — are what shape the "textual patterns" (182) of the text as it is experienced in reading, but precisely because they are integral to the creation of the reading experience they can do no more than offer us a vague outline of what lies underneath, their "unformulated cause" (227). Our awareness of negativity pulls us into a search for a "hidden cause" (227) that we can never find; instead, negativity "embraces both the question and the answer, and is the condition that enables the reader to construct the meaning of the text on a question-and-answer basis" (228):

> It is this process that endows the meaning of the literary text with its unique quality. It does not consist in giving a determinate solution to the determinate problems posed, but is the transformation of events into the discovery of the virtual cause. Meaning thus emerges as the reverse side of what the text has depicted. [...] [L]anguage can never explicitly state the

[5] My instinct is to turn to the original German edition, *Der Akt des Lesens*, but when comparing it to the English version, it quickly became clear that the English has been heavily altered; in the interest of time, then, I will rely on the English version, which I've read, at the expense of the German, which I have not.

> meaning; it can only make itself felt by way of the apparent deformations and distortions which the formulated text reveals. (228-229)

"Meaning", when we are confronted with negativity, can never be more than a provisional outline of the shape of negativity as perceived or "felt" by the reader (and each reader's perception will be necessarily different). The presence of something inexpressable and not-quite-perceptible that is *part* of the text but not actually directly accessible provides us with specific terminology for thinking about the "ambiguous objects" (McHale 1987, 32) of fiction — things we assume or believe to be present in the fictional world but which we can never *know* for ourselves.

More recently, we might think to look to the work of Bruno Latour, who devotes a chapter in his *Enquête sur les modes d'existence* to "les êtres de la fiction" [the beings of fiction] (2012, 241). Unfortunately, while Latour's understanding of beings of fiction is more interesting than analyses of modal logic and literary semantics, he still falls into the trap of assuming that their existence is, ultimately, rooted exclusively in human readers:

> Dire que les êtres de fiction peuplent le monde, c'est dire qu'ils viennent à nous et qu'ils s'imposent, mais avec ceci de particulier qu'ils ont besoin néanmoins, comme [Étienne] Souriau l'avait si justement noté, de notre *sollicitude*. [...] Mais si nous ne les reprenons pas, si nous ne les soignons pas, si nous ne les apprécions pas, ils risquent de disparaître pour de bon. Ils ont donc ceci de particulier que leur objectivité dépend de leur reprise par des subjectivités qui, elles-mêmes, n'existeraient pas sans qu'ils nous les aient données... (250, emphasis original)
>
> [To say that beings of fiction populate the world is to say that they come to us and impose themselves, but with this particularity, that they nevertheless need, as [Étienne] Souriau had so justly noted, our *solicitude*. [...] But if we do not take them up, if we do not care for

them, if we do not appreciate them, they risk disappearing for good. They have, thus, this particularity, that their objectivity depends on their being taken up by subjectivities which, themselves, would not exist if they [i.e., beings of fiction] had not given them to us...]

Latour's description of the ontology of beings of fiction is an improvement over Doležel, but it seems to me to fail to satisfy the motivation he claims for his project, to account for different kinds of being on their own terms. By grounding fictional entities' existence in their human readers (in this scheme characters become almost vampiric), Latour has already given up the possibility of an understanding of fictional existence in its own right. Even with his closing assertion that fictional beings provide us (that is, non-fictional beings) with our subjectivity, the basis of fictional existence is still the (non-fictional) reader, rather than beings of fiction themselves.

In contrast to Latour but consonant with parts of Iser, I turn to Unamuno and, especially, the Argentine writer Macedonio Fernández, whose *Museo de la Novela de la Eterna* (henceforth: *Museo*) provides us with a very different — and much more philosophically aligned with my own experiences interacting with fictional entities — perspective on the matter. Macedonio[6] touches on a wide range of concepts and ideas relating to aesthetics and metaphysics in *Museo*, but he circles especially around a group of closely related questions concerning literary realism and the ontology of the "fictional" world as distinct (or not) from the "real" world, focusing in particular on the distinction (or not) between "real" *people* (*personas*) and "fictional" *characters* (*personajes*).[7] The novel begins with a dedication to one of its "characters", la Eterna, affirming

[6] Macedonio Fernández is conventionally referred to for short by his first name rather than his last.
[7] As Unamuno, notes, the origin of both *persona* and *personaje* is the Etruscan word *φersu*, "la careta o máscara trágica o cómica que llevaba el actor antiguo cuando representaba lo que llamamos un papel" [the tragic or comic mask that the ancient actor wore when performing what we call a role] (1998, 42) and only later came to mean "el papel que uno hace en la tragicomedia de la historia" [the role that one plays in the tragicomedy of history] (42).

both that "[*l*]*a Realidad y el Yo, o principalmente el Yo, la Persona* [...] *sólo se cumple, se da, por el momento altruístico de la piedad*" [Reality and the Self, or principally the Self, the Person [...] are only achieved, given, through the altruistic moment of piety] and, at the same time, that "*[e]l ímpetu máximo de la piedad* [...] *lo he conocido en la Eterna*" [the maximum impetus of piety [...] I have known in la Eterna] (2010, 135, italics original); this, like Unamuno's expression of belief in the presumably fictional Ángela Carballino of *San Manuel Bueno, mártir* — "creo en ella más que creo en mi propia realidad" [I believe in her more than I believe in my own reality] (Unamuno 1987a, 103) — suggests that la Eterna herself has, in some way, "achieved" reality, that is, that she *exists*, "really", rather than "just" fictionally. A few pages later, Macedonio contrasts la Eterna with another character, the No-Existente-Caballero, or Nonexistent Knight, "el único no-existente personaje" [the only nonexistent character] who "funciona por contraste como vitalizador de los demás" [functions in contrast as an enlivener of the rest] (2010, 149); this suggests that we might perhaps read the distinction between "person" and "character" not as a sharp ontological divide between two unconnected categories but rather as something with a certain amount of fluidity or at least some blurring where the edges of the categories come into contact: there are characters who are *not* people, and there are characters who *are* people — or, at least, who are something *like* people. Macedonio likewise raises the possibility of *people* who are *characters*, introducing several — apparently — real people (Nicolasa, Pasamontes, Federico) in the prologues who then appear in the novel itself, even if only fleetingly and under some duress.

Museo tantalizes its readers with the possibility that they, too, might become characters, a prospect that is at once terrifying — as the character of Quizagenio reminds the reader, to be a character is unavoidably to be *known* by the author, "te sabe como se sabe a un personaje" [he

knows you as one knows a character] (332)[8] — and much to be desired, as it would give the reader, finally, access to the negativity of the text. As *Museo*'s reader (situated ambiguously between "person" and "character") laments, "¡Oh si yo pudiera colarme de noche a vuestras conversaciones y tener siquiera por una hora el ser de personaje! Vida de 'La Novela' ¿quién no la suspira?" [Oh, if I could sneak at night into your conversations and have even for an hour the being of a character! The life of The Novel: who doesn't sigh after it?][9] (331). This — the desire to find out what the characters in a novel are doing "at night", metaphorically speaking — is fundamental to both the act of reading and to understanding the existence of fictional entities. The nature of fictional negativity is, fundamentally, also the nature of other human beings: despite the suggestion that a fictional character may be known *completely* by the reader, there will always be things that *cannot* be known — Pavel offers as an example the question "how many children did Lady Macbeth have?" (1986, 75) — and about which we can only speculate. While, as Iser notes, in "dyadic interactions" with other "real" human beings we "can ask each other questions in order to ascertain how far [our] views have controlled contingency" (1980, 166), we still, as when we read, regularly find ourselves in situations where something we *thought* we knew turns out to be wrong or incomplete and we must, in effect, reread the text — that is, come to our next interaction with the person (or character) with new questions to which we hope to find the answers, if our interlocutor chooses to give them; the difference is that our fictional friends tend to be less forthcoming than our non-fictional friends.

[8] Macedonio uses the verb *saber* here, rather than the expected *conocer*; *saber* typically describes factual knowledge, knowledge that can be fully encompassed by the knower's mind, whereas *conocer* describes *familiarity* with a person or place — something provisional and subject to revision. Nonetheless, *personaje*, *character*, is preceded by the so-called "personal *a*", marking *personaje* as animate — a person, not an object.

[9] Here Macedonio plays with the ambiguity of "La Novela", which in the context of *Museo* refers both to *the novel* as a literary genre and to *The Novel*, the house shared by its main characters.

Instead of assuming that fictional characters are nothing but textual constructs to be analyzed, then, I want us to think about them as entities with which we establish relationships during the act of reading. The metaphysical details of these entities' existence aside, the idea that fictional entities possess an ontological status as something more than an assortment of marks on a page or figments of their authors' or readers' imaginations raises some pressing questions about the *ethics* of literary criticism. To use one of the passages I quoted earlier as an example, if I take seriously Beth Brant's inclusion of her Native characters (and so, presumably, of other Indigenous characters by other Indigenous writers) within the sweep of "Native people everywhere" (1994, 122), what ethical obligations does that create for me as a settler scholar? What does it mean to "analyze" or "critically read" a text inhabited by people over whom I am systemically privileged within the settler colonial societies of both Canada and the United States? How can I, or how *should* I, enter into relationships with these texts and the entities that they host? I don't — yet — have concrete answers to these questions, although some of Keavy Martin's work on Inuit literatures (2012; 2016) might offer a starting point. This is fundamentally what is at stake in the ontology of fiction: what responsibilities do I have as a reader and interpreter of a text, when I interact with its world and its characters?

A note on Unamuno

Before I continue, I want to briefly discuss my relationship to and use of Miguel de Unamuno's work. Unamuno has been rightly described, including by himself, as *unsystematic*; he asserts in *Cómo se hace una novela*, for example, that "[e]l sistema [...] destruye la esencia del sueño y con ello la esencia de la vida" [systems destroy the essence of dreams and with them the essence of life] (2009, 128). Even his most clearly philosophical works, while small parts of them

may be "rigorously" argued, are frequently contradictory, sometimes within a matter of only two or three pages (or even less) — and this is just within single works. Across the body of his work, the complications and contradictions deepen.

There are both advantages and disadvantages to this. If I am attempting to argue that people other than me should care about Unamuno as a theorist, we come to the problem of what "theoretical" texts I would have them read (I usually default to *Cómo se hace una novela*, but its disunity makes it difficult to recommend without qualification or clarification). If I am making an argument to Unamuno scholars, much of what I might draw out of his work risks opening me to the charge that I am cherry-picking only what directly supports my argument. Still, this constant contradiction also offers me (cynically) a useful counterpoint: precisely because Unamuno contradicts himself so frequently, I would argue that the *only* way for us to really work *with* Unamuno today — as opposed to working *on* Unamuno as a matter of historical interest, (just) a product of his time and context — is to take from him just what is useful to us, knowing that something else in his work probably contradicts it, and not feel obligated to account for every single turn in his thought. Indeed, apart from being — I think — impossible, an attempt to "fully" systematize Unamuno's thought would run counter to his explicit instructions.[10]

My engagement with Unamuno differs from the bulk of Unamuno scholarship in that I am interested neither in fitting his fiction into a narrative of the development of modern (or postmodern, or proto-postmodern, as the case may be) literature, nor in deriving from his philosophical works a systematic theory of some kind. Down the first road lies the tendency of

[10] In *Del sentimiento trágico de la vida*: "como Walt Whitman, el enorme poeta yanqui, os encargo que no se funde escuela o teoría sobre mí" [like Walt Whitman, the great Yankee poet, I charge you all not to found a school or theory on me] (2013, 163).

some Unamuno scholarship to focus questions of classification;[11] down the second the tendency to allegorize or explain away (often as "ironic") aspects of his thought that don't quite fit the system in question, or that seem frivolous.[12] My objection isn't necessarily that these allegories don't work (Unamuno himself acknowledges them as, at the very least, possibilities), or that Unamuno isn't ironic (he certainly is), but rather that both of these approaches result in a smoothing over or just plain erasure of the aspects of his work that *I* find most interesting: Unamuno has appealed to me since my first encounter, at the end of high school, with *San Manuel Bueno, mártir*, not as a theorist of (human) existentialism, but for his theories of fiction and reading, and his explorations (both in his philosophical works and in his own "fiction") of our relationships as readers and writers with the fictional entities and worlds we meet in or write into books.

Even apart from the contradictions, Unamuno is far from perfect: his perspective was inevitably limited by his status as a financially stable, white, heterosexual, Catholic man in early twentieth-century Spain (even his period of exile first in the Canary Islands and then in France during the dictatorship of Miguel Primo de Rivera, while providing us with some of his most strikingly political writing, was less an ordeal than an inconvenience, and he continued to publish newspapers articles in Spain during that time). But precisely because of the range of his theoretical interests, I hope to show that Unamuno can provide us with useful insights today, far outside his original context. That is, rather than limiting ourselves to critical readings of Unamuno's own texts, to studies of elements of his philosophy that do not move beyond exegesis, or to tracing known or

[11] Teresa Gómez Trueba reviews debates about the genre of *Cómo se hace una novela* in her introduction to the text (Unamuno 2009, 68-76), for example.
[12] See, for example, Francisco La Rubia Prado's reduction of Unamuno's theory of reading in *Cómo se hace una novela* to an allegory for human existence, turning a book into a "libro de la vida", a "book of life" (1999, 37).

knowable direct influences or connections — all primary focuses of Unamuno studies[13] — I hope to show that Unamuno can be useful to us *as a literary theorist* whose work can illuminate *other* works even as it is illuminated by them; I offer the next section as an example.

Reading ghosts

Sofia Samatar's fantasy novel *A Stranger in Olondria* (henceforth: *Stranger*), is the story of a young man, Jevick, traveling through a foreign country, Olondria, that he knows, or at least thinks he knows, even before arriving in it, thanks to the books he grew up reading, a collection of Olondrian literature provided by his tutor. *Stranger* has many different, though often interrelated, theoretical concerns; I will focus here on just one of them, namely its examination of the experience of *reading*. *Stranger*'s account of reading provides a useful counterpart to and illustration of Unamuno's polemic on reading, writing, and (im)mortality in *Cómo se hace una novela*, with which I will juxtapose it, both complicating (or perhaps moderating) Unamuno's position and reinforcing the fundamentals of his argument about the nature of reading.

Jevick's home, in the Tea Islands south of the Olondrian mainland, is — more or less — an illiterate society. His first introduction to the use of written signs to convey language, and not simply numbers for accounting purposes, is by his Olondrian tutor, Lunre, who writes, letter by letter, Jevick's name on a page. Jevick is at first confused, then amazed:

> only when he had described all the signs several times, repeating my name, did I realize with a shock that I was in the presence of sorcery, that the signs were not numbers at all, but could speak (Samatar 2013, 18)

[13] See, for example, Beraldi 2013, Chabrán 2007, Ferraro 2007, García 1991, López-Pasarín Basabe 2009, or Morón Arroyo 1997.

Soon Jevick is himself caught up in the web of sorcery that books create, "the magical voices that called to me from their houses of vellum" (20); books can take him, after a fashion, to Olondria, which he dreams of, but they offer, too, something *more* than the concrete Olondria he will visit:

> I longed for wide streets loud with carriage wheels, for crowded markets, for bridges, libraries, gardens, pleasure houses, for all that I had read of but never seen, for the land of books, for Lunre's country, for *somewhere else, somewhere beyond*. (24, my emphasis)

If we consider the *reasons* that we read, or if we ask other readers about their own relationships with reading, we are likely to find this (almost) magical element of reading; at the very least, it's central to my own experiences of reading, and that is, after all, what this is all about.

Rita Felski, in *Uses of Literature*, devotes a chapter to the question of the *enchantment* of reading. Enchantment as Felski describes it is both "rapturous" and, nonetheless, *unsettling*:

> You feel oblivious to your surroundings, your past, your everyday life; you exist only in the present and the numinous presence of a text.
>
> [...] Descriptions of enchantment often pinpoint an arresting of motion, a sense of being transfixed, spellbound, unable to move, even as your mind is transported elsewhere. Time slows to a halt: you feel yourself caught in an eternal, unchanging present. (2008, 55)

Felski's argument throughout *Uses of Literature* is that we cannot ever fully understand literature without understanding the "emphatic experience[s]" (20) that reading produces in readers — enchantment being one of these. As she argues, the "desire to purge aesthetic experience of its enigmatic and irrational qualities merely has the effect of driving them underground" (54). Prefiguring elements of "postcritique", Unamuno, in *Cómo se hace una novela*, highlights these "enigmatic" qualities of reading, directly connecting literature (and the novel specifically) with *life* itself; a true book, for Unamuno, becomes *food*, something that sustains and revitalizes the

reader: “Cuando un libro es cosa viva hay que comérselo, y el que se lo come, si a su vez es viviente, si está de veras vivo, revive con esa comida” [When a book is a living thing it must be devoured, and the one who devours it, if they in turn are living, if they are truly alive, comes alive again through that devouring] (2009, 118). This is part of a process of immortalization that unites reader with author through the text as experienced by the reader: “sólo haciéndose uno el novelador y el lector de la novela se salvan ambos de su soledad radical. En cuanto se hacen uno se actualizan y actualizándose se eternizan” [only through the noveler [*novelador*] and the reader of the novel making themselves one are they both saved from their radical solitude. As they make themselves one, they are actualized and in actualizing they become eternal] (195). Unamuno describes this process as “apocalíptico” [apocalyptic] and “revelador” [revelatory] (118) — these being, etymologically, synonyms (cf. the Gaelic verb *taisbean*) — recalling the powerful but occasionally traumatic experiences that Jevick reports from Olondrian literature: “Tala of Yenish is said to have kept her books in an iron chest that could not be opened in her presence, else she would lie on the floor, shrieking” (Samatar 2013, 19). Books are more than passive objects awaiting interpretation: they contain a life (or a Nonlife [see Povinelli 2016]) that can powerfully affect their readers.

The enchantment or “sorcery” of reading is of central importance to *A Stranger in Olondria*; Jevick finds in books not only a few hours’ diversion but something that produces deep and lasting effects on him — perhaps, in Unamuno’s terms, the *life* of the literary texts he reads. Books in turn become Jevick’s life: as he says at the beginning of his journey, “Words are everything. They can be everything” (Samatar 2013, 43). Upon his arrival in Olondria, Jevick’s reading becomes entangled, very literally, in questions of life and death, when the ghost (or *angel*, as they are called in Olondria) of a young woman from his home islands, Jissavet, begins to haunt him, demanding that he write a *vallon* — the Olondrian word for book — for her: “Write me a

vallon. Put my voice inside it. Let me live. [...] Write me a *vallon*, Jevick. Like what you read to me on the ship that day. You said they last forever" (121). Jevick is horrified — almost disgusted — by the idea: "'No,' I said aloud, gritting my teeth. I would not do it. I would not mingle the horror of death with what I most loved" (124).[14] Finally, though, after his journey takes him to an abandoned desert estate where he and a friend are slowly starving to death, he gives in: "That was our bargain: a life for a life" (211). As he writes Jissavet's life, Jevick finds himself, through the simultaneous process of reading-listening and writing-recording, falling in love with the angel: his life becomes entangled in hers, like Unamuno's reader and author, united through books.

When, the *vallon* complete, she departs, he is devastated — and expresses this devastation in terms of the experience of reading:

> The silence. End of all poetry, all romance. Earlier, frightened, you began to have some intimation of it: so many pages had been turned, the book was so heavy in one hand, so light in the other, thinning toward the end. [...] Oh, was it possible to read more slowly?— No. The end approached, inexorable, at the same measured pace. The last page, the last of the shining words! And there—the end of the book. The hard cover which, when you turn it, gives you only this leather stamped with old roses and shield.
>
> Then the silence comes, like the absence of sound at the end of the world. You look up. It's a room in an old house. Or perhaps it's a seat in a garden, or even a square; perhaps you've been reading outside and you suddenly see the carriages going by. Life comes back, the shadows of leaves. [...] It is the sound of the world. But to you, the reader, it is only a

[14] Unamuno speaks of "[t]odos los que vivimos principalmente de la lectura y en la lectura" [all of us who live principally by reading and in reading] (2009, 137). Not for nothing does Jissavet equate books with *jut*, the external souls of the people of the Tea Islands (Samatar 2013, 265).

> silence, untenanted and desolate. This is the grief that comes when we are abandoned by the angels: silence, in every direction, irrevocable. (274-275)

Just as Jevick's Olondrian books left him longing both for Olondria specifically *and* for "somewhere else, somewhere beyond" (some indefinable *other* place, *other* life, *other* world), the book of Jissavet's life is both a token of *her*, after her departure, and another world unto itself, so close he can *almost* touch it, but never quite within reach. "This is a journey to *jepnatow-het*, the land of shadows [i.e., of ghosts]," he tells his students when he returns to his home island and becomes a teacher; "Do not mistake it for the country of the real" (Samatar 2013, 298). When a book enchants us with "its power to turn absence into presence, to summon up spectral figures out of the void, to conjure images of hallucinatory intensity and vividness, to fashion entire worlds into which the reader is swallowed up" (Felski 2008, 62), we give it (our) life; to experience its life, we must be willing, for a time, to surrender our own. In contrast to Unamuno, however, Samatar offers no possibility of immortality: Jissavet the angel is gone; the Jissavet who appears in words is different, distant, and resides only in the pages of her life story, the gaps in which are transformed into a taunting negativity.

In light of the end of the novel, it would be easy to dismiss Jevick's early enchantment with books as the enthusiasm of a naïve reader whose reading practice is in need of demystification — a process he himself might be said to engage in precisely when he warns his students not to mistake their readings for "the country of the real". What I want to suggest, though, with Felski, is that to dismiss or ignore this kind of reading experience — of which Jevick is so keenly aware — or to downplay its intensity as felt by the reader is to allow ourselves only half a picture of the process both of reading and of critical practice. At stake in this, among other things, is the "postcritical" question of how we as critics navigate our attachments to the texts we read (Felski 2015, 13, e.g.),

but also, more generally, how we can balance, reconcile, or come to terms with both "uncritical reading" and "critical reading" (see also Warner 2004). Reading, for Samatar as for Unamuno, is an intense encounter with something *other* than the reader. Our tasks as critics (my task as a critic navigating my own reading practice) is to attempt to account for this experience, *both* the emotional and intellectual ties that we (I) develop to the entities, objects, and worlds we (I) find in books *and also* the moments where the reading experience changes or falters, where our (my) attention sticks unexpectedly and perhaps unpleasantly (the sudden appearance of homophobia or racism, for example) and we are (I am) thrown out again. Both sides of our engagement with a text may suggest problems or puzzles that prompt us (me) to do an "academic" or "critical" reading of it; to neglect either element is to ignore half of the directions a text might lead us in.

A note on Gaelic[15]

This project is (or will be) mildly haunted by a tension between, on the one hand, works (both academic and literary) produced in English and Spanish — both, albeit to different extents in different contexts, hegemonic "major" "world" languages — and works produced in (or about) Gaelic. Let's consider a passage from Samuel Delany: "Along with such vigilance must go a willingness to problematize radically, as part of their critique, the model—that is language—that still, in these debates, controls so much of meaning" (1999, 184). In an English-language context, especially, the word *language*, which is of enormous importance to twentieth- and twenty-first-century theory and philosophy, is a problematic term, because it encompasses both the sense of *the fact of human speech* (Spanish *lenguaje*; in Gaelic perhaps *cainnt*), which has been a central

[15] I follow the convention of contemporary Celtic studies in using "Gaelic" to refer specifically to *Scottish* Gaelic, as distinct from "Irish" (sometimes also called "Gaelic" or "Irish Gaelic") or "Manx" (occasionally, if infrequently, called "Manx Gaelic").

concern of much theory and philosophy; the sense of *a particular language* (Spanish *lengua* or *idioma*; Gaelic *cànan*); and, as I read this excerpt from Delany, also the sense of *the particular words used in a particular field of discourse* (in Spanish perhaps *vocabulario*; in Gaelic perhaps *briathrachas*). English-language theory and philosophy — and English translations of texts originally in languages that make these distinctions more reliably — suffer from this polysemy, and from the hegemony of anglophone realism (see below) that makes other languages unthinkable, eliding both the differences in meaning between these uses of the word "language" and, crucially, the differences between particular languages-*lenguas*-*cànanan*.

For my purposes, though, this ambiguity is useful, precisely because it always leaves room for us to reinsert the question of language-*lengua*-*cànan*: what possibilities does Gaelic (or Basque or Galician or Nahuatl or Kikuyu) offer us to "radically problematize" and critique the language (English or Spanish, in this context) that controls the terms of these debates (about literature, about language, about politics) both inside and outside of the academy?[16] Moi's discussion of "ordinary language philosophy", for example, makes me wonder: what qualifies as "ordinary language" in a Gaelic context, when there are so few places where Gaelic *is* the "ordinary" language of "everyday life" (Moi 2017, 49)? Gaelic speculative fiction in particular can hardly be said to reflect "ordinary language" — except perhaps Fionnlagh MacLeòid's *Gormshuil an Rìgh* (2010), drawing as extensively and consciously as it does on the language of traditional oral narratives — because the Gaelic world lacks not only the actual science fictional or fantastic elements that contemporary speculative fiction relies on (plasma pistols, space stations, schools of wizardry, and interdimensional portals are hard to come by in the Hebrides) *but also* an extensive tradition of genre conventions on which to rely as guides. Reading Gaelic speculative fiction requires us to

[16] See McLeod 2011, e.g., for a discussion of Gaelic-language use within the academy.

translate, quite literally, our reading protocols for these genres from whatever "major" language we are most comfortable in (usually English) into Gaelic.

Similar questions arise regarding the relationship of Gaelic literature to "non-Gaelic" literary theory and philosophy, illustrated by the hedging that sometimes accompanies discussions of "theory" in Gaelic criticism, as in Thomas Owen Clancy's reference to "the full-scale assault of modern critical theory, which tends to displace in any case the intended subject of the critique, the poem itself" (2010, 121) or William Gillies's implication that, while it is possible "to write adequately" (2006, 13) about "modernist" Gaelic literature with twentieth-century critical frameworks, these represent an outside imposition on Gaelic that risks "ask[ing] [it] to dance to the tunes appropriate to ['typical modern, western European'] literary cultures" (2). To an extent, at least, I am avoiding these concerns by focusing exclusively on literature in the "modernist strand" (13), but I am sensitive to questions about the viability of theory and philosophy grounded in major western European languages when it comes to literature produced in a minority language. I hope, by focusing on literary works themselves as engaged in "theory" or "theorizing", that I may be able to suggest, in broad strokes, ways for us to read *other* works of Gaelic literature, both "modernist" and "traditional", that can help us work around the question of whether "critical theory" as constituted in English, French, and German is applicable to Gaelic, without feeling that we have to either make critical theory our *only* approach to Gaelic literature *or* reject it out of hand. By the same token, by (ultimately, even if not directly in *this* paper) using Gaelic literature to problematize or complicate *specific* aspects of twentieth-century theory, I hope I may be able to draw greater attention to the language-*lengua-cànan* of theory even outside the small world of Gaelic academia.

Escape

A preliminary caveat: my reading in this section is structured a little more conventionally than my reading of *A Stranger in Olondria*, considering the ways that "theory" might illuminate "fiction". Still, though, I think the end result is similar: if we *do* assume a clear divide between "theory" and "fiction", how might "fiction" also illuminate the "theory" that we use to read it, casting it in a different light? If I am less attentive here to the theorizing in which *Cailèideascop* itself is engaged, I don't mean to suggest that it doesn't have theoretical concerns of its own, or that these are only directly related to Gaelic. *Cailèideascop* is an example here of *one* thing that speculative fiction in particular (but all fiction to some extent) can do, but not the *only* thing.

In his essay "On Fairy-Stories", J.R.R. Tolkien offers a concerted defense of "fairy-stories" — a category that includes both traditional oral stories and modern works of fantasy — against an adult condescension that dismisses the genre as inherently childish, asking: "Is there any *essential* connection between children and fairy-stories? Is there any call for comment, if an adult reads them for himself? *Reads* them as tales, not *studies* them as curios" (2006, 130).[17] By way of defense, he sets out to describe the nature and function of these stories, identifying three main functions: recovery, escape, and consolation. "Consolation" is primarily a product of Tolkien's conservative Catholic worldview, but "recovery" and, "escape" both, I think, can offer us useful ways of thinking not only about fantasy but also about science fiction and, possibly, other "popular" genres with "escapist" functions. Further, despite the common and not unjustified perception of Tolkien as "reactionary" (Bould 2002, 58, e.g.), I want to suggest that we can take his work (like Unamuno's) and repurpose it for more radical or revolutionary — or at least

[17] Tolkien might well have been responding to Darko Suvin's *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*, published several decades later, where Suvin sets up a contrast between "fairytale readers", who have "juvenile taste", and "sophisticated SF readers" who "disbelieve the fairy tale" (1979, 24).

transformative — ends. Tolkien himself gestures towards this possibility, although the revolution he imagines is motivated by a reactionary worldview.

Tolkien's vision of escape turns on a metaphor, challenging the equation of the "escape" that fantasy offers with a facile retreat from "real life":

> In what the misusers of Escape are fond of calling Real Life, Escape is as a rule very practical, and may even be heroic. In real life it is difficult to blame it, unless it fails; in criticism it would seem to be the worse the better it succeeds. Evidently we are faced by a misuse of words, and also by a confusion of thought. Why should a man be scorned if, finding himself in prison, he tries to get out and go home? Or if, when he cannot do so, he thinks and talks about other topics than jailers and prison-walls? The world outside has not become less real because the prisoner cannot see it. In using escape in this way the critics have chosen the wrong word, and, what is more, they are confusing, not always by sincere error, the Escape of the Prisoner with the Flight of the Deserter. (2006, 148)

Tolkien's "escape", then, is not the "Flight of the Deserter", an abnegation of responsibility and engagement with the world, but instead is rooted in "Disgust, Anger, Condemnation, and Revolt" (148). Tolkien, the consummate Catholic intellectual, of course aligns himself explicitly with reactionary, anti-"modernist" forces (he takes electric street lights as his exemplary target and suggests that the escapist might propose tearing them down), but if we refocus our attention we might see in his (also explicit) mention of "Revolt" an answer to the problem of "capitalist realism", the "pervasive *atmosphere*" (Fisher 2009, 16, emphasis original) that makes capitalism and its concomitant power structures appear "inevitable, even 'inexorable'" (Tolkien 2006, 149).

Tolkien's theorization of "escape" is intimately connected with the question of "recovery":

> Recovery (which includes return and renewal of health) is a re-gaining — regaining of a clear view. I do not say 'seeing things as they are' and involve myself with the philosophers, though I might venture to say 'seeing things as we are (or were) meant to see them' — as things apart from ourselves. We need, in any case, to clean our windows, so that the things seen clearly may be freed from the drab blur of triteness or familiarity — from possessiveness. (146)

I will suggest that these concepts, "escape" and "recovery", function just as well outside the boundaries of fantasy as within them, and certainly at least as well in the context of science fiction.

Daibhidh Eyre's science fiction novel *Cailèideascop* offers us a vision of a future where Gaelic is not only still alive, but *thriving*, beyond what anyone in our early twenty-first century can probably imagine — certainly not any time soon:

> '[...] tha Gàidhlig aig mu cheithir millean neach a-nist, a' chuid as motha dhiubh ann an nàbachdan an seo ann an Alba, ach tha mu 20,000 dhiubh cuideachd ann an Aimearagaidh a Tuath, agus còrr 's 150,000 ann an àitichean far na Talmhainn.'
>
> 'Le sin, mu thrì 's trì-chairteal millean anns na nàbachdan Albannach?'
>
> 'Tha sin ceart. Trithead 's a h-ochd às a' cheud dhe na daoine. Chan eil an àireamh sin air a bhith cho àrd bhon 17mh linn.' (Eyre 2017, 119)
>
> ['[...] around four million people speak Gaelic now, the majority of them in communities [*nàbachdan*][18] here in Scotland, but there are about 20,000 of them in North America, too, and more than 150,000 in places beyond Earth.'
>
> 'So that's about three and a half million in Scottish communities?'

[18] "nàbachd" means roughly "neighborhood", but it's clear in the context of the novel that they mean communities larger than city neighborhoods (and, indeed, outside cities).

'That's right. Thirty-eight percent of the population. That number hasn't been so high since the 17th century.']

As references to Gaelic's present circumstances within the novel's framed narrative show, Eyre is far from unaware of the fraught language politics that surround Gaelic — what the sociolinguist Emily McEwan-Fujita has called a "death discourse" (2006, 280-282) surrounding Gaelic in the public sphere. This passage isn't, then, proof that Eyre is ignorant of or pretending not to notice contemporary language politics and the (in many ways) dire circumstances in which Gaelic is currently struggling to exist. Rather, he is rejecting them, refusing, like Tolkien's escaping Prisoner, to allow his imagination to be constrained by them.

By placing us, however temporarily, outside the confined space in which Gaelic-speakers are forced to operate, Eyre offers us the opportunity to look at our present with fresh eyes. *Cailèideascop* is a provocation, a challenge to those of us who are invested in Gaelic's future. Is this the future (however distant it may be) we want for Gaelic? And if so, what would we have to do to get there? Are we currently doing what we need to in order to make it happen? To borrow Mark Fisher's terminology, we might say that Eyre is addressing an "anglophone realism" (although *Cailèideascop* is not alone in the contemporary Gaelic scene in devoting attention to capitalist realism *per se*, as well). By "anglophone realism" I mean the pervasive sense that the dominance of English is inevitable, and that, like "[p]overty, famine and war" in capitalist societies (Fisher 2009, 16), the negative consequences associated with that dominance — most prominently language death, which after all really means the death of a language's speakers and the community or communities in which it is spoken — are perhaps regrettable but also unavoidable, and that to suggest they could be alleviated or eliminated outright is simply "naive utopianism" (16). By offering us a vision of a post-capitalist future where Gaelic is not only surviving but *thriving*,

where Sabhal Mòr Ostaig is part of a multilingual, interplanetary academic network and Gaelic songs can be heard on Callisto (Eyre 2017, 31), Eyre pushes us to think beyond both the pressures of language endangerment *and* the impulse to retreat into traditionalism and isolation seen in some older Gaelic science fiction (Shirley 1964, eg.).

If we zoom out slightly, we can see a connection here between Eyre, Tolkien's "escape", and the hallucinatory politics Unamuno identifies with the figure of Don Quijote. In Unamuno's Kierkegaard-inflected reading of Don Quijote as the "caballero de la locura" (1987b, 44), or "knight of madness", we find a valorization of madness or hallucination: Don Quijote not only *believes* in the absurd — like the Kierkegaardian "knight of faith" with whom Unamuno also identifies him (53) — but, in fact, succeeds in making it a *reality*, to varying degrees depending on the adventure in question and the onlookers around him. Radical change, Unamuno asserts, requires a radical, perhaps *insane* vision, and then the will to *spread* that vision:

> En cuanto una alucinación se hace colectiva, se hace popular, se hace social, deja de ser alucinación para convertirse en una realidad, en algo que está fuera de cada uno de los que la comparten. (38)
>
> [As soon as a hallucination becomes collective, becomes popular, becomes social, it ceases to be a hallucination and turns itself into a reality, something that is outside each one of those who share it.]

Unamuno's reading of the Quijote is focused (excessively, I would say) on the individual as a catalyst for change, but this *quijotización* is fundamentally *collective*. The "escapist" elements in works by Eyre and others offer us a chance not (or not only — it would be disingenuous to

completely deny the consoling function of genre fiction)[19] to flee from our responsibilities, but rather to return to the world we inhabit with fresh eyes and new visions that we can spread in the interest of creating a world where life can, finally, flourish (cf. Unamuno 1987b, 166).

To be clear: my argument is *not* that reading is itself a "radical" act, or that reading *alone* (no matter what particular reading practices we adopt) can or will change the world. Rather, I am saying that the sense of "defamiliarization" or "cognitive estrangement" or "escape" or "recovery" or whatever else we might want to call it that speculative fiction, in particular, produces, by temporarily altering our perception of the material conditions in which we are constrained to operate (for example, the enormous social, economic, and sometimes political pressures exerted against Gaelic communities by anglophone societies and their power structures), can both offer us visions of a future that are not limited to a (failing) politics of incremental reforms[20] and also, precisely by "defamiliarizing" our "actual situación política" [current political situation] (Unamuno 2009, 123), reveal the extent to which that situation and the material conditions that shape and are shaped by it are *contingent*, not inevitable. The fundamental basis of any radical politics, however materialist it may be, is both of these things: a sense that the limits of our present world are subject to (historical) change, and a vision — an idea, or even, perhaps, (a dangerous word, I realize) an ideal — of a better world that lies beyond those limits.

[19] Samatar's "Request for an Extension on the *Clarity*" (2017, 178-187), for example, considers this consoling function of reading in a science fiction context.

[20] "[C]uando oigo hablar de política futura y de reforma de la Constitución contesto que lo primero es desembarazarnos de la presente miseria, lo primero acabar con la tiranía y enjuiciarla para ajusticiarla" [When I hear talk of a future politics and of reforming the Constitution I answer that the first task is to relieve ourselves of the present misery, to first put an end to tyranny and sentence it to execution] (Unamuno 2009, 123). Unamuno's point is not that we should *ignore* the future, but that if we are always thinking *exclusively* in terms of policy changes, elections, constitutional reform procedures, we will never escape our *presente miseria*.

Postscript

My goal in this paper has been to begin to address a cluster of related issues surrounding the central question of *how reading works*. What is the relationship between theory and fiction? By extension, what is the relationship between readers and fictional entities and worlds? How does this relationship play out through the process of reading? How do we read one text *with* another text ("theoretical" or otherwise)? How might we turn our "theoretical" engagement with texts as we read (with) them into a basis for political action?

All of these broad questions are, I think, interrelated (at the very least, they all arise from my *own* practice of reading), and each of them raises further questions that push us (me) to think about the activity of literary criticism in different ways, not as an "objective" practice where I can position myself safely on the outside of the texts I read, but as one where I am deeply involved in the texts I read (even if there are parts of them that I can never access), with ethical and political obligations that emerge from that involvement rather than (or rather than *only*) preexisting it. Of course, I've only been able to scratch the surface of these issues here, but first steps are always the hardest. *'S e obair latha tòiseachadh*, as they say — beginning is a day's work.

With this beginning behind us, we can start to really dig in.

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On Spying, Reading, and Criticism: A Survey of Discourses

The critic's relation to the aesthetic object is mediated by her *techne*, criticism. Without fail, the critic subscribes to particular schools of thought in her interpretations of literature, or more broadly, art. Recently, Eve Sedgwick, Rita Felski, among many others, have analyzed how critical theory, in its more prominent Freudo-Marxist trends, has limited the polyphonic dimensions of aesthetic objects and muted other modes of productive, critical reading. Established narratological discourses have also been criticized by speculative theorists, such as Ridvan Askin, for their strictly mimetic and representational schemas which ignore the more nuanced aspects of how narrative functions. These recent theoretical turns focus on reevaluating the critic's approach to her object of critique, but fail to pay adequate attention to the ever-present relationality that is cultivated during the practice of criticism. Such an analysis would include questions such as: For whom does the critic write? Who is the 'reader' that corresponds to the critique's reading of a text? How do aesthetics evoke critique? Where does the bifurcation of theory and praxis lie for criticism? In an interview with George Stambolian, Félix Guattari anticipates this problem of criticism by describing his entanglement with Kafka: "It's not a question of method or of doctrine. It's simply that I've been living with Kafka for a very long time. I therefore tried [...] to put into our work the part of me that was, in a way, a becoming-Kafka. In a sense the book is a schizoanalysis of our relation to Kafka's work" (*Soft Subversions* 145). Guattari prioritizes the processual and complex relation between critic and text as the central node of critical analysis.

The muddled, intermediary space within which aesthetics and criticism are comingled requires a devoted analysis and extended application. Rather than using theory as a scalpel that makes precise incisions within texts to uncover infections and diseases, aesthetics can inform and mutate theory to produce collective expressions. In his later texts, Guattari affirms that aesthetics innovate more

productive interpretive tools than critical discourse: “If you want to analyze your unconscious, rather than going to Freud and Lacan, refer to the richest authors—Proust, Beckett, Joyce, Faulkner, Kafka or Artaud—because scarcely anything better has been done since. Interpret Freud, Jung and the others through Proust and not vice versa” (*Chaosmosis* 182). Through Guattari’s approach, which in proper schizoanalytic fashion will also be reconfigured, the ontological attunement and processes between aesthetics and criticism will be sketched. In a parallel vein, recent criticism on Joseph Conrad has reasserted that “[his] fictions are good to think with [...] they do not require any theory to be applied to them [rather], they hold up a theoretical mirror to us” (Lawtoo XV). It is Conrad’s political texts, in particular, which will serve as the nexus of theoretical production and inquiry; novels such as *Nostromo, The Secret Agent*, and *Under Western Eyes*, and the short stories from *A Set of Six* and *‘Twixt Land and Sea* are perhaps some of the most narratologically advanced and textually autonomous work in Conrad’s oeuvre. The overarching themes and textual embodiment of espionage and duplicity in these texts—complemented by complex and ambiguous narration—consistently evoke the figure and experience of the spy, which will be placed into dialogue with Felski’s revisiting the figure of the critic as detective. The spy, unlike the Freudian detective of moralistic methodologies, is inherently split, schized, in that every spy is at least a double agent—a *homo duplex*—that reconfigures herself and adapts an amoral “art of intelligence”; she is invisible, and melds into and becomes complicit with the Other (Steward & Newbury XX).

Conrad’s Long Shadow

The vast array of Conrad criticism from the past six decades highlights the unresolvable and productive ambiguity of Conradian prose. To reiterate Guattari, criticism has been living with Conrad for a very long time. More traditional and politically conservative readings of the novels written between 1900 and 1912 are challenged in the 1960s by critics Eloise Hay Knapp and Avrom

Fleischman. Knapp ripostes critics' claims of Conrad's distaste and strict moralization of politics by affirming that Conrad views the individual as an inherent component of a greater political mechanism, and by highlighting his "extraordinary dread of being caught in a fixed moral posture" (*The Political Novels of Joseph Conrad* 3; 216). She argues that the expatriated Pole's politics are equivocated through his fictions which, even through their more ironic commentary, betray moments of solidarity with more radical characters and concepts, which Fleischman also affirms. Knapp dismisses Gustav Morf's Freudian interpretation of Conrad's oedipal complex toward Apollo Korzeniowski, his father, and his revolutionary-mysticism, argued to appear as anti-revolutionary rhetoric and irony in Conrad's essays and political novels; rather, Knapp emphasizes the inherent philosophical, political, and psychological duplicity through which Conrad's fictions function. Fleischman further investigates the nuances of Conrad's politics and identity. Initially, his views were strongly Bourbonist—reflecting his uncle Tadeusz Bobrowski's conservatism—but steadily changed as he wrote through the 1900-1912 period. Conrad's depictions of the growth of organic communitites, which rely on the "rugged individualism" of the human subject, are the focal point of Fleischman's analysis (*Conrad's Politcs: Community and Anarchy in the Fiction of Joseph Conrad* 110). The interpersonal conflicts and accords in the community are foregrounded as the impetus of Conrad's political novels; for example, Nostromo's "relation of the individual ego to the collective identity of the people" of Sulaco and the ironic vision of the shattered, alienating community in *The Secret Agent* (Fleischman 173; Fleischman 188). Edward Said's *Joseph Conrad and the Fiction of the Autobiography*, reiterates the problem of the *homo duplex* and closely examines how Conrad reconstructed his identity through writing to integrate within the English community. As Said notes, "[w]riting and life were, for [Conrad], like journeys without maps, struggles to win over and then claim unknown ground", that is to say, experience and identity were intimately connected to and formed through his writing, and it is through his prose that Conrad not only expresses events and experiences, but also shapes the contours of being and becoming

someone else (82). On a more meta-critical note, Said mentions how "in the openness of the conscious mind [...] critic and writer meet to engage in the act of knowing and being aware of an experience", thereby sharing a molecular proximity through a shared engagement in textuality—his comment alludes to the relationality between text and critic (26).

A crucial commonality between Knapp, Fleischman, and Said is their refutation of psychoanalytic interpretations of Conrad's identity, correspondence, and fiction. They argue that psychoanalysis reduces the complexity of his work and tumultuous life. Their analyses align with Guattari's insistence on the tangible complexity of the production of subjectivity. While the above-mentioned critics approach Conrad's work through a more fluid and open inquiry, recent Conrad criticism relies on the application of strict theoretical frameworks.

The publication of Frederick Jameson's *Political Unconscious* in 1981 marked a turning point in literary criticism, the effects of which are still felt. Jameson's chapter, "Romance and Reification: Plot Construction and Ideological Closure in Joseph Conrad" exemplifies symptomatic reading, one of the dominant modes of criticism today. Analyzing Conrad's *Lord Jim*, Jameson identifies the text's stylistic oscillations between high literature and light-reading romance within which capitalist ideology is distilled into aesthetic representation: "the final consumable verbal commodity—the vision of the ship—the transformation of all these realities into style and the work of what we will call the impressionistic strategy of modernism whose function is to derealize the content and make it available for consumption on some purely aesthetic level" (202). The description of the ship's inner workings—the labourers in the boiler room toiling in the coal—seamlessly shifts into a romantic register of the ship at sea and obscures the ideological underpinnings of the text, "ultimately detectable only to the elaborate hermeneutic Geiger counters of the political unconscious and the ideology of form" (Jameson 202). Though Jameson's reading is compelling and innovative, it contains Conrad's text within the critic's mastercodes of ideology and capitalism thereby overlooking subtle threads that generate the

novel's complexity; for example, the microcosm of the ship is interpreted along lines of labour and space, flows of imports and exports, piracy, etc. rather than the singular experiences of displacement, alienation, Marlow's intimate and conflictual solidarity of Jim being 'one of us'. More recent criticism by Maurice Ebileeni and Anne Enderwitz attempts to address issues of non-representation, ontology, and lived experience in Conrad, but they respectively vet their interpretations through Lacanian and Freudian frameworks. Ebileeni examines how Conrad "[suggests] that narration of human experience is aimed at a hypothetical kernel that marks the threshold of the potential destruction of human consciousness and the (im)possibility of viewing experience objectively", which is made possible by an experimentation of divergent modes of subjectivity that break with the perceived stability of the nineteenth-century world view (*Conrad, Faulkner, and the Problem of Nonsense* 13). Rather than investigating the intensive node of non-representation through the existential proximity cultivated in the act of reading and interpreting, Ebileeni applies Lacan's notion of the unrepresentable Real that must be negotiated through the Symbolic. Similarly, Enderwitz uses the affective turn as her theoretical reference, only to contain it in the paradigm of Freudian melancholia (*Modernist Melancholia* 11). Enderwitz's melancholic-turned-affect theory emphasizes the non-linguistic and affective qualities of experience that language strives to understand, and therefore complete, through signification; this mirrors how the melancholic ego fixates on the lost love object and tries to complete itself again through the love object's psychic reincorporation through substitution – the non-representational is, once again, relegated to a fixed and structural understanding of representation and the unconscious. Ebileeni and Enderwitz provide productive analyses of the irreducible ambiguity of Conrad's prose, but in following dominant critical paradigms their creative interpretations are restricted by psychoanalytic frameworks that reduce Conrad's texts to symptoms and diagnoses.

Other contemporary critics approach Conrad without using strict, theoretical methodologies. Instead, they work within the parameters of the text and allow for the narrative to *in-form* their

methodological tools and concepts. John G. Peters's *Conrad and Impressionism* thoroughly explores how Conrad expresses and works through the problematics of perception and subjectivity. For Peters, Conrad's narratives cultivate a subjective proximity with readers through an "association of reader with character", which he identifies as "one of the primary goals of impressionist narrative" (110).1 Peters argues that "Conrad rejects moral and intellectual nihilism by focusing on his belief in the certainty of human subjectivity, and in fact employs the very source of the problem – human subjectivity itself – as its solution and in the process creates meaning for human existence" (5). The texts' uses of subjectivity nullify any moral stance as the spectrum of perspectives undermine any stable position. Conrad's rendering of subjectivity also problematizes Descartes's mind-body split; the former depicts that the "[s]ubject alters object, just as object alters subject", a reciprocal influence that also extends to experiences and spaces (Peters 18). Peters, however, focuses on the impressionistic mode of subjectivity, in that experience and perception are epistemologically limited by the self; he fails to address what Jacques Ranciere identifies as the ontological capacity of Conrad's narratives. Rejecting the analogies of impressionistic painting, Ranciere asserts that Conradian narratives embody "the impossibility of the picture coming to an end" ("Marlow's Lie" 38). The textures of description and experience that saturate his prose "[are] an active destruction of [their] verisimilitude, a revolution in the ontology of fiction, which eliminates the gap itself between the real and the dream and substitutes the temporality of coexistences for the order of possible chains", in other words, the narrative's details annul the narration's distant objectivism and equivocate the distinctions between reality and textuality—an intensive, ontological aura is actualized through the fiction's virtual potentiality of catalyzing the lived experiences it expresses (Ranciere 42). Conrad's narratives function within the

1 In this introduction, Peters notes that "since literary impressionists left behind no philosophical treatise and usually wrote little by way of helpful commentary concerning their works, I have generally had to reconstruct impressionist literary theory" (*Conrad and Impressionism* x). Though not expressly stated, Peters uses Conrad's fictions to guide and affirm his reconstruction of impressionist theory.

liminality of the "transmissible and the intransmissible", melding and fracturing language such that it functions within and without representation (Ranciere 44). In *Polish, Hybrid and Otherwise*, George Gasyna confirms Ranciere's claims by highlighting the fluid sense of reality, "underscored by an insistent autonomy of language", in Conrad's texts; this textual autonomy "[defies] both the narrators' and the readers' attempts at ordering, and more to the point, satisfactorily explicating the disparate social and political phenomena described" (13). Narrators', as well as readers', gazes are muddled by the processual intensity of the narrative that not only transmits an event or experience, but sustains its existential texture in the act of reading and through the relationality with the reader. In analyzing the self-sustaining poetics of *Nostromo*, Gasyna suggests that the text initiates "a theory of the novel elaborated concomitantly with the infolding of the plot, that is, as its architectonics are untangled by the reader or the critic" (211). It is through the productive tension between text and critic that the novel articulates a self-aware construction and functioning. Thus, the critic cannot effectively engage with the narrative in question without a pathic, ontological attunement to the text. Peters, Ranciere, and Gasyna collectively break with the dominant hermeneutics of paranoid reading and open Conrad's prose to auto-generative interpretations that reassemble theoretical frameworks to produce collective expressions with aesthetics.

Another notable critic who also identifies the inherent, theoretical potentialities of Conrad's texts is Nidesh Lawtoo. His recent book, *Conrad's Shadow*, provides this project with an invaluable model and foil. Lawtoo uses Conrad's concept of *homo duplex* as his point of departure in retooling the protean "heterogeneous field of 'mimetic theory'", under which he includes neuroscientific and psychological concepts from "psychic identification to affective contagion, hypnotic suggestion to entranced possessions, restricted mimesis to general mimesis, mimetic desire to mimetic pathos, mirror neurons to the mimetic unconscious" – a mutation of narratology into neurotology (XIV). Using Conrad's corpus to develop and apply the concept of mimetic plasticity—tracing how *homo duplex*

becomes *homo multiplex*—is commendable and compelling; it is a key example of how aesthetics can reconfigure theory. Furthermore, in his analysis of *The Secret Agent*, Lawtoo notes how its textual foregrounding of late nineteenth-century terrorism within our contemporary, referential reality post 9/11 generates "disturbing mimetic continuities that cut across discontinuities between fiction and reality", which is a symptom of the novel's hyper-simulated representations of media and terrorism retroacting "onto the real in order to generate fully embodied, mimetic, or […] hypermimetic effects" (295; 297). The relationality between the real and the textual is understood in terms of simulation and mimesis, which, at times, addresses the ontological characteristics of this dynamic. While Lawtoo's analysis provides applicable readings of narrative ontology and examples of aesthetico-theoretical entanglement, a number of his concepts prove problematic. For example, he suggests a double "diagnostic sense" of mimesis in Conrad, the "dark and pathological" versus the "luminous and therapeutic" (bad and good mimesis) which recalls the Manichean, moral structures of conservative Conrad criticism, albeit in a contemporary, transdisciplinary iteration (Lawtoo XX). From a disability studies perspective, this binary is problematic in how it diagnoses the "[penetration] of the boundaries of the ego", "schizophrenic reactions", and madness in negative and violent terms (Lawtoo XX). His steadfastness in mimetic *representation* also curtails lines of inquiry that treat the supervalent, existential textures of narrative that flit between non-representation and representation. Lawtoo's contribution to recent Conrad criticism is significant and it will be crucial in the development of this project's aesthetico-theoretical argument.

"The Fuzz, the Spy, the Thinker"

Contemporary Conrad criticism runs parallel to burgeoning theoretical reorientations within literary and cultural criticism. Capitalizing on this timeliness, this investigation will seek to coalesce arguments of the dominant, hermeneutic school and the Post-Critical movement, while engaging in a

meta-analysis of criticism through a thorough Conradian recalibration of schizoanalysis.2 Indeed, double agency—or a schized perception—will be key in this navigation between opposing, critical convictions. As an aside, criticism and academia have no shortage of figurative and literal spies: Julia Kristeva having been suspected to be a Bulgarian spy, the Cambridge Five (and their rumoured accomplice, Ludwig Wittgenstein), and the recently declassified *France: Defection of the Leftist Intellectuals* from the Central Intelligence Agency all point toward an understood affinity between these two modes of 'intelligence' work. The critic-as-spy will provide a productive meta-modelling of the critical imaginary, as recent publications note the effectiveness of her centaur-like thinking and schized ontology (Sesardić 82). This spy figure is a foil to the detective, the deadened, analogical twin of the critic (and psychoanalyst), whose tools of detection work too prescriptively by adhering to the code of law. In the schema of Freudo-Marxist hermeneutics, Felski revisits this old analogy that still haunts critical methodologies.

In her most recent publications, Felski identifies the shortcomings of suspicion-based hermeneutics. The impetus of her work is found in the criticism of Sharon Marcus, Heather Love, and Ridvan Askin (among many others), all of whom contest dominant modes of criticism. In the chapter, "An Inspector Calls", Felski evokes the cliché of critic-as-detective and highlights the problematic parallels that stifle literary criticism (86). Critics, like detectives, "[have] the intent of tracking down the guilty party", though their procedure is adjusted in that they already know the identity of the culprit—capitalist, colonial, or racist ideologies, symptoms of the oedipal complex, melancholia, the mirror stage, etc.—and reconstruct the crime through the text's complicity in the suspected structures; "[i]nterpretation becomes a moral as well as a political exercise in the detection of guilt" wherein the text is guilty of obscuring evidence, facts, and incriminating lines of narrative complicity (Felski 86;

2 I use Postcritique as a general term for methodologies that diverge from 'symptomatic reading,' i.e surface reading, literal reading, critical description, New Formalism, etc.

Felski 94). In lieu of the moralizing, paranoiac gaze, Felski advocates a more sympathetic approach through a phenomenological exploration of reading. In *Uses of Literature*, she argues that through a balanced approach to "cognitive and affective aspects of aesthetic response" ubiquitous experiences of reading are compatible with literary critique (Felski 15-16). By attuning herself to the nuances of the identification, aesthetic enchantment, and affective shock experienced while reading, the critic sees through the clouds of suspicion and sketches the "micro-aesthetics" of the text (Felski 133). Felski's aesthetico-phenomenological approach refocuses on the aesthetic object's existential textures and examines the critic's collective enunciations through it. The phenomenological emphasis disentangles criticism from paranoiac tendencies, but adheres to a dissimulated distancing prone to phenomenological investigations.3 An ontological understanding of the relation between self and text, criticism and aesthetics, implies an existentially-charged inquiry that adheres to their experienced and sensed entanglement.

In objection to the orthodox schools of narratology, Ridvan Askin's *Narrative Becoming* shifts its critical optics to the problems of non-representation and ontology in narrative. Askin uses Deleuze's notion of *becoming* as his theoretical foundation; per academia's systematic dismissal of Guattari, the schizoanalyst is only mentioned in citations for *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* despite his extensive development of the concept of *becoming* in his texts prior (*The Machinic Unconscious*) and after (*The Three Ecologies*, Schizoanalytic *Cartographies, Chaosmosis*) *Thousand Plateaus*. Rather than fixating on the epistemological dimensions of narrative—representation, language, consciousness—Askin's differential narratology "pushes narrative theory […] to where narrative ceases merely to be a form of human access to things (while also being that) and becomes expressive of being as such" (5). This notion stems from Deleuze and Guattari's *percept*, the notion that "[a]ffects are no longer feelings or

3 In his correspondence with Roman Ingarden, Witkacy quips that, for him, Edmund Husserl exists only as a pair of glasses and a beard—that is to say, phenomenology brackets sensed being (or ontology) as a correlate to consciousness (Michalski 91)

affections; they go beyond the strength of those who undergo them. Sensations, percepts, and affects are beings whose validity lies in themselves [...] The work of art is a being of sensation and nothing else: it exists in itself" (*What is Philosophy?* 164). Narrative's autonomy, therefore, is actualized through an ontology which Gary Genosko describes as a pre-personal and glischroidic affective consistency that molecularly channels a subject's flux of becoming, and yet, remains ungrounded and collective (*Reinvention of Social Practices* 151). Askin describes this abstract, collective process as the immanent plane of the virtual and actual within narrative, "with virtuality explicating (unfolding) actuality and actuality implicating (infolding) virtuality." (*Narrative Becoming* 21). The in-un-folding is facilitated by intensity, an enunciation of the innate potentiality of the narrative made perceptible through narrative mechanics "from the employment of inconsistent narrative voices to the mixing of incongruent narrative levels, from the projection of impossible perspectives to the interweaving of incompossible storylines", including disjointed chronology and *style indirect libre* (Askin 22). These narrative mechanics "fracture and break up, and thereby render inconsistent, their representational surface", expressing the aesthetic autonomy of the text; differential narratology, therefore, "is sensitive to the inner workings of narratives while being ever attentive to the fact that these inner workings never comprise a mere closed interiority since it is precisely this interiority which comes from elsewhere" (Askin 22; 24). To foster such sensitivity to narrative's processual autonomy requires the critic to attune herself to the narrative's *becoming*, a process Guattari calls his *becoming*-Kafka. Askin's rejection of subjectivity's role in narrative forms an object-oriented argument; he betrays his neglect of Guattari's work by failing to address how subjectivity and the unconscious are inherently machinic, up-taking an influx of non-anthropomorphic components, experiences, and contexts thereby rendering the production of subjectivity a processual assemblage that is irreducible to subject-object binarism (*Machinic Unconscious* 17). Overlooking the nuances of subjectivity's production nullifies the analysis of human implications and complicities in affective, pre-personal dimensions. Critical interpretations of

spying and the spy suggest that such an attunement to details, discontinuities at the heart of continuities, and paradoxical logic are possible by reading through the spyglass.

In *Policing Literary Theory*, spying and policing are explored in a theoretical register. Călin-Andrei Mihăilescu's "Le Cercle Carré: On Spying and Reading" traces the ever-shifting contours of spy logic. In the act of spying, the self becomes diffuse: "the 'I' in 'I spy' is cancelled by the predicate 'spy,' and consequently the predicate is freed from the bonds of assumed agency, thus turning either universal or empty" (47). Unlike the detective's 'I detect', which relies on the subject's moralizing agency and logic (as Felski argues), 'I spy' causes the self to instantaneously oscillate between cosmic and null magnitudes, its logic in a processual tension that morphs upon given contingencies or potential certainties. Mihăilescu claims that in the late 19th Century, spy-logic permeates literature primarily through Charles Baudelaire's poetry and criticism, which establishes "an immanent self-regulating system, whose high-end products require insistent readings that depend no more on transcendental reference points", consequently engendering a mode of reading that "throws the reader in the crossfire between herself and the text" (51; 52). The initial impetus of Modernism cultivated an aesthetics that implicates readers within an auto-reflective process of producing and disassembling meaning, which requires a plastic hermeneutics. Conrad, who for a time lived on a steady diet of Baudelaire, Gustave Flaubert, and Guy De Maupassant, also developed a similar aesthetic, one that eventually depicts, embodies, and instigates the experience of spying. In such a readerly entanglement, the critic functions best as a spy; she becomes invisible, diffuse, saturated by the text, and yet, she also permeates the text as she notices and experiences its various details, mechanics, and sensations. The critic's prescriptive gaze is thus inverted and refracted through a shared, ontological lens—or spyglass—that accordingly (un)focuses and refocuses, becomes convex or concave, through the act of reading, rereading, and interpretation.

The oscillation between the transparent and all-pervading subject can also be transcribed into a broader, cultural analysis. John Zilcosky thinks through Franz Kafka's *The Trial* and *The Castle* to analyze our contemporary surveillance state. Mass surveillance technologies make it so "the panoptic sovereign reappears where he should not, in modern democracies, and thus creates a sense of madness[…] the subject develops a paranoid perspective in which his very subject-ness – his 'ego' or 'I' – is put into question"; since this collected data is accessible through an internet connection, "the sovereign is everyone; everyone has data about you" (Zilcosky 171; 173). This penetrating gaze that accesses intimate and ontological proximities is examined in Kafka's pervasive use of *style indirect libre* which has the third-person narrator's vision permeated by Josef K.'s perspective: "neither an experiential first-person nor an implied narrative 'I' – or, better, we have an implied narrative 'I,' but this 'I' leaves no trace of itself beyond being the figure who calls Josef K. 'he.'" (Zilcosky 175). Josef K.'s paranoia of his possible crime quietly grows, because it is always ambiguous, molecular, and potential through the ever-proliferating documentation about its general specifics. The bureaucrat-paranoiac develops an intimacy with the greater, sovereign 'I' of the law, or superego, exemplified by the blending of 'Is' in the *style indirect libre* which denotes a radical transparency of the self—all the information is available, but there is too much to adequately process, litigate, and convict the culpable and tangible 'I'. Though Sigmund Freud's tripartite *Ich-Es-Uberich* (ego-id-superego) structure is used in the reading, it is Kafka's narrative mechanisms and themes that are saliently re-expressed and applied as a critical interpretation of the contemporary surveillance state. The societal interpretation that everyone is a sovereign-subject who is on the verge of a two-fold collapse, through self-reflective paranoia and overflow of the data-gathering gaze, is aptly accurate in the wake of ever-newer forms of intelligence and surveillance work—Cambridge Analytica and Facebook, Snowden's NSA revelations, the Patriot Act of 2001 and Canada's 2015 response with Bill C-51, etc. The modern subject's ontology is a mutation of the spy's: she is invisible among the petabytes of data created and collected daily, and

yet, she permeates it with her molecular presence and sovereign gaze; her digital presence can proliferate as she collects, consumes, and produces data—for example a social media influencer, a widely-shared post (#metoo), or a well-crafted malware program (Genosko 20). But as Zilcosky notes, there is a sense of madness within this being-in-the-world, an ontological schiz that leaves the human subject split(ting) and in-between the Real and the Digital, the Actual and the Virtual. It is through Guattari's affinity with madness and his mutable theories of schizoanalysis that these aesthetico-ontological issues will be addressed and developed.

"I Am an Idea-Thief"

Guattari's theoretical texts and his clinical praxis at Jean Oury's psychiatric clinic, La Borde, find their grounding in the phenomenological traditions of psychiatrist Eugene Minkowski and Jean-Paul Sartre, and through a parasitic deconstruction of psychoanalysis. Minkowski establishes the discourse of psychiatric phenomenology in 1933 with *Lived Time*, in which he expands phenomenology through the perceptions of different psychopathologies. Minkowski's proximity to spatio-temporal experiences of the psyche's extreme states, such as melancholia, hypermania, and schizophrenia, and his extensive analyses thereof, result in theorizations of how affect, sympathy, and empathy "[touch] upon the most profound and vibrant chords of our being" and cause a viscous, transferred lived experience—a stickiness of affect (252). This leads Minkowski to affirm that upon closer examination of these states of mind "we will not find a 'diseased person' but a 'person who is different'"; he also states, "I am not completely sure what is meant by this so-called normal man" (248; 293). Through his observations, Minkowski dismantles psychiatric and psychoanalytic convictions of normalcy and the cure, laying the foundational path of an affective inquiry into schizo-subjectivity and its processes—concepts Guattari will develop with Deleuze in *Anti-Oedipus*.

Germinations of schizoanalysis are also found throughout Sartre's philosophical exploration of being's connection to nothingness. Sartre examines how the individualizing limitation of being denotes the potentiality of non-being and asserts that "[n]othingness lies coiled in the heart of being—like a worm"; nothingness also acts as an immanent becoming of the self, as Sartre states, "I am the self which I will be, in the mode of not being it (in the future of possibilities)" (*Being and Nothingness* 8; 21; 32). The nothingness of being and consciousness creates an uneasiness that is mitigated by bad faith, patterns of consciousness and life that perpetuate a falsehood which hides the truth from consciousness itself: a conscious lie that is told to oneself and cynically (continuously) reaffirmed—the self is simultaneously the deceived and the liar. Psychoanalysis is argued to be a substitute for bad faith, it is a negotiation with the lie: "Finding the Other in ourselves through this lie (the id). The mediator between ego and id, the idea of a lie without a liar" (Sartre 51). It acts as a censor of existential intuitions and of the psychic whole. In the bad faith of psychoanalysis, the body is also reduced to an addendum of the mechanistic theory of drives; Sartre, however, analyzes the body as "the engaged contingent of being-for-itself [that] enables the radical nihilation of being-for-itself by placing it in the world" (309). Though the object-subject duality is adhered to, there are moments in which the groundwork of the Body without Organs (BwO) is seen: "it is always the body-which-points-beyond-itself […] the depth of my body's being as an object in the midst of the world is constantly in flight and escapes me, the perpetual outside of my most intimate inside" (351). The body is described to be constantly slipping away in a line of flight—it does not necessarily escape the self, but inverts and exposes it to the different becomings of the world and Other. Sartre's existential philosophy provides crucial insights to the development of several Guattarian concepts, most notably lack as production, the immanent plane of becoming, the BwO, and the parasitic disassembling of psychoanalysis.

Beyond philosophy, the autofiction *Le schizo et les langues* by Louis Wolfson, originally published in 1970 with an introduction by Deleuze, provides a linguistic demonstration of what

Guattari will call the schizo-process. The protagonist, a language student diagnosed with schizophrenia, cannot bear hearing, reading, or speaking his mother tongue, English, and so engages in a tireless process of converting each English phoneme into either French, German, Polish, Russian, Yiddish, or Hebrew equivalents; the meticulous, plastic logic of matching similar sounding phonemes constructs non-syntactical strings of words in different languages, resulting in nonsensical phrases. In addition, the student's disgust of ingesting food is eased by converting the different foodstuffs he consumes into their molecular structures and atomic chains, reapplying the schizo-process to his physical nourishment. Language no longer signifies in this story, neither are the words taken as signs of objects or things by the student, rather words produce a certain force of experience upon being melded together, cleaved apart, fractured, and shattered through this processual story: "tous les mots racontent une histoire d'amour, mais cette histoire n'est plus ni désignée ni signifiée par les mots. Elle est prise dans les mots, indésignable, insignifiable (Deleuze 17; 23). The text's language does not signify, rather the story is breathed into the words, an a-signifying affect that stutters through the precise stumbling of the narration. Wolfson writes in his non-native French and often makes errors in grammar and punctuation, which further embodies a syntactical upending of ordered logic and sense. Deleuze notes that the conversions into foreign tongues and molecular compounds are not attempts to mitigate lack to achieve completion—a melancholic reflex—but rather function as components and parts, simultaneously composing and decomposing a multiplicity, or assemblage; in other words, the nonsensical sentences' components falter and function in their respective domains of syntax, and yet, through the singular mode the language student uses them, they work according to his logic even as they make no sense beyond it, and elicit yet another interpretation from the reader, or critic. Already collaborating on *Anti-Oedipus* (1972) by 1970, Deleuze's introduction betrays itself to be a proto-schizoanalytic reading.

The scope of Guattari's work since 1972 ranges from studies and theories on ecology to architecture, from media, communications, and informatics to dance, theatre, and narcotics. Within the limitations of this exercise only a brief survey of his corpus, and its critical offshoots, will be possible. Perhaps the most pervasive notions found in the early and middle texts of Guattari (and Co.) are desire and machines. Desire is never conceived as deriving from lack, but a constant process of production, or anti-production, and machines function in, through, and with desire—desiring machines. Machines are components or parts of various magnitudes plugged into the real, always parts of other parts *ad infinitum*, and desire "disconnects, changes, modifies, organizes other forms, and then abandons them", it is an immanent catalyst (*Machinic Unconscious* 156). These processual components compose and recompose multiplicities through a given form and a giving of form; more importantly, the subject is the residue of this molecular complexity of concrete and abstract components (*Anti-Oedipus* 17). It is in this sense that Guattari understands the unconscious as machinic, a process and uptake of different affects, semiotics, and environments, always geared toward the future. Deleuze and Guattari use the schizophrenic on a walk through nature as an example:

> "Everything is a machine. Celestial machines, the stars or rainbows in the sky, alpine machines — all of them connected to those of his body […] To be a chlorophyll- or a photosynthesis-machine, or at least slip his body into such machines as one part among the others […] He does not live nature as nature, but as a process of production. There is no such thing as either man or nature now, only a process that produces the one within the other and couples the machines together (*Anti-Oedipus* 2).

The subject is not fixed, but constantly linking with, plugging into, constructing (being constructed by) different machines of different orders: socio-political dynamics and realities, aesthetic realms, the environmental sphere, etc.4 Antonin Artaud's figure from *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu*, the

4 This intensive re-calibration to the sensitivities of our pluralistic existence is called the schizo-process.

Body without Organs, is retooled to describe this immanent plane of "assembling elements, things, plants, animals, tools, people, powers, and fragments of all of these"; it is not a concept or state of being, it is "a set of practices" that never attain finality, for the BwO is a limit that always changes consistency according to the immanence of desire (*Thousand Plateaus* 161; 150; 154). Discursive language overcodes and congeals the productivity and transversal linkages of these ever-shifting components and multiplicities, thereby stunting the residual subject by fixing it to vetted paradigms of signs and meaning. This controlled language is reinforced by faciality, the dominant mode of semiology, a figuration of the human face that is "focalized in a black hole, simultaneously a vanishing point and a centralizing point, a point of arborescence and closure whose translation engenders the illusion of a homogeneous world of signification" (*Machinic Unconscious* 87). Dominant signifying redundancies, enhanced by socio-political norms that orbit the all-too-human face, capture and reroute potentialities of radically creative and subversive instances of semiology and being back into accepted, often capitalist, paradigms of logic.

Despite its overcoding, language still possesses the potentiality to rupture itself from the imposed strictures of redundant modes of being, expression, and semiotics. In *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, Deleuze and Guattari argue that authors' uses of language can deterritorialize it from stagnant moorings and "make it vibrate with a new intensity" that subverts "all symbolic or even significant or simply signifying usages of [language]" (16; 19). They give the example of Kafka, a Jewish, Czech "machine-man", who uses the major language of German, but whose writing causes it to vibrate at radically different frequencies that produce becomings-animal, becomings-inhuman through supervalent, a-signifying registers—a minorization of language (Deleuze and Guattari 7). This phenomenon is not singular to Kafka's work, but present in a wide range of literature—and aesthetics more generally—that exhibits a reassembling of language's discursive coordinates and actualizes its potentiality through an intensive production of sense, affect, and experience. Conrad's minorization of

English can be seen through his plastic identity as a Polish-expatriate/naturalized British machine-subject which displaces language from its standard usages; as a corollary, his prose processually *becomes* through ontological frequencies shared and accordingly retuned by readers. It is Guattari's theoretical and pragmatic focus on the immanent, molecular relations and interactions of multiplicities within and without the text that make his views applicable to a theorization of critical attunement and proximity to aesthetics (*Thousand Plateaus* 4). An approach to the relationality and production of subjecitivities through the muddled intermingling—the given and giving of form—between theory, aesthetics, and writing requires the specialized, technical tools of Guattarian theory to produce a meta-modelling of the relation between art and criticism. Guattari argued that theory should in itself strive to be a minor language that fractures the doxa of language and philosophy, "singularly [intervening] on a body that is itself given new or different attributes, a body shifted, reshaped, disrupted or even defamiliarized" (Porter 19). In this sense, "the only way to remain faithful to a practice like [Guattari's] is to appropriate it and thoroughly transform it" before it becomes instated as a major language; thus, by realigning schizoanalysis through different ontological and theoretical problems it reassembles and *becomes* enunciated through another aesthetics and critic (Holmes 109). Guattarian theory's ability to betray itself, to become its own double agent through an autopoiesis that turns the outside in, makes it an apt theoretical basis for the critic-as-spy.

The plasticity of ontology, or self, and the contours of empathetic *becoming* have been recently explored by a number of critics. Catherine Malabou's *The Ontology of the Accident* explores the concept of destructive plasticity, a present that comes from no past, "modes of being without genealogy that have nothing to do with the wholly other found in the mystical ethics of the twentieth century" (3). In addition to Antonio Damasio's digestible neuroscientific observations, Malabou examines Spinoza's philosophy of the singular substance, which refutes Descartes's mind-body duality, and its applications to understanding how affect can radically reform being. In Spinoza, "there is in fact a recognition of an

ontological plasticity that is both positive—the plasticity of the affects—and negative—the absolute modification of the mode, the production of another existence unrelated to the previous existence" (37). The negative aspect of plasticity relates to the scolium of proposition XXXIX of *Ethics* that describes the complete transformation of an individual's character after suffering from an illness, a loss, or an accident—dying before being dead.5 Malabou argues that the sudden collapse of order and sense during and after the moment of the accident causes a "withdrawal that takes form" in a being-as-such wholly devoid of reference to the prior coordinates of self, time, and space (*Ontology of the Accident* 69). Destructive plasticity suggests that "being itself consists perhaps of nothing but a series of accidents" that dismantle and disfigure the concepts of essence and sense—a plurality of immanent molecular events, interactions, and linkages that reconfigure the production of the subject (Malabou 91). Malabou's main points of reference are the irreversible instances of brain damage and degenerative, neurological diseases which produce radically different forms of self and ontology. While she affirms the creative potentialities for philosophy with such morbid concepts, they are ultimately conceived of in negative terms.

Within the realm of illness and critical theory, Rita Charon M.D argues that narrative is a crucial component of medical practice for the attunement to others' sense of being. Charon affirms Askin, Ranciere, and Guattari's critical insights by asserting narrative's inherent ontology: "As a living thing, narrative has many dimensions and powers" (*Narrative Medicine* 39). She argues that "singularity blends into intersubjectivity" through the acts of reading, writing, and sharing narratives, which cultivates "a mutual creation of identity" between text and self (*Narrative Medicine* 60). At her medical practice and Columbia Medical School's program in Narrative Medicine, Charon's methods based on literary theory and narrative gave tangible, psychological results in the form of improving levels of

5 It is important to note that Spinoza also provides the philosophical foundation for many Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts; in *Thousand Plateaus*, they state "[a]fter all, is not Spinoza's Ethics the great book of the BwO?" referencing its treatment of the immanence of the primary substance and desire (153).

empathy in medical students who used critical, narrative approaches with patients (*Narrative Medicine* 174). Such results point to the innate capacity within the practice of literary critique to channel a textual attunement through a pathic empathy. Jacek Dukaj's chapter in *Conradology*, "Live Me", considers Conrad's aesthetics of lived experience through the notion of empathy as an affective and bodily experience; the word's etymology in ancient Greek, εμπάθεια, which means physical affection, is compared to the German, *Einfuhlung*, or 'in-feeling' (172; 181).6 Empathy is pathic, in that it occurs "entirely outside of [one's] control or awareness", the affect intervenes suddenly within the self, and in turn the self finds itself within the affect (Dukaj 181). It functions as a subtle permeation that facilitates an inversion and emptying of self into another mode of being. Charon and Dukaj's respective examinations of empathy in narrative provide the applicable term of pathic empathy to this project, as a re-framing of Deleuze, Guattari, and Malabou's respective, though related, focuses on mental 'illnesses', neurological injuries, or diseases. Despite the latters' well-intended and creative reinterpretations of schizophrenia, brain damage, and even Alzheimers, there is a risk of romanticizing the diagnostic labels and trivializing the conditions of certain persons. Pathic empathy could become a term of registering the unstable states of being that are labelled by diagnoses, the catalyst necessary to spy-into other modes of experience wherein the 'I' is rendered empty and the affective realities of others *in-form* a shared ontology.

Disability theory and aesthetics further develop notions of the arbitrary diagnosis and empathetic modes of bodily reading. Tobin Siebers's *Disability Aesthetics* argues that the 'disabled' body and mind play important roles in the advent of modern art movements. Rather than reducing the experiences and thoughts of the 'disabled' subject to variations and examples of human deviancy and inferiority, art channels them into novel modes of expression that subvert accepted paradigms of aesthetics and beauty. As a result, the definition of normalcy is destabilized and becomes arbitrary—

6 Though, in modern Greek, εμπάθεια means prejudice, malevolence, malice, and hatred.

along with certain diagnostic labels. Echoing Charon and Dukaj, Siebers argues that experiencing and engaging such art teaches one to read again and "to acquire a new use of the body"; he goes on to say, to read "is to recast the body image […] [words] stand still, producing a seizure of meaning, interrupting the ordinary transparency of the page, and exposing the materiality of language" (*Disability Aesthetics* 124). Readerly perception cannot be reduced to conscious perceiving or conceived through a Husserlian reduction, or bracketing, rather it instigates a wholistic attunement. Through this reading reorientation, the body becomes implicated in the shifts of affect, subjectivity, and experience. Language recalibrates itself and causes the border between textuality and reality to become porous. Sieber channels the Deleuzo-Guattarian concept of *becoming* through reading, in that these ontological proximities to other bodies, experiences, and "'intensities', [affirm] the capacity and power of bodies to do new things" and achieve a "certain ethical resonance" between self and aesthetics (Porter 22; 23). Max Van Manen's methodology to researching lived experience reiterates that a text has its own modalities of lived space, lived body, lived time, and lived relation that "can be differentiated, but not separated" from the act of reading (*Researching Lived Experience* 105). This is not to say that literature produces the effect of a hallucination, rather it intensely hails the reader and elicits a liminality that can disorient the reader momentarily—this is particularly true of the critic, whose relation to the text is of a higher degree of intensity. Re-focusing Malabou, Deleuze, and Guattari's views of mental 'otherness' through a non-diagnostic, positive framework enables a less reductive practice and understanding of divergent modes of expression and generates a productive ambiguity of sanity. In this sense, the rejection of textual diagnoses of symptomatic reading can generate a corollary, quotidian praxis that addresses social-justice and political issues surrounding psychopathologies.

The Madman and the Englishman

Conrad critics have also noted the equivocation of sense and nonsense in the writer's fictions. Through the depictions of imperialist brutality and absurdity, Eurocentric logic is shown to be inherently flawed when followed through in extremis. In Conrad's fictions, the defiant individual struggles to exist in the senseless, socio-political mechanism, which marks her as mad for defying the norm; she must also psychically grapple with the indifference of the universe that arbitrarily knits her into existence and then "knits [her] out" (*Life and Letters* 216). In *Motywy szaleństwa w twórczości Witkacego i Konrada*, Marta Skwara affirms that madness is a pervasive thread in Conrad's novels and argues that they interpret the world through a coaxed madman's perspective (7). Indeed, Conradian fiction often depicts experiences of madness, and not necessarily through the negative lens of pathology as Lawtoo claims. Skwara compares Conrad's uses of madness with that of Polish writer Stanisław Witkiewicz, or Witkacy, noting how the latter redeploys the former's critique of the illusion of healthy, Eurocentric reason by using literary and popular stereotypes of the madman to redirect the characterization of madness onto the 'sane' masses, or the audiences of his theatre pieces (*Motywy szaleństwa* 190; 234). For example, mass obsession with technology and mechanization inspire Witkacy to use the train as the Modern ship of fools (Skwara 220). Both writers demask the arbitrary line between sanity and insanity, uncovering a potent node of creation within that ambiguity (Skwara 255). While Skwara's comparisons are a much-needed addendum to Daniel Gerould's brief notes on Conrad's influence in Witkacy's work, her interpretations of Conrad's texts neglect their inner tension and ambiguity; for example, she reduces Winnie to the crazed woman archetype and neglects how the structures of bourgeois familialism, capitalist survivalism, and the stagnant space of the home inflict her with psychic violence (184). Skwara's argument provides thorough thematic comparisons of Conrad and Witkacy's prose, though she overlooks a nuanced theoretico-philosophical affinity in the two writers' approaches to literature's function.

Witkacy's prose and theory have recently begun to gather more critical appreciation. The Polish, painter, photographer, dramaturge, writer, and philosopher composed theoretical essays on aesthetics while also practising the arts about which he theorized. Michał Markowski affirms that Witkacy was above all a theorist, as his literature became an expression of his philosophies (*Polska literatura nowoczesna* 285*)*. In light of Gasyna, Lawtoo, Peters, and Richard Ambrosini's respective arguments that Conrad's fictions express their own theories of aesthetics and philosophy, Witkacy further develops the Conradian process of aesthetico-theorization (*Polish Hybrid and Otherwise* 211; *Conrad's Shadow* XV; *Conrad and Impressionism* 29; *Conrad's Fiction as Critical Discourse* 11). Witkacy became an active component of interwar continental philosophy, often meeting and keeping correspondence with Polish and German philosophers such as Roman Ingarden, Hans Cornelius, and Edmund Husserl (Michalski 33). He opposed the dominant phenomenological school with a radical redefinition of ontology. For Witkacy, psycho-physical introspection is the primary sense that the subject registers when sensing any phenomenon; this introspection is, in fact, a vector that comes from without, given that touch and sense are dependent on a permeable, double barrier between inside / outside—this becomes the base of the Witkacy's pan-psychicism (Dombrowski 162). Consciousness is immanent rather than transcendent, entwined with the body's metaphysics that melt it into that which is perceived, sensed, and experienced, like ice cubes in water (Michalski 100).

Witkacy's notions on ontology are elaborations of his theatre-oriented Theory of Pure Form, which anticipated Artaud's theatre of cruelty; a genealogical line extends from Witkacy to Guattari's schizoanalytic formulations of *becoming*, the Body without Organs, and the ethico-aesthetic paradigm (Kiebuzinska 59).7 Pure Form is most thoroughly illustrated in Witkacy's play *The Pragmatists*, which

7 It is interesting to note that while Deleuze wrote about Witold Gombrowicz as one of the major Modern writers, Guattari became critically invested in Witkacy's aesthetics; these respective critical affinities demonstrate the Deleuze – Guattari binary that remaps itself onto the Gombrowicz – Witkacy binary, highlighting the institutional preference of the major philosopher and writer which systematically neglects the philosophical and literary contributions of the schizoanalyst and polymath (Ziarek 6).

evacuates narrative and linguistic cohesion through a "nonrepresentational dramaturgy" that forces the audiences to grapple with the performers miming, dancing, screeching, and acting out "the dilemma of existence" (Gerould 65; 66). The events that transpire during the play float within a timeless and spaceless expression of "the hypercomplexity of existence [gaining] a more viscous consistency" through which the viewer feels the chaos of existence on her skin ("Refrain and the Machinic-Feminine in Witkiewicz's *The Pragmatists*" 245; Markowski 329). Though Witkacy argues that this reorientation of the viewer's existential parameters is solely applicable to theatre and plastic arts, the ontological dimensions of literature, as argued by critics above, suggest that life and literature are also intimately entwined in a mutual becoming. Literature functions through a constructionality which enables its aesthetics to produce the experience of metaphysics via an existential provocation (Markowski 317; 369). Thus, representation and transmission are not the inherent functions of literature, rather it has a mediator function between philosophy and existence that implicates the reader in its metaphysical exploration of the secret of existence. The visceral prose of Witkacy's novels sweeps up the reader into its narrative flux.

Insatiability is the most exemplary novel of this process. The novel intervenes at the moment of Genezip's consciousness becoming self-aware upon his initiation into society and, more broadly, the metaphysical crisis of existence. Witkacy channels the instability, and insatiability, of consciousness reckoning itself with bare existence—the novel is full of narratorial interjections, philosophical digressions, and *style indirect libre* that equivocate delineations between narrator, characters, time-space, and the reader. The future reverberates into the present of the narrative, upending all certainty in it. Genezip's nervous musings on existence slide along the narrative's immanent plane, implicating the future and intrusive voices that cut off his monologue and fracture him: "Hence his life's mess. And why? If it was all going to end in... more on that subject later. Only yesterday his recent boyhood had stood out pristinely, as something alive, forever in a state of becoming. Its division into infinitesimally

small parts precluded epochs in spite of epoch-making events (like, ostensibly, those happening at present)" (*Insatiability* 49). The future in-folds into immanent experience, simultaneously potentializing and "obliterating the known present" (Gerould 296). By disassembling reality's facade into a complex knotting of time, space, and consciousnesses, Witkacy renders reading a visceral experience that implicates the reader through a disorientation of subjectivity. Gerould describes how the inefficiency of language in the narrative "emphasizes the discrepancy between words and experience, letting the novel hang in the air between the two and play itself out in the void"; the reader, too, finds herself within this liminal textuality and cannot solely rely on *logos*, but must let herself become existnetially complicit in and through the narrative to engage with it (304). In this investigation, Witkacy's novel will function as a model of how aesthetics express theory—it will confirm the Conradian development of an autopoetic theory of the novel.

During the 1900-1912 period, Conrad arguably published his most innovative and experimental novels and short stories. The layers of narrative (re)framing, the sudden interweaving of different strands of time and space within a given scene, and a *style indirect libre* that continuously equivocates detached narration, all exemplify a dynamic textuality that implicates the reader within its existential topographies and textures. Conrad's thematics of espionage, political intrigue, and revolution are timely both in the context of pre-war Europe and the contemporary geopolitical conundrum of proxy conflicts. Lawtoo's comment on *The Secret Agent* is applicable to most of Conrad's political novels: "a sense of the timeliness of this tale was triggered in the last decades of the twentieth century by the very mass media Conrad denounces within the text for being complicit with, rather than subversive of, the contagious logic of terrorism" (295). Ted Kaczynski, the Unabomber, appropriated the alias of 'Conrad' and used *The Secret Agent* as a source of demented inspiration, leading to the FBI's close study of the novel to understand their anarcho-terrorist suspect; after the September 11 terrorist attacks, the novel became "one of the three works of literature most frequently cited in the American media" (Schulevitz)

and was hailed as "the classic novel for the post-9/11 age" (Reiss). The plot of *The Secret Agent* orbits a kernel of non-representation: the bomb's explosion and Stevie's death. Throughout the novel, the event is indirectly described by newspapers, first responders, other fellow conspirators, and family members, but it is never treated directly by the narration—language fails to represent and capture the ephemeral moment. *The Secret Agent* seemingly defies Conrad's literary credo, found in the preface to *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, that the creative task of the writer "is, before all, to make you *see*!"; however, the novel's functionality makes the reader complicit by seeing through the spyglass (7 original emphasis). Refracted details and perspectives of the event are relayed sporadically and diffuse the explosion throughout the plot, its spatial expansion through the park embodied through the narrative's unfurling. A double agency functions through this oscillation between textuality and spatiality, narrative distance empties itself as the reader is subsumed by the *instantaneousness* of experience: "Greenwich Park. A park! That's where the boy was killed. A park—smashed branches, torn leaves, gravel, bits of brotherly flesh and bone, all spouting up together in the manner of a firework" (*The Secret Agent* 258). Winnie, Stevie's sister, channels the expelled energy, gore, and matter through this instance of *style indirect libre*, which envelopes the moment in an intensive consistency. The final phrase sputters, as the catalogue of matter relays the explosion's force without a human subject to centre the experience. Consequently, the reader sees through this plane of shared, existential consistency, rendering the narrative tangible. Though we never see the explosion, we do see it through the doubly articulated spyglass of shared ontology. The processual poetics of Conrad's political novels hail the reader and cause her to become complicit in their assemblages through the proximity of *becoming*.

Novels like *Nostromo* and *Under Western Eyes* remain poignant in their respective explorations of the lived experience of political upheaval and the complex "[psychologies] of spies, collaborators, and informers"; Andzrej Busza claims that Conrad's expression of the latter outclasses his descendants, Ian Fleming and John Le Carré (Busza 130; 136). Beyond the thematic focus on the underbelly and

processes of the political machine, the texts' narratives also problematize the narratorial and readerly gaze. In *Nostromo*, the sudden folding-in of time-space causes discontinuities that defamiliarize the narrative flow, resulting in an intensive consistency that reassembles the narrative continuity. For example, a quotidian, conjugal conversation between Charles and Emilia Gould about the St. Tomé Mine, narrated in past tense, digresses into recountings of Charles's business dealings and meetings with Mr. Holroyd, in an implied past perfect tense; after depicting several conversations, settings, and slipping into multiple characters' perspectives, the narration abruptly resumes the initial conversation, a disjuncture that catalyzes continuity (*Nostromo* 56; 62). The digression re-contextualizes the intimate dialogue within the macro-political sphere, reassembling their existential coordinates and implicating the reader within the interpersonal tension of the scene—the moment becomes seeped in affective consistency, *in-forming* readerly ontology that simultaneously in-feels into the text. This enmeshing of being and desire between text and reader, or critic, produces a micropolitics of existence which engenders potentialities of molecular, revolutionary shifts in subjectivity through an in-feeling of radically different lived experiences and spaces.

Conclusion

Originally, the fictions of Witkacy were to play a greater role in this project. The breadth and depth of Conrad's fictions, even within the 1900-1912 period, and the corresponding critical nebula they continue to generate provide an ample amount of primary and secondary source material. Although, the loose genealogical line extending from Conrad through Witkacy, onto Artaud, and finally Guattari produces a consistency among the investigation's critical coordinates. Within this current arrangement, Witkacy functions best as a theoretical touchstone through his philosophy, correspondence, and novels.

The most pressing question at this juncture is how does this ontological entanglement enable us to spy into the process of criticism. Can the critic refocus and refract the spyglass onto and through her *techne* of criticism? The ontological figure of critic-as-spy can potentially use and tear asunder Guattari's process of meta-modelling to enable a processual analysis of the inner workings between aesthetics and theory and their more singular functionalities. A more thorough survey of works such as Susan Sontag's *Against Interpretation,* Bruno Latour's "Why Has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern", Jane Elliot and Derek Attridge's *Theory after Theory*, and other such foundational and contemporary texts will be crucial in further establishing this investigation's intellectual footing. The consequent responses from practitioners of 'suspicious hermeneutics' will also be needed for the project's double agency to properly function. Guattari's fixation on the molecular processes of subjectivity, aesthetics, and politics provides the possibility of coordinating an inter-paradigmatic, self-referential critical discourse. Similar to Caspar David Friedrich's *Chalk Cliffs on Rügen*, this investigation will use a perpetual waterfalling of perspectives; from the aesthetico-theoretical entanglement, it will subsequently shift into processes within and without theory—the mutually-implicating productions of aesthetic and critical subjectivity will be the impetus of this analysis.

Further analysis of contemporary texts such as *Spy Watching* by Loch K. Johnson, *The End of Intelligence: espionage and state power in the information age* by David Tucker, *Intelligence Theory* by Mark Phytian, *Intelligence and Espionage: Secret and Spies* by Daniel W.B. Lomas, along with official spy reports such as the 1968 Fulton Report on the Cambridge Five and the CIA's report *France: Defection of the Leftist Intellectuals*, will all contribute to the project's theoretical and pragmatic foundation of spying and its application to a critical theory. The spy games of reading and writing cultivate a rich glossary of theoretical terms, such as *in-forming*, double agency, *intelligence* work, the spyglass, and the surveilling gaze, all of which straddle the registers of espionage and critique and

demonstrate the applicability of spying to reading and criticism. Suspicious hermeneutics, however, still threaten this project. In her paranoia, the spy may over-interpret details and, through the obsessive accumulation and reporting of data, runs the risk of becoming compromised. Such potential hazards will reaffirm the need for a meta-modelling of criticism to cultivate an ongoing auto-critique that will keep writing self-aware. The critic-as-spy must work carefully and be *in-formed* by aesthetics, not relying on paranoia, but on an existential proximity that renders her transparent and causes her *techne* to betray itself. Criticism, then, possesses the potential to immanently reconfigure itself to the contours of aesthetics, while relegating critical allegiance to a playful game of double agency.

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Translating the Translingual:
A New Approach to Translation in the Field of Multilingual Writing

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Et si l'on traduit par plusieurs langues à la fois, appellera-t-on cela traduire ?

— Jacques Derrida

C'est pas croyable le trouble que vingt-six lettres pis une couple d'accents pouvont faire.

— France Daigle

1. Introduction: Overview of the field of multilingual writing

Although there is nothing new about multilingual writing, defined here as writing that occurs in more than one language, the scholarly field on the topic is relatively recent. In the 1980s and 1990s, undoubtedly inspired by the surge in postcolonial and cultural studies, a number of literary scholars started exploring the politics of language, most notably Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986), Chantal Zabus (1991), Michael North (1994), François Paré (1992), Alfred Arteaga (1997), Édouard Glissant (1981, 1990), and many others. Coming from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds—Chicano, Caribbean, Kenyan, Québécois, etc.—and working on various genres or types of literature—from modernist poetry to postcolonial fiction and nationalist theatre—, these scholars focus on texts that nevertheless have one thing in common: they all seek to communicate an understanding of cultural difference through a multilingual or hybrid idiom. Indeed, the politics of language is rarely, if ever, explored in texts that are written in a monolingual fashion, i.e. that are written in an unchallenged standard language and therefore do not formally question its validity, power, or authority. The second half of the twentieth century saw an increasing number of

writers, coming mostly from the (post)colonial world or from "minority cultures"[1] (Paré 1992) who questioned the legitimacy and the status of imperial, standard languages by bringing other languages and registers on the page. It is thus no surprise that a segment of literary studies would start exploring the political implications of multilingual writing.

As stated earlier, however, multilingual writing is not a recent phenomenon; it was, for instance, a key aspect of transatlantic modernist literature—Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*, Eliot's *The Waste Land* and Pound's *Cantos* being the most referenced examples. However, the scholarship produced during the 1980s and 1990s witnessed a shift from the mostly *aesthetic* purposes and raisons d'être of modernist multilingual writing[2] to the explicitly *political* nature and implications of multilingual writing in the second half of the twentieth century. Many scholars have indeed shown that multilingual literature written in the past fifty years or so has been concerned with cultural nationalism (Paré 1992, Boudreau 2016, Dobson 2009, Gauvin 2000), post/anticolonial struggles (Ngũgĩ 1986,

[1] François Paré uses the expression "littératures minoritaires" to describe the works produced by Canadian francophone writers that live, write and publish outside the province of Québec, such as Franco-Ontarian and Acadian writers. Paré's "littératures minoritaires" are not intrinsically or naturally "minor;" rather, they have been and are "minoritized" (*minorisation*) through historical processes such as the lack of funding and institutional support on the one hand, and through its perpetual location outside of the dominant discourses on the other. (Paré, 13–14) In a whole other context, linguist Félix-Lambert Prudent observes the same phenomenon (but uses the term "minoration") with regards to creole languages in the Caribbean: he argues that in spite of all the differences and specificities that characterize the different Caribbean languages, they all share a common problem, that of being a "langue minorée," brought about by active, if at times subtle, processes of "minoration linguistique" on the part of imperial institutions. (Prudent, 55, 173)

[2] Steven Kellman has demonstrated that the modernists' project was to transcend language in general, and thus that modernist writers cultivated translingualism for mostly aesthetic reasons: "the linguistic amalgam that [Pound, Eliot, and Joyce create] is aimed at a synoptic vision that transcends the limitations of any particular language". (Kellman, 16 and 38) Of course, this is not to say that such a project took place in a political vacuum; Michael North has shown, for example, that Cummings, Eliot and others have used some (admittedly problematic) appropriated version of the black vernacular in their writings in order to oppose the constraints imposed by the standardization movement which aimed to force "pure English" on the masses. (North, 33) Nevertheless, there is a consensus in the field around the fact that modernist multilingual writing mostly used the foreignness of other languages to play at self-fashioning, to deconstruct the referentiality of language in the absolute, and to explore verbal innovation, rather than to explore the more political issues of identity, representation, and power through the juxtaposition or confrontation of multiple languages. (*see* North, 20; Simon 172; Arteaga 1994, 14; Ch'ien, 14; Dowling, np; Walkowitz, 229; Ramazani, 31)

Zabus 1991, Bernabé et al. 1989), identity politics (Anzaldúa 1987, Arteaga 1994, Dobson 2009), or a mixture of those, always responding to a certain extent to the political exclusions that come with linguistic standardization and imperial monolingualism. What this literary scholarship shows first and foremost is that language is the site par excellence to explore not only questions surrounding identity, belonging, community, and the nation, but also the workings of exclusion, discrimination, and dominance. In short, this first wave of scholarship on the politics of language in multilingual writing started to recognize language as the terrain on which borders are constructed, (Heller 1999, 167) and underlined as a result the need to "attend carefully to language as a primary site where subjects are 'fixed' and where categories and boundaries are constituted, boundaries to our thinking that have a concrete, material bearing on the lives of many people." (Karpinsky, 37)

Stressing the importance of language in literary articulations of identity, belonging, and political struggles, those early accounts of multilingual writing soon led to the emergence of a field entirely dedicated to (mostly contemporary) multilingual writing in the 2000s. The past few years in particular have seen a proliferation of research on the topic,[3] research that is now without a doubt informed by the reality and effects of globalization and transnational flows. There seems indeed to be a consensus today about the transnational implications of contemporary multilingual writing, acknowledging that literary monolingualism has been, since the rise of the nation-state in the eighteenth century, an effect as well as a source of "monologic nationalism," (Arteaga, 94) itself

[3] Examples include Doris Sommer's *Bilingual Aesthetics: A New Sentimental Education* (2004) Jahan Ramazani's *A Transnational Poetics* (2015), Yasemin Yildiz's *Beyond the Mother Tongue: The Postmonolingual Condition* (2013), Anjali Pandey's *Monolingualism and Linguistic Exhibitionism in Fiction* (2016), Catherine Leclerc's *Des langues en partage? Cohabitation du français et de l'anglais en littérature contemporaine* (2011), Evelyn Ch'ien's *Weird English* (2005), Myriam Suchet's *L'imaginaire hétérolingue : Ce que nous apprennent les textes à la croisée des langues* (2014), and Sarah Dowling's *Translingual Poetics* (forthcoming).

rooted in the Romantic belief that those who are "born" into a language are the natural (and therefore rightful) users of that language.[4] So while multilingual writing strategies can certainly still be associated with the *intention* of asserting one's identity, showing pride in one's cultural roots, or subverting colonial domination through the "indigenization" of the (ex-)colonizer's language, (Zabus, 3) scholars today argue that the *effects* of such writing go beyond these situated political struggles in that they complicate, on a more global scale, our understandings of language as well as the dominant associations between language, culture, national belonging, and citizenship. Seeing in multilingual literature a potential for creating new types of transnational communities, literary scholars interested in the politics of language have recently been turning to multilingual texts for clues on how to build solidarities that are not restricted to the boundaries of the nation-state or to the boundaries between languages, the two of which are often conflated. (*see* Canagarajah, 20–22)

Regardless of the different streams, arguments, and schools of thought that have characterized the field of multilingual literature since the 1980s, there is one concept that seems to infiltrate both multilingual writing practice and scholarship on multilingual literature: the notion of translation. As an activity that both unites and separates languages, translation surfaces whenever we are confronted with the presence of more than one language in a given text. Indeed, for most literary scholars, it seems impossible to avoid the concept when theorizing or analyzing multilingual writing.

[4] North sums up the historical equation between nation and language nicely: "The whole idea that language is something to which one must remain loyal […] is a popularized application of Romantic philology. When Leibniz declared that 'tongues differ as profoundly as do nations,' he suggested an equation that was to be crucial for Herder, who taught that each language is a spiritual individuality like a nation, and for Humboldt, who took the next and, for our purposes, most crucial step, by maintaining that language is 'an accurate index to the grade of intellectual comprehension attained by' a people. Thus language becomes the cornerstone of national identity and an index of cultural health." (North, 23)

2. Multilingual writing as translation

From Salman Rushdie's expression "translated men" to Eva Hoffman's classic *Lost in Translation*, Gail Scott's account of "living in translation" (Leclerc, 194) and Gabriel Okara's strategy of literal translation (Okara in Ngũgĩ, 8), writers have used the concept of translation to talk about the experience of writing between cultures. This metaphorical use of translation is also characteristic of many postcolonial theories, which use the concept to describe any kind of intercultural encounter or experience (*see* Suchet, 26). It is also highly reminiscent of the use of translation in poststructuralist terms, according to which all texts and subjects are always already translated. Viewing translation as "the transport of a semantic content into another signifying form" (Derrida *in* Karpinsky, 4), a number of poststructuralist and postcolonial scholars have expanded its meaning to writing in general, and even to thinking, talking, interacting, and generally living in the world, thus extending the boundaries of its usage significantly.[5] Putting aside all the productive repercussions of such a broad theorizing of translation, in literary studies translation often becomes an empty signifier used to describe, sometimes interchangeably, the acts of writing, reading, explaining, and interpreting texts. While numerous scholars use it to discuss multilingual writing, very few provide a clear definition of what they understand translation to be.

[5] Some translation scholars have been reluctant to subscribe to this "broad view" of translation (Karpinsky 2009), a view that has indeed led to a (sometimes uncritical) convergence between translation and the postmodern aesthetic (Simon, 75), evacuating linguistic difference altogether and taking place in only one language, usually English. (*see* Suchet, 26) My use of the word "translation" in this paper refers to Roman Jakobson's concept of interlingual translation, or what he calls translation proper, in other words the interpretation of verbal signs that belong to a given language by means of verbal signs that belong to another language. However, as Karpinsky reminds us, feminist, postcolonial, and cultural-studies theories have been instrumental in politicizing the concept of translation in both a literal and a metaphorical sense, relating it to the problematic of representation. (Karpinsky, 10) While my project engages in a narrower approach to translation—focusing on the actual practice of translating between languages recognized as such—, it remains indebted to the broad approach to translation, which has pushed forward the politics of language and of translation. (*see* Spivak 1993 [b])

To give a few examples, Rachael Gilmour and Tamar Steinitz have argued that translation has become a structuring feature and analytical concept in contemporary literary works: they describe multilingual literature as "translational literature," as it foregrounds and problematizes the act of translation. (Gilmour and Steinitz, 7) Author Abdelkebir Khatibi has stated that the multilingual title signals "une opération de traduction" in his own texts. (Khatibi, 172) According to Catherine Leclerc, the presence of several languages in a single text makes translation and its processes visible, thus suggesting the emergence of a "translational culture." (Leclerc, 109) Deborah Saidero writes that "translingual texts are a privileged space of translation." (Saidero, 211) Chantal Zabus believes that all postcolonial writers engage to some extent in a type of translation she calls "indigenization." (Zabus, xvii) According to Rebecca Walkowitz, in the case of multilingual books, "everyone has to read in translation at least some of the time." (Walkowitz, 171) The list goes on, but perhaps the intersection between translation and multilingual writing is best summed up in the words of translation and literary scholar Sherry Simon, who defines the poetics of translation, which according to her underlies multilingual writing, as follows:

> procédé de création interlinguale qui a pour résultat la manifestation « d'effets de traduction » dans le texte, d'éléments d'interférence qui créent une certaine ouverture ou « faiblesse » sur le plan de la maîtrise linguistique et du tissu de références auxquelles s'affilie le texte. (Simon, 19–20)

Here, multilingual writing ("création interlinguale") operates according to a poetics of translation, which creates "translation effects" on the page. Leclerc, strongly influenced by Simon and working from the same premise, has argued that the material presence of multiple languages in a single text represents "une mise en scène de la traduction."

(Leclerc, 112) According to this view, translation is constitutive of multilingual writing; it underlies both its process—translation as a process of cultural negotiation—and its product—on the page, the presence of elements of linguistic interference which simultaneously open the text and weaken its linguistic command (of the text's dominant tongue, that is). Following Simon, many scholars seem to have subscribed to this equation between multilingual writing and translation, without necessarily questioning it, in order to put forward their own theoretical agendas and contributions. In all sources quoted above, however, it remains quite unclear what translation means, and most importantly what it implies: are we talking about a process, a product, or both? Who translates: the author, the reader, or an actual translator? Does the type of translation being mobilized above take place between languages? Cultures? Identities? Selves? These questions are important, since talking about translation always involves a movement between an "original" and its subsequent versions (which often creates a hierarchy), it involves agents, and therefore implies ethical, if not political, problems,[6] and it implies interactions between fixed, bounded categories which are often subject to fraught power relations. Furthermore, the conclusions of most of this scholarship in relation to translation, i.e. that multilingual writing is "translational", or that it suggests a "translational culture," do not seem

[6] Translation is inevitably entangled with the ethical, as it "entails a subject's movement towards others premised on their irreducible differences." (Kamboureli 2014, 16) This is corroborated by Karpinsky, who reminds us that "translation require[s] heightened self-reflexivity and [is] always about ethical choices as [it is] confronted with heterogeneous selves and texts, with conflicting intentionalities, with a multiplicity of interpretations." (Karpinsky, 35)

particularly interesting or innovative in and of themselves, especially if translation refers to an unproblematized, celebrated act.[7]

To be sure, Simon's project in *Le trafic des langues* is to study a number of multilingual texts from Québec from the prism of translation, which means that the reality of translation is assumed from the very start. Translation, because it is her starting point and constitutes her conceptual framework to study literary texts, is an unquestioned given throughout her book, and it should be noted that this methodology does give rise to a very interesting literary analysis. But what happens if we turn our gaze the other way around: what if we looked to multilingual writing as the starting point to study the concept, and practice, of translation? Following Myriam Suchet, I believe it is not so much multilingual poetics that must be thought of through the prism of translation (Simon's laudable and overall interesting project), but translation which must be thought of through the prism of multilingual writing. (Suchet, 24) If our methodological movement goes from translation-as-unproblematized-fact to multilingual writing, as Simon, Leclerc and others have suggested, it follows that we will find traces, or evidence, of translation in multilingual texts. Instead, if our starting point is a linguistic and literary analysis of multilingual writing *on its own terms*, without presupposing the fact of translation or of a "translational culture," it becomes clear that the multilingual text is precisely one that does *not* translate. As Suchet points out, "[l]à où la traduction substitue les langues les unes aux autres, le texte hétérolingue les fait cohabiter." (*ibid.*, 23)

[7] This is not to say that the texts quoted previously are uncritical or theoretically unsound overall, but to argue that their mobilization of translation as a theoretical or methodological concept is often vague, if not misleading. While they all constitute fascinating and important contributions to the field of multilingual writing in their own ways, they usually feature translation as a walk-on extra, using it to support their claims without seriously engaging with the concept or the field of translation studies.

Take the following excerpt from *Balconville*, the first ever bilingual Canadian play, written by David Fennario in 1979. In the final scene, two neighbors in Montréal, francophone Claude Paquette and anglophone Johnny Regan, put their differences aside and come together to move their furniture out of their respective apartments that are burning down. Because they fought in a previous scene, Paquette now refuses to address Johnny in English when they are moving a sofa down the stairs:

PAQUETTE:	Lève-toi… Lève-le…
JOHNNY:	Irene, he's speaking French!
IRENE:	Lift it!
PAQUETTE:	Tourne-le… Tourne-le…
JOHNNY:	Yeah yeah… tour-ney…
PAQUETTE:	À droite...
IRENE:	To the right.
PAQUETTE:	Laisse-le slyer sur la rampe... La rampe...
JOHNNY	What???
IRENE:	Slide it down the banister! (Fennario, 119–120)

This excerpt is interesting for the argument I am trying to make because it is multilingual—it contains more than one language—at the same time as it stages translation. Translation indeed plays a crucial role in this scene: Johnny, a mostly monolingual English speaker who usually relies on Paquette's bilingualism to communicate with him, is incapable of deciphering the crucial instructions his neighbor his giving him in French. Johnny therefore calls upon his girlfriend, Irene, who speaks both languages, to translate Paquette's instructions into English, so that they can work together towards their common goal—surviving economic dispossession as working class people. In this scene, translation happens *after* and *because of* the incommunicability caused by the presence of multiple languages; it is not constitutive of multilingual writing, and so does not precede it. Rather,

translation is required after Paquette explicitly *refuses* to translate his instructions into English for Johnny's comprehension—previously in the play, before the neighbor's fight, Paquette talks to Johnny in English for the most part. What this multilingual excerpt illustrates is that translation is required after the fact of multilingualism, which is depicted above as a *refusal* to translate, not as translation. The material presence of two languages in the quoted excerpt does not produce "translation effects" as Simon would have it, but non-translation effects; assuming that translation creates or underlies multilingual writing actually distracts us from seeing the effects created by such writing for what they really are: multilingual effects that hinder communicability between agents (in this case, between fictional characters). My aim is therefore to problematize and reimagine the act of translation through a critical engagement with the multilingual workings of certain contemporary texts, rather than analyzing said texts through the prism of translation.[8]

3. Translation, monolingualism, and translanguaging

Besides, seeing translation as a fundamental component of multilingual writing—multilingual creation qua poetics of translation—implies taking the perspective of the "langue tutélaire," a term coined by Simon Harel to refer to the multilingual's text's main

[8] It should be noted that this project comes from my direct and recent engagement, as a literary translator working in Canada, with multilingual texts, including *Islands of Decolonial Love* (2013) and *This Accident of Being Lost* (2017) by Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, as well as *Jonny Appleseed* (2018) by Joshua Whitehead. The presence of more than one language in these texts has challenged the way I perceive the work I do as a translator because they force a re-examination of translation as happening from one bounded language to another. As Simon has observed: "Nous sommes habitués à concevoir la traduction comme une opération de transmission d'*un* texte, écrit dans *une* langue, appartenant à *une* culture, vers une nouvelle demeure linguistico-culturelle." (181) However, multilingual practice, as Heller and others have shown, forces us to move away from the study of languages as whole, bounded systems. (Heller 2007, 15) Since translation is still generally practiced on structuralist grounds, relying on strict linguistic boundaries, the new linguistic configurations that multilingual writing suggests force us, I believe, to re-imagine how we think about and practice translation.

or dominant language, which hosts, as it were, the other languages. (*see* Harel, 1989) In Fennario's *Balconville*, the "langue tutélaire" would be English, as at least two thirds of the play are written and acted out in this language. Studying this text through the prism of translation, and stating that multilingual writing strategies create translation effects, would imply that the French parts of the play are translated from an original monolingual text that would be entirely in English, if only in the mind of Fennario. A perhaps unplanned consequence of this assumption that utterances in languages other than the "langue tutélaire" are a product of translation, this locates the authors of multilingual texts in an original monolingualism, from which they subsequently translate bits and pieces into other languages when writing multilingually. In other words, here, we would automatically assume that Fennario is an English-language writer who is translating as soon as he uses languages other than English. The idea that multilingual writing is produced through translation (whereas monolingual writing is not) is therefore rooted in what Yasemin Yildiz and others have called the monolingual paradigm, according to which "individuals and social formations are imagined to possess one 'true' language only, their 'mother tongue,' and through this possession to be organically linked to an exclusive, clearly demarcated ethnicity, culture, and nation." (Yildiz, 2; *see also* Canagarajah, 20; Derrida, 69–70) By using translation as her main analytical tool, Simon's account of multilingual texts therefore refracts multilingualism in literature through a monolingual lens, perhaps unintentionally. While some multilingual texts might indeed follow a monolingual logic, and some authors a translation approach to multilingual writing, many multilingual texts today challenge precisely the idea that having one language is the natural norm, and that everything that falls outside said language is only a translation, something from *outside*

that comes *after*.[9] I want to argue here that seeing the many languages of a multilingual text as simultaneous allows us to step out of the monolingual paradigm. The simultaneity of languages implies getting rid of translation as an analytical tool for the study of multilingual writing on the one hand, and pushes us to redefine it instead by taking the inner workings of the multilingual text as a springboard on the other hand. Now, recent developments in the field of applied linguistics just might help us better understand the weaving of languages that is at play in multilingual writing.

Linguists studying bilingualism, who have been grappling with the monolingual paradigm for quite some time, have developed a new approach to the use of language called "translanguaging," (García and Wei, 2014) or "translingual practice." (Canagarajah, 2013) According to Ofelia García and Li Wei, translanguaging is a new approach to bilingualism that considers the linguistic practices of bilinguals as constituting only one linguistic repertoire, which contains features that have been socially constructed as belonging to two separate languages. (García and Wei, 2) In the same vein, Suresh Canagarajah suggests that speakers treat all available codes as a repertoire, not as being separated according to the labels we give them. (Canagarajah, 7) This represents a significant move away from previous notions of bilingualism and multilingualism, where speakers were believed to add whole autonomous language systems to their initial one (additive bilingualism or

[9] Again, these texts urge us to question the very monolingual, structuralist way translators (myself included) are currently dealing with multilingual writing. Translators, with the help of the publishing industry, identify one language in a given text as being its "langue tutélaire," and this language is the one that becomes the object of translation. The other languages are usually left "as is". In Canada, this means that translation happens only between French and English, even in the case of multilingual texts. For instance, when translating Simpson's *Islands of Decolonial Love*, my co-translator and I only translated the English parts into French, leaving all sections in Anishinaabemowin intact. While this may appear as (and may well be) the ethical, proper thing to do, it does follow a very monolingual logic, a logic epitomized in the inscription "traduit de l'anglais par Arianne Des Rochers et Natasha Kanapé Fontaine", found on a bookstore's website even though this inscription is absent from the translated edition, which simply says "traduction de Natasha Kanapé Fontaine et d'Arianne Des Rochers ".

multilingualism), or to eventually replace their initial language system with another (subtractive bilingualism). In short, the view of bilingualism as a dual phenomenon amounted until relatively recently to conceiving of a bilingual individual as two monolinguals in one person. This has been highly contested, including by Monica Heller, who sees bilingualism as comprising of "sets of resources called into play by social actors under [specific] social and historical conditions". (Heller 2007, 15) This is in line with the now widespread sociolinguistic and applied linguistics understanding of language that considers linguistic practices as mobile resources. (Boudreau, 21; Blommaert in García and Wei, 9; Canagarajah, 13) According to this more dynamic view of bilingualism, speakers have only one linguistic "system", which can incidentally contain more than one language. This is possible because, as Alastair Pennycook and others have argued, languages do not exist as real, discrete, and enumerable entities in the world, but are rather socially constructed and labeled as different, relatively closed systems in relation and in comparison to one another through historical processes of linguistic sedimentation. (Pennycook, 49; Canagarajah, 15–16) What translanguaging suggests is that bilingual or multilingual speakers draw on the resources of their one and only linguistic repertoire, which contains distinct, socially-constructed languages, to adapt to different sociolinguistic and communicative situations and to make and negotiate meanings old and new. The focus of translingual practice, or translanguaging, is therefore on the speaker's creative and critical use of the many linguistic resources their repertoire includes at a given time. (García and Wei, 10)

What this relatively new understanding of language and bilingualism suggests for the analysis of multilingual writing is that no matter the number of languages that

physically appear on the page, the writing all comes from, constitutes, and creates, one repertoire, or dynamic system. A translingual approach to multilingual writing debunks the concept of the "langue tutélaire" as naturally distinct from the other, less important languages that are featured in a given text. It also resonates with the views on language expressed by many multilingual writers, including Gloria Anzaldúa, who explains the multilingual nature of her writing in *Borderlands/La Frontera* as follows: "The switching of 'codes' in this book from English to Castillian Spanish to the North Mexican dialect to Tex-Mex to a sprinkling of Nahuatl to a mixture of all of these, reflects my language, a new language—the language of the Borderlands." (Anzaldúa, 20) The Chicana author puts the word "codes" in quotation marks to underscore their constructed nature, and describes the whole that these codes form for her as a singular, non-hierarchical language. For the linguistic analysis of multilingual writing, taking as a starting point the totality of "codes" rather than the "langue tutélaire," and considering said codes not as translated add-ons to the main language of the text but as contributing to the text's linguistic repertoire as a whole, allows us to move away from the assumed fact of translation and to better understand what the multilingual text actually *does*. Following Annette Boudreau (2016), García and Wei, and Canagarajah, this means centering the study of multilingual writing around practices that are readily observable—the textual effects created by the juxtaposition of codes socially constructed as distinct—, rather than following the boundaries that separate languages as if they were a natural given. In this light, and considering that "multilingualism all too often becomes little more than a pluralization of monolingualism [and] champions the use of separate codes rather than challenging their existence" (Pennycook, 49) I will from now on use the term *translingual* to describe texts

that mobilize more than one language, rather than the term I have used this far, multilingual.[10]

Without a doubt, this perspective challenges my own current approach to translating translingual texts, which amounts to separate the different languages on the page and to translate only the English parts of a given text. The activity of translation as I have learned it is one that has historically and undoubtedly occurred between delimited, mostly standard, codes, usually substituting one for another entirely, even actively working for the preservation of the "integrity" or the "purity" of the target code by combatting any sort of linguistic interference or influence.[11] It then follows, as I argued earlier, that the translingual text, by featuring more than one code, engages precisely in non-translation, letting the author's linguistic repertoire appear in its inherent heterogeneity, which is precisely what creates translingual effects. For all the reasons outlined above, I believe translingual writing is better seen as engaging in non-translation, as creating non-translation effects, and as enacting a refusal to translate.

[10] I am of course deeply indebted to Sarah Dowling's forthcoming *Translingual Poetics* for this term. She explains her choice of the term as follows: "While the term multilingual is typically positioned as the alternative to monolingual, it is increasingly critiqued because it simply describes the coexistence of languages in space and time, and is generally silent about the relationships between them. I use the term translingual, which has gained currency in applied linguistics, transnational and diasporic literary studies, and composition and rhetoric, because it describes the capacity of languages to interact, influence, and transform one another." (Dowling, np; *see also* Canagarajah, 7–8) I also find that "translingual" allows us to analyze a given text's language (in the sense of *langage*) as one repertoire that can contain more than one language (in the sense of *langue*), while "multilingual" is better understood as the side-by-side cohabitation of different, autonomous language systems in one person or text.

[11] The fear of linguistic interference is particularly widespread in Québec, where there has been a longstanding "interest in keeping French free of contamination by English" in the name of protecting and preserving the French language and, by extension, nation. (Heller 1999, 150) Translation programs in Canada still remain committed to this goal with their focus on "la chasse aux anglicismes". (Heller 1999, 150)

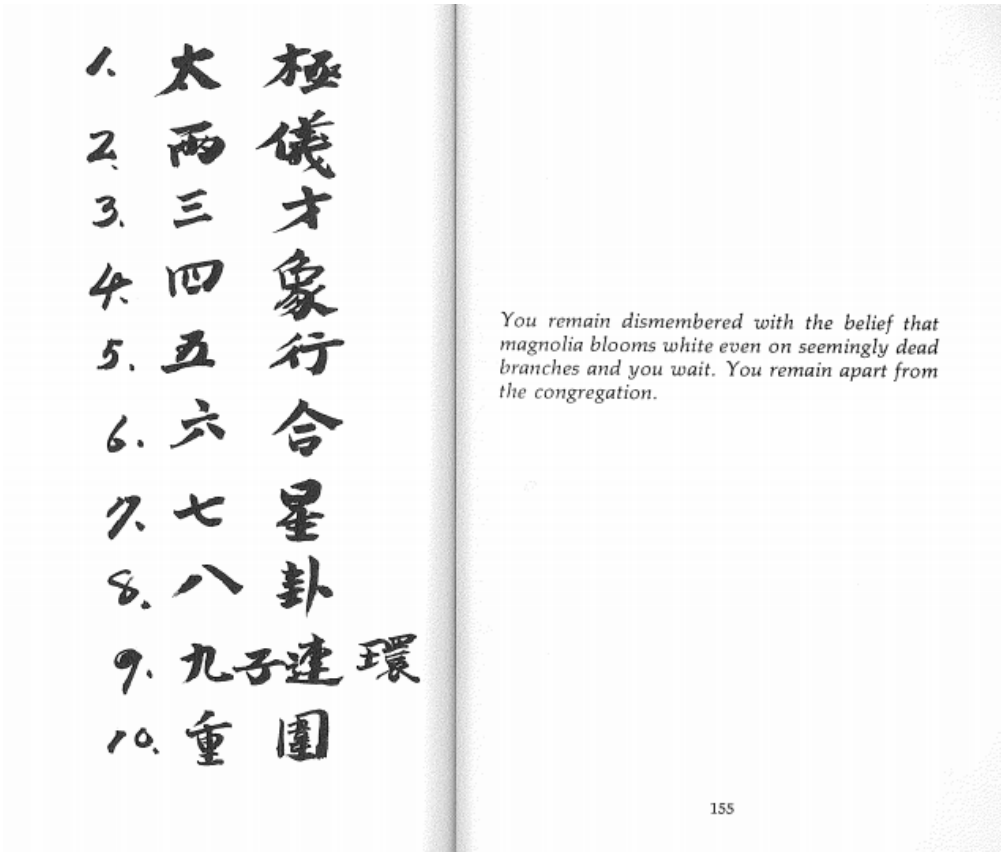
4. Translingual writing as non-translation and the refusal to translate

The idea of the refusal to translate in translingual writing has been touched upon by some scholars, including by Leclerc, who suggests that while the translingual text is mostly "une mise en scène de la traduction," it is also a partial refusal to translate. (Leclerc, 112) Evelyn Ch'ien describes Junot Díaz's writing in Spanglish as "the art of assertive nontranslation," observing that he places Spanish words side by side with English words without translating, explaining, or contextualizing them. (Ch'ien, 209) More recently, Sarah Dowling (forthcoming) has concluded her insightful account of the ways in which translingual poetry responds to dominant articulations of personhood in settler societies with a chapter that explores the refusal of translation as a highly political and transformative project. Conceiving of translingual poems as texts who "refuse to presume or to perform translational equivalency," she sees them as enacting a "translingual poetics of refusal". (Dowling, np) Resistance to translation has many implications and potential repercussions: from the point of view of a "minoritized" language, the refusal to translate is often associated with the preservation of cultural difference, and relates to a refusal to assimilate into the dominant, homogenizing culture.[12] A similar argument has been made about writing in the vernacular, described by Ch'ien as "the *refusal* to be educated in the ideals of the colonizing culture". (Ch'ien, 13, my emphasis) Writing literature in different registers or languages can also help legitimize and value them via their literary institutionalization, as Michel Tremblay's and Antonine Maillet's plays and novels have

[12] On the other hand, from the point of view of dominant cultures and languages, resistance to translation is associated with ethnocentrism and cultural hegemony, as a way to keep the mother tongue sealed, unpolluted by foreign elements. (*see* Karpinsky, 35)

done with Joual and Acadian French respectively, thereby challenging the standard, imperial language's claims to the monopoly of authority.

According to Dowling, a translingual poetics produces effects of "untranslatability, opacity, and non-comprehension." (Dowling, np) Indeed, opacity and non-comprehension are precisely what the act of translation, a practice aimed at making communication possible and easier between different linguistic communities, generally tries to avoid by its very nature and definition—hence the connection between opacity, non-comprehension, and *non*-translation. In *Dictée* (1982), for instance, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha blends mostly English and French, but also includes traces of Latin, Mandarin, Korean, and other languages and mediums, such as photography and historical records. Towards the end of the book, for instance, the reader encounters these two pages: (Cha, 154–155)



This excerpt represents an extreme case of translingual writing, as it uses not only two different codes but two different writing systems. In the United States, where this book was written and published, it is safe to suggest that some, if not most readers do not have both these languages and writing systems in their repertoire. But I can, and will, only speak for myself: as a reader whose repertoire is composed of French, English, and Spanish, I can understand the sentences on page 155, but I do not even know the name of the language that is used on page 154. Although I can see a numerical list, I have no access whatsoever to the code that is mobilized in the list, let alone to the things that are being listed.[13] The use of a writing system I know nothing about impedes my access to the text, creates opacity for me, and is a clear reminder of the limits of my knowledge of the world. The resources required for reading and understanding the contents on page 154 and page 155 are different; the readers who do not have the resources to comprehend what is written on the first page are temporarily left out; they "remain apart from the congregation" that meets on page 154.

Such multilingual effects and opacities abound in translingual writing. For instance, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's *Islands of Decolonial Love* (2013) is full of passages like the following:

> bozhoo odenaabe
> shki maajaamegos ndizhinaakaz
> it's been a long time. (Simpson, 124)

The story/poem this excerpt is taken from, titled "nogojiwanong," contains entire paragraphs in Anishinaabemowin—which are for the most part not translated, explained,

[13] Furthermore, the numerals explicitly signal non-translation: without them, readers could easily assume that the characters on page 154 were simply translated into English on the next page. Since the English text on page 155 does not constitute a list, however, the numbers alert the readers to the absence of equivalency between the two pages.

or contextualized in any way. For the reader who does not have the linguistic resources needed to engage with these passages, this means a limited access to this particular story. Of course, translingual writing does not create the same opacity for everyone, but at its core, it is "not addressed to an in-group of readers able to move nimbly between languages, dialects, and registers in order to understand the full range of linguistic material included in a given [text]." (Dowling, np) Indeed, in Cha's and Simpson's cases, it is safe to say that a relatively small proportion of their readership will have all the resources needed to understand the totality of their writing: few people can read English, French, Latin, Korean, and Mandarin, and according to the latest Canadian census in 2016, only 28,130 people speak Ojibway, or Anishinaabemowin[14]—some of whom might not be fluent English speakers, let alone readers of poetry. Thinking about her own writing process, Trinidadian-born poet M. Nourbese Philip explains that the writer's choice of language is related to that of audience:

> "If you work entirely in nation language or the Caribbean demotic of English you do, to a large degree, restrict your audience to those familiar enough with it; if you move to standard English you lose much of that audience and, along with that loss, an understanding of many of the traditions, history, and culture which contextualize your work." (Philip, 37)

As a way out of this limiting dichotomy, many authors chose to use different registers, dialects, or languages in their texts, leaving "whatever audience there is *less complacent* and *less comfortable* with things as they appear to be." (*ibid.*, 37, my emphasis) Well aware that language can present a "barrier to complete understanding", (*ibid.*, 40) Philip engages

[14]https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/98-200-x/2016022/98-200-x2016022-eng.cfm

different registers and varieties in her writing, deliberately creating discomfort for her readers. While it is certainly probable that some readers have the required resources to "fully" comprehend particular instances of translingual writing, my starting point for exploring translingual texts is that most readers will experience a varying degree of opacity when engaging with them. The idea is not to uncover the full range of meanings in a given translingual text, but to face the text's staging of difference and the opacity it creates.

The reason behind this focus on opacity, and thus on readers whose linguistic repertoire does not exactly correspond to the text's repertoire—rather than on, say, the few polyglots (Cha), the Anishinaabemowin speakers (Simpson), and the educated Anglo-Canadians of Caribbean origin (Philip) that are granted "full" access—lies in my interest in translation, the activity that is usually mobilized to fill the intelligibility gaps created by the presence of more than one language for the purposes of cross-cultural communication and interaction. As we have seen earlier with the *Balconville* scene, translation happens because of the inherent opacity between languages it is trying to resolve. It is my belief that, because translingual writing strategies create texts that are purposefully opaque, we need to develop new reading strategies that are not centered around intelligibility, transparency, and comprehension. Ultimately, these texts demand that we develop new reading methodologies that should in turn inform a renewed practice of translation, which would emphasize linguistic opacity rather than seeking to eliminate it entirely, not least because, as Martinican theorist and writer Édouard Glissant has shown, the concept of opacity can undergird a radical relational ethics.

5. Opacity in translingual writing

Opacity is one of Glissant's favorite and most revisited concepts: it is central to his poetics of "Relation," a cross-cultural way of being in the world that is oriented towards producing a non-universalizing, non-hierarchical and non-authoritative totality with all the existing cultural and linguistic imaginaries. The main condition for the emergence of Relation is the ultimate respect of difference, which, according to Glissant, goes hand in hand with the concept of opacity. In his work, opacity is mobilized in response to what he sees as the Western obsession with transparency:

> Si nous examinons le processus de la « compréhension » des êtres et des idées dans la perspective de la pensée occidentale, nous retrouvons à son principe l'exigence de cette transparence. Pour pouvoir te « comprendre » et donc t'accepter, il me faut ramener ton épaisseur à ce barème idéel qui me fournit motif à comparaisons et peut-être à jugements. Il me faut réduire. (Glissant 1990, 204)

Understanding the Other through the requirement of transparency thus inevitably involves its reduction, or, to put it differently, its assimilation. The opaque, on the other hand, is what is not reducible. (*ibid.*, 206) In contrast with transparency, which forecloses the possibility of Relation, opacity is what creates the grounds for solidarity: "Je puis donc concevoir l'opacité de l'autre pour moi, sans que je lui reproche mon opacité pour lui. Il ne m'est pas nécessaire que je le 'comprenne' pour me sentir solidaire de lui, pour bâtir avec lui, pour aimer ce qu'il fait. Il ne m'est pas nécessaire de tenter de devenir l'autre (devenir autre) ni de le 'faire' à mon image." (*ibid.*, 206) Opacity for Glissant is not synonymous with difference, but surpasses it: we have to go beyond the simple fact of recognizing

difference and otherness because doing so actually creates and reinforces the boundaries that are constructed, and because the act of recognizing the Other ultimately lies in the hands of the Self. For Glissant, opacity is what protects "le Divers" against generalization/universalization, recognition/assimilation, and standardization. (*ibid.*, 75 and 42) It allows difference and otherness to exist without being subjected to constant assessment on the part of the reader—after all, how can we assess or reduce something that we do not understand or have access to? The opaque remains at a safe distance, because it avoids being interpreted by the reader who does not form a part of a given linguistic community.

Opacity also leads to what Smaro Kamboureli has referred to as a productive kind of "failure":

> Failure to know the Other means failure to accommodate existing stereotypes and failure to produce new ones. It means failure to assimilate the Other into cultural and political discourses that appropriate its difference. It also means failure to accept universal principles in good faith, and failure to see the Other as a fully knowable entity. (Kamboureli, 130)

In this context, failure is a highly fertile phenomenon in the sense that it enables a "negative capability" through which we become aware of the limits of our knowledge, thus approaching the Other with more humility, deference, and respect. (*ibid.*) For both Glissant and Kamboureli, opacity leads to the failure to know (and master) the Other, which creates discomfort for the readers of the dominant culture as they realize that their culture is far from transparent. The idea is to invest this discomfort and the space that it creates as the locus of cross-cultural solidarities, instead of trying to eradicate it—by naively trying to close the gap between cultures—through transparency-driven strategies. What Glissant's

theory of Relation, with its focus on opacity as the grounds for respect and solidarity, suggests for the reading of translingual texts is that we must fight the temptation to fully comprehend them and acknowledge that our access to these texts are limited. In short, translingual writing creates possibilities for solidarity that are not solely based on transparency, as it prevents difference from being accommodated or appropriated through a recognition-by-assimilation approach.[15] (*see* Spivak 1993, 88–90)

While Glissant only wrote a handful of sentences on translation proper, he did suggest that translation generally consists in an attempt to give some transparency back to a text. (Glissant 1990, 129–130) After all, translation is precisely about making a text accessible to a pool of readers who could not previously access it. And in fact, the all-too common obsession with transparency in the translation industry—i.e. the belief that a translation should not read like one, and should cater to the expectations and taste of the receiving culture rather than welcoming the Other in its irreducible singularity and difference—, even though it has been criticized and challenged by many translation scholars (*see* Venuti 1995, Bellos 2011, Berman 1984, Spivak 1993), is sadly still dominant today. Yet, Glissant also recognizes that translation has the potential to become a fundamental mechanism of Relation. (Glissant 1990, 129) Indeed, one can hardly imagine a dynamic totality of cross-cultural rapports without the participation, albeit partial or incomplete, of translation. Following the many attempts to create an alternative to the ethnocentric and transparent ideologies of translation that have plagued the practice since the inception of the monolingual ideology in the eighteenth century and that have only

[15] Drawing on his ethnographic work, Canagarajah has observed that communication can be achieved in contact zone encounters despite the absence of formal linguistic similarities: according to him, people adopt negotiation strategies to retain their local identities and specificities while still communicating "successfully" with each other. (Canagarajah, 38, 58)

recently started to be challenged, I argue that translingual texts, precisely because they foreground the practice of non-translation and opacity, can help us conceive of translation in new—translingual, opaque—ways. This focus, in turn, helps us in studying translingual writing strategies not in terms of the failure to mean in translation (and thereby for the monolingual reader), and thus the failure to enter the circuits of recognition (through the eyes of the dominant other), but in terms of their potential, opaque meaning outside of translation—outside the reach of recognition.

6. Refusing in the context of Canadian multiculturalism and settler colonialism

The project of reimagining translation through the prism of new translingual realities, notably observable in contemporary literature, is especially crucial in the Canadian setting, where "language is important for the image and the functioning of nation and state." (Heller 1999, 143) In fact, Eve Haque has shown that language has, since the implementation of the official policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework in the 1970s, replaced the previous category of race to become the primary site for articulating and justifying political exclusions in Canada. (Haque, 4) Operating a very contradictory dis/articulation between language and culture, Canadian multiculturalism identifies language as a fundamental element of culture for the so-called founding races, making the French and English languages worthy of institutional protection and promotion in the public sphere, while it conceives of language as a private and peripheral element of culture for any other "ethnic" group. (*ibid.*, 6) Under Canadian multiculturalism, said "ethnic groups" emerge of active processes of discursive differentiation and essentialization, by

the dominant cultures, of all the cultures and ethnicities but their own.[16] (Day, 5) In Canada, the nation-building project, at least since the 1960s, has not entailed the erasure of difference, but the depoliticization, management and commodification of the cultures and languages not associated with French or English, always according to the disciplinary gaze of the dominant society. (Chazan et al, 6; Kamboureli 2009, 110; Mackey, 83, 164)

Official multiculturalism, defined by Richard J.F. Day as a "recognition-based approach to liberal pluralism," (Day, 209) has been increasingly criticized for the dubious politics of recognition it relies on. Finding Charles Taylor's influential *The Politics of Recognition* highly problematic, because the type of recognition it promotes is not equal, reciprocal, and freely given, but a "partial and grudgingly bestowed *gift* from a canonical Self group to a series of problematic Others" (*ibid.*, 217, emphasis in original), many scholars have been challenging the very idea of recognition that sustains Canadian multiculturalism. Among them is Dene scholar Glen Sean Coulthard, who takes issue with the "affirmative relationship drawn between recognition and freedom" and the "liberalized appropriation of Hegel"—one can hardly not recognize Taylor here—that inform many contemporary proponents of identity politics and of the politics of recognition in Canada. (Coulthard, 16–17) He urges us to turn away from what he calls the "vernacular of mutual recognition," (*ibid.*, 3) and to understand recognition as "the field of power through which colonial relations are produced and maintained." (*ibid.*, 17) In lieu of the politics of recognition, which implies that minorities should seek recognition and inclusion by the

[16] Here is where some of my concerns arise regarding the dominant practice of translating only the English or the French parts of a fundamentally translingual text, without reflecting on the translingual nature of such a text. This practice seems to rely uncritically on Canada's bilingual tradition between French and English, which is highly imperial and fraught, without a genuine engagement with the other parts of the translingual repertoire displayed in a given text.

state, Coulthard privileges Indigenous self-determination, which is informed by a broader politics of refusal—"scraps of recognition, opportunistic apologies, and the cheap gift of political and economic inclusion" need to be *refused*; and Indigenous peoples ought to look not to the state but to themselves for the grounds of their liberation. (*ibid.*, 173) Indeed, the discourse of reconciliation and recognition between the state and First Nations as it is currently articulated in Canada is asking from Indigenous communities that they look for solutions to their problems from the very institutions that create these problems and that perpetuate, day after day, their dispossession and marginalization. Eva Mackey has offered a similar critique, arguing that the institutionalization of cultural difference by the Canadian state is precisely what allows it to control access to power, and to ultimately legitimate its power over cultural minorities.[17] (Mackey, 63) Today, Canadian scholars and activists are starting to look for answers elsewhere; one of these sites being the site of refusal altogether.

Going back to the refusal to translate in translingual writing, I believe we need to engage with this broader politics of refusal, which is linked to struggles for self-determination (rather than, as it has sometimes been the case in the past, requests for political and cultural inclusion[18]) within the groups and identities that are being managed by the state's multiculturalist and colonial regime. The following example, taken once more from *Islands of Decolonial Love*, will hopefully shed light on the connection between

[17] Mackey has also shown that the recognition of cultural difference is integrally linked to the (state) management and control of said difference. (Mackey, 75)

[18] Kit Dobson has been critical of the claims for inclusion, which rely on the benevolent tolerance of the state, he observes in 1980s diasporic writing, notably in Neil Bissoondath and Michael Ondaatje's works. (Dobson, 129) He writes: "By articulating different bodies that seek recognition, writers assert their place within Canada and are frequently approved of for seeking inclusion (reform) rather than radical disruption (revolution). This movement may be desirable; at the same time, this gesture of inclusion has appeared at times to reify existing power structures by implicitly validating the power of the bodies that recognize difference as such. A bid for social inclusion can be a troubling thing if it leaves the core values of the nation intact." (Dobson, 74)

translingual writing as refusal to translate, and the politics of refusal in the context of settler colonialism and official multiculturalism, currently embodied by Indigenous writers more than anyone else. In "ishpadinaa," Simpson attempts to (mis)translate an Anishinaabemowin word in the text itself—not in editorial footnotes—; at the beginning of the poem, she translates, or defines, the word "aanikoobijigan," as follows:

> aanikoobijigan: ancestor
> aanikoobijigan: great grand child
> aanikoobijigan: great grand mother (Simpson, 95)

This series of definitions is already striking for an English-only-speaking reader, for whom "great grand child," "ancestor" and "great grand mother" are very different concepts (including in terms of gendering), with different meanings that a single English word cannot encompass. Still, the monolingual English reader can nonetheless interpret these different meanings and understand that "aanikoobijigan" is a term which signals a relation, probably a cross-generational one. However, towards the end of the poem, the concept emerges again, this time with completely different "translations:"

> aanikoobijigan: to tie together, a bond, a link
> aanikoobijigan: my broken paper chain from when i was six
> aanikoobijigan: to measure loss (Simpson, 96)

I want to suggest that by playing with translation, that is, by accepting (and not refusing) to play the game of "translational equivalency", Simpson is rewriting the rules, so to speak. Knowing that the word "aanikoobijigan" cannot literally refer to "the narrator's broken paper chain from when she was six," and noticing the stark contrast between "loss" and "bond/link," the reader becomes aware that the author is playing with readers who do not know the Anishinaabemowin language. The English-only readers are first led to believe that the author is making the effort to be recognized by them, by translating and explaining and making this term available to them. However, it becomes clear to the readers that the

author does not give them access to “aanikoobijigan:” if anything, for the English monolingual reader, this series of definitions is more confusing than it is enlightening. So even when Simpson *does* provide (mis?)translations, she does so in a way that aleniates the “true” meaning of the word and focuses instead on the practice of not fully disclosing herself by writing translingually. The question, for non-Anishinaabemowin readers, is not what she means or does not mean by “aanikoobijigan;” it is precisely not the point. To my view, the question is to recognize when access is not granted to non-speakers of Anishinaabemowin, where there is a deliberate refusal to translate, or disclose, oneself into the hegemonic English, and if that strategy takes place in a broader set and structure of power relations and struggles for self-determination.

Translingual writing is a way, for writers whose cultural identity is managed by official multiculturalism and settler colonialism, to partially circumvent the dominant society’s disciplinary gaze (Kamboureli, 110) at the same time as it reveals the gaze’s very existence to the readers that display it. It refuses to engage in multicultural performance, which generally requires the minimization or elimination of linguistic difference through the exclusive use of French or English. Challenging the inclusion into the multicultural mosaic via its criteria of linguistic assimilation and conformity, the “linguistic juxtapositions seen in translingual poetry work against incorporation; instead, they reveal the narrow-drawn tracing of the neoliberal multiculturalism’s linguistic boundaries.” (Dowling, np) That is, they work against incorporation as it is currently articulated and prescribed: translingual published works still reach a wide audience, but on their own terms, without compromise. In light of the competing tensions between intelligibility and opacity, how can translation mirror the refusal to translate in translingual writing—which

is geared towards the preservation or the occultation of some content from the dominant gaze—without, at the same time, further participating in the differentiation of languages other than French and English in translingual texts? It is my hope that close scrutiny of contemporary translingual texts produced in the Canadian context will help answer this question. The idea is obviously not to develop a far-reaching methodology that would apply to all translingual texts everywhere, but to engage in a highly situated translingual and critial practice of translation.

7. Conclusion: Translating the translingual

I stated earlier that translation surfaces whenever more than one language is involved. I, like many of my peers, have also found it impossible to talk about translingual writing without tackling the problem of translation—although, more importantly, for me it has become impossible to think about translation without considering translingual writing. Throughout this paper, it has been my aim to critically posit translingual writing as non-translation and the refusal to translate, and to consider translation as a practice that takes place in the context of the fraught politics of recognition in Canada. These interventions have, I believe, important implications for the practice of translation in Canada and elsewhere, as it is currently articulated mostly as an intelligibility and transparency (or recognition/assimilation)-driven activity between languages viewed as distinct, bounded systems. Ironically enough, the refusal of translation in contemporary literary texts indicates precisely that translation is necessary and, in fact, anywhere *but* in multi- or translingual texts and interactions. Faced with translingual writing, readers have no other choice than to become translators themselves. In her study of translingual poetry, Dowling

explains that her methodology in reading translingual poems is to pursue the strategies available to any other reader. She identifies three possible strategies for interacting with a translingual text: 1) skip and not understand the passage; 2) seek out a translation from an expert, usually someone who knows the language; and 3) personally attempt a translation, for instance, by consulting dictionaries or looking for clues online. (Dowling, np) What translingual writing strategies do, in contrast to monolingual texts, is force the reader who encounters a multilingual passage to face the problem of unintelligibility and to make a choice about how to ignore, circumvent, or solve this problem—a choice translators have to make on a daily basis. The absence of translation in translingual writing is precisely what renders visible and evident not translation per se but the *need* for translation and translators in a cross-cultural setting. In a somewhat surprising and paradoxical turn of events, the refusal to translate and to assimilate oneself is precisely a condition for the preservation of multiple languages, which, in turn, is what makes translation possible and necessary in the first place. On the other hand, translation is also a condition for the preservation of multiple languages; without it, we would all have to speak the same language, or else not speak at all. Both the refusal to translate and translation are therefore necessary for the safeguarding of linguistic diversity; but the refusal to translate, because it turns away from the dominant gaze, comes from a desire for self-determination, rather than from the need to be recognized and included by the dominant other. At the basis of my project, then, lies the following question: how do we translate texts that precisely refuse, albeit partially, translation?

One thing is clear: translation cannot rely on its historical linear linguistic axis when dealing with translingual texts who do not subscribe to the dominant monolingual

paradigm. Speaking about the Chicano hybridized identity which refuses both the Mexican and American national identification while selecting competing cultural elements from both discursive territories, Alfred Arteaga argues that "[t]he inhabitants of the border zone who partake in messy cultural interplay cannot be contained on the narrow conceptual axis of monologic nationalism." (Arteaga, 94) The same can be said of translingual texts, which function as metaphorical borderlands along the boundaries between languages: because they partake in linguistic interplay, they cannot be contained on the narrow conceptual axis of linear, unidirectional translation. In recent years, some translation scholars have begun to think about what translingual writing might mean for translation. Myriam Suchet (2014) suggests we turn away from the plurilingual énoncé and look instead to the discursive site of enunciation for clues on how to approach and translate translingual texts. Insisting on the "instance d'énonciation" allows Suchet to see translation as an operation of re-enunciation, rather than of interpretation of an énoncé with a fixed meaning. Highly abstract and philosophical, Suchet's intervention, however, falls short of providing any sort of tangible clue as to what this potentially means for the actual practice of translation. Another translation scholar interested in the matter is Christopher Larkosh, who in a recent article (2017) has very embryonically suggested a multidirectional approach to translation, inspired by a praxis of continual cultural and linguistic multidirectionality he observes in the works of Québécois author Jacques Poulin. In his attempt to extend the discussion beyond institutional models of bilingualism by exploring the fundamentally multidirectional nature of cultures and languages in global and translocal transit, he challenges the unidirectionality of translation between two fixed poles. Central to his argument are both a "linguistic model that remains singular while no longer dual and

continually on the way towards the increasingly multiple," (Larkosh, 41) and the acknowledgement that real-life models of multilingualism reaffirm the need for separate cultural spaces. (*ibid.*, 44)

On the one hand, how can the centering of opacity and the move away from intelligibility in translingual writing inform a renewed ethics of translation? On the other hand, how can we ensure that translation does not participate in "othering" languages in the multicultural-but-bilingual publishing scene in Canada? How can translingual writing situate the practice of translation outside of the monolingual paradigm? What does translingual practice mean for the dominant structuralist approach to translation, and, most importantly, for the practice of literary translation in real life? What would a translingual (Canagarajah), opacity-centered (Glissant), translanguaging-inspired (García and Wei), relational (Dowling, Glissant), multidirectional (Larkosh) approach to translation look like? What would a translation practice that does not solely emphasize transparency, intelligibility, and recognition focus on? How can translation operate along, and contribute to, a post-national sensibility? (Heller 2011) It is my hope that my research project will tackle the ambitious task of beginning to answer these questions. If writers and scholars today are pushing our understandings of language use and linguistic boundaries, and by extension our understandings of belonging, difference, and solidarity, then translation, the activity that relies the most on linguistic boundaries, has to follow suit. I believe this project is particularly urgent in present-day Canada, a country where translation plays an important role in the management, representation, and refraction of many languages, communities, and identities under a fraught multicultural regime of inclusion and exclusion, and where more and more people are turning away from the politics of recognition that underlie the

latter. My aim is to explore what translators working in a highly imperial-oriented linguistic and cultural market and political regime (where translation happens almost only between English and French) can learn from translingual texts that explicitly challenge this regime. To unsettle and challenge current assumptions about translation and current translation practices by looking at how, when, and why Indigenous, diasporic, and writers "en milieu minoritaire" refuse to translate. To make sure translation does not operate according to a recognition-by-assimilation logic, and to open up new ways of thinking about difference in translation through the dual prism of the politics of refusal and translingual practice.

To go back to that *Balconville* scene once more, translation is what allows Paquette to remain opaque and thus to retain his cultural identity in his interaction with his neighbor Johnny. But translation, through the figure of Irene, is also what allows the two men to come together in a moment of crisis; a careful blend of both translation and its refusal is what creates a grounds for solidarity in which Paquette does not have to give up his specificity. The challenge for translation is to find the moments when a text resists translation and to work along that resistance, rather than to try to tame it. Speaking about his use of Kanien'kehaka words when he talks publicly about his works, visual artist Martin Akwiranoron Loft says: "People may not understand everything I say, but they listen." (Loft, 57) In *Balconville*'s final scene, Johnny might not understand his neighbor, but he is actively à l'écoute. As readers and translators, not to understand, but to listen.

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