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ON THE MEDIALITY OF TWO TOWERS: CALGARY—TORONTO

IRA WAGMAN AND LIAM COLE YOUNG

Abstract: *This article uses the CN Tower and Calgary Tower to explore how the architectural form of the tower possesses a number of characteristics we typically associate with media technologies. To appreciate what we call "tower-mediality," we start first with a brief discussion of the scholarly literature on towers, highlighting that while much is said about towers' symbolic value, little attention has been devoted to thinking of these forms in material and infrastructural terms. Then we turn to the Canadian towers themselves, asking, first, why they have received so little scholarly attention, before suggesting some points of intersection between architecture and communication research. Finally, we offer three registers—ritual, perspective, and spectacle—by which to explore the mediality of the CN and Calgary Towers. In undertaking this analysis, we attempt to expand the vocabulary available for understanding how towers are platforms that mediate the temporal and spatial elements of civic culture and to invite further considerations of the mediating and communicative work that occurs along the vertical axis.*

Résumé: *Cet article examine la tour du CN et la tour de Calgary afin d'explorer comment la forme architecturale de la tour présente un certain nombre de caractéristiques que nous associons généralement aux technologies des médias. Pour apprécier ce que nous appelons "tour-médialité" nous commençons par une brève discussion de la littérature sur les tours, et nous soulignons que si beaucoup de choses sont dites sur la valeur symbolique des tours, peu d'attention a été consacrée à la pensée de ces formes en termes matériels et infrastructurels. Ensuite, nous nous tournons vers les tours canadiennes elles-mêmes, en nous demandant, premièrement, pourquoi elles ont reçu si peu d'attention de la part des chercheurs, avant de suggérer quelques points d'intersection entre la recherche en architecture et en communication. Enfin, nous offrons trois thèmes—rituel, perspective et spectacle—pour explorer la médialité des tours du CN et de Calgary. Nous essayons d'élargir le vocabulaire disponible pour comprendre comment les tours sont des plates-formes qui servent d'intermédiaires entre les éléments temporels et spatiaux de la culture civique et pour inviter d'autres considérations du travail de médiation et de communication qui se produit le long de l'axe vertical.*

INTRODUCTION: TWO IMAGES

In July 2001, two Greenpeace activists—one British, one Canadian—scaled the CN Tower in Toronto by making use of its steel maintenance cables. The banner they unfurled from the observation deck, nearly 340 meters from the ground, claimed Canada and US President George W. Bush as "climate killers." The act was timed to coincide with an international summit on climate change taking place in Bonn, Germany, as a reminder to Canadians that both countries had failed to ratify the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. A CBC report at the time claimed that the activists were "reaching to the clouds to send a message about global warming" ("Taking Greenpeace's Message to the Skies" "Greenpeace Activists Scale CN Tower"). Nine years later, in 2010, Greenpeace took to another iconic Canadian tower. This time, activists hung a "Separate Oil and State" banner from the Calgary Tower so as to focus attention on the relationship between Canada's government and its oil industry centered in Alberta ("Anti-Oilsands Protest Unfurled on Calgary Tower"). This effort was timed to coincide with the start of a meeting of Canadian provincial premiers taking place in Winnipeg, Manitoba, nearly 1300 kilometers away.

Figure 1: Greenpeace Activists Scale CN and Calgary Towers

These examples, from two of Canada's highest spires, complicate the way towers are usually "read" as symbols of civic pride and identity, tributes to modernity and modernism, monuments to capital accumulation, or markers of power. Given its functional use in sending and receiving broadcast and telephone signals, the CN Tower is sometimes positioned alongside other forms of media infrastructure that facilitate communication across time and space, such as radio and cellular phone towers. While symbolically serving as "the cathedrals of a media society" (Von Borries, Böttger, and Heilmeyer 12), such towers also, according to Patrik Åker, subtly "integrate different forms of media distribution, their structure expressing de-materialization, the opposite of solidness and weight" (Åker 85). Shannon Mattern similarly traces the importance of towers and other vertical structures like telephone poles, antennae, and radio masts to imaginaries of modern communication, given that they stand as traces of otherwise invisible or "ethereal" media networks like radio. These artifacts for conceiving the inconceivable also provided inspiration for visions of urban futures typified by figures like Le Corbusier, Buckminster Fuller, and Sam Jacob (Mattern 4-8).

But our two images show that towers do both more and less than such readings imply. Most often, towers serve more humbly as platforms for other media to do their communicative work. In these cases, each tower hosted the writing and icons of cloth banners designed for political dissemination. In scaling their heights, Greenpeace sought to leverage each tower's capacity for broadcast within a local urban environment and to create a media event that would further expand the distance by which the organization's message was disseminated. In both cases the tower, as platform, was tactically crucial. It is surprising that very little has been written on how towers serve in such capacities for various forms of civic, symbolic, and even political communication.

Towers perform an array of medial functions at different times across a spectrum of communities and thus they cannot be reduced to any single meaning or function (whether symbolic, architectural, or communicative). The concept of mediality, we argue, captures the protean nature of towers and thus addresses the gaps and limits of understanding their role in public life. By mediality we draw upon what

Will Straw calls the "occasional state" that physical objects occupy when they demonstrate some of the qualities normally associated with media technologies (128). Such qualities include processing, storage, and transmission, functions most famously associated by Friedrich Kittler with "technical media" like the gramophone, film, and typewriter. However, in a vein similar to Straw, Liam Cole Young observes that such qualities can be found in a range of banal forms of communication, which also store, organize, and disseminate knowledge—for example, the everyday list (37-38). Mediality, rather than media, is a concept more attuned to the changing sites and vectors of communication that any object might temporally occupy. Moreover, for Jonathan Sterne, the concept of mediality avoids the pitfalls of approaches that implicitly view every process of mediation as a corruption—of ideal experience, truth, or physical reality (9-10). For theorists using mediality, there is neither a hierarchy of media technologies nor any privileged, *a priori,* experiential realm that such technologies degrade. The term instead describes a general condition in which media forms cross-reference and cross-pollinate, performing different functions at different times. The concept therefore pushes media theory beyond the hardware of devices and networks and the intentions or interpretations of people to consider intermediaries that "operate like catacombs under the conceptual, practical, and institutional edifices of media" (Sterne 16). Mediality encourages us to understand communication as a complex interplay of forms, surfaces, artifacts, users, and techniques that are constantly shifting and morphing. It thus offers a fresh view on the communicative capacities of non-traditional media like towers.

In this essay, we explore what we call "tower-mediality" through two of Canada's most famous steeples. Our aims are modest and two-fold. First, we wish to expand the vocabulary available for understanding how towers are platforms that mediate the temporal and spatial elements of civic culture. Second, we hope this essay invites further considerations of the mediating and communicative work that occurs along the vertical axis. Media theory has historically been very good at analyzing media devices, networks, and functions that move along the horizontal plane; but it has been less adept when it comes to understanding verticality. We proceed first with a brief dis-

cussion of the scholarly literature on towers, highlighting that while much is said about towers' symbolic value, little attention has been devoted to thinking of these forms in material and infrastructural terms. Even less has attempted to consider towers according to different medial states. From there we turn to the Canadian towers themselves, asking, first, why they have received so little scholarly attention, before suggesting some points of intersection between architecture and communication research. Finally, we offer three registers—ritual, perspective, and spectacle—by which to explore the mediality of the CN and Calgary Towers.

TOWER STUDIES AND MEDIA STUDIES

Towers have played an important role in the organization of culture for millennia. Lewis Mumford noted "tower" as one of the "graphically clear" symbols discovered by archaeologists at the ancient Mesopotamian city-states of Ur and Kish (alongside "temple," "water," "garden," "woods," "high-road," "market," but—much to his chagrin—not "city") (*City in History* 66). The Bible is chock-full of towers, the most famous is Babel, routinely used to explain the proliferation of different languages in the world. However, many others can be found in scripture: Towers of Edar, Penuel, Shechem, Jezreel, Jerusalem, Hananeel, Ophel, Lebanon, Syene, Siloam, and Meah. "The Lord" is referred to consistently as a tower—high, strong, and ever watchful (2 Sam. 22.3; Ps. 18.2, 61.3, 144.2, and 18.10; Song of Sol. 7.4 and 8.10). Towers are invoked as essential constitutive units of cities that will be built alongside walls, gates, and bars (2 Chron. 14.7). Watchtowers are also ubiquitous, particularly in the book of Isaiah (see Peters, *The Marvelous Clouds* 235). The presence of towers in sacred texts from various religions usually signals the power that accompanies "over the top" viewpoints.

One reason why the tower persists in our stories and cities is that it offers a central point of view, rising above all (or most) other sights, which is visible across space and time. The tower is to the vertical plane as the wall or trench is to the horizontal: a trace of ancient attempts by humans to re-shape the world through technics. As walls inscribe boundaries and borders, creating distinctions upon

which political concepts arise (such as between inside/outside, civilization/barbarism, order/chaos, us/them;), towers similarly inscribe concepts into the sky (for more on the political concepts inscribed by walls, see Siegert 11-12). As Rudolf Arnheim notes, all buildings share the "daring sin" of encroachment, intruding into empty space and raising "the basis of human action beyond the safety of the common ground" (34). It is this sense of size and range that we see the familiar claims of towers as "ladders to the Gods" or as points on the earth that aspire to pierce the heavens. In so doing, however, towers create platforms for a plethora of other human activities: communication, most notably, but also observation, time keeping, experimentation, and even violence. Michele Bertomen emphasizes amplification and distribution as essential aspects in how towers facilitate "communications between distant points and a consequent sense of the shortening of space and time" (55). That towers help link distant points via the sending and receiving of optical or acoustic data is a common refrain in media theory (see Kittler, "History of Communication" and Peters, *The Marvelous Clouds* 238-40).

Towers are also useful tools for thinking more closely about the political and ethical implications of how social activity is arranged spatially. Eyal Weizman argues for a politics of verticality to show how two-dimensional mapping cannot adequately capture what he calls "the experience of territory" by those living in the West Bank. The presence of Israeli settlements built on hills and the use of drones demonstrate occupation and surveillance even if maps show separation and autonomy. "Geo-politics," Weizman writes, "is a flat discourse," part of the "cartographic imagination inherited from the military and political spatialities of the modern nation-state" (Weizman). Towers might similarly serve as a powerful tool for considering the relationship between vertical space and the governmentality of everyday life.

Modern towers appear primarily through the prism of the skyscraper—a potent architectural symbol of the transformation from traditional to modern society. In *Skyscraper Cinema*, Merrill Schleier writes that the role of skyscrapers in film concerns "the relationship between masculinity and modernity…a metaphor for upward mobility and capital achievement" (3). Mumford took a wider historical view but still saw in the skyscraper the same base will-to-power

(and capital). Skyscrapers were the newest instantiation of the tendency of those with power and capital to produce monumental architecture—at great expense, using costly material, and with much fanfare—as a symbolic expression of that power (Mumford, *City in History* 65 and *Sticks and Stones* 108). Both Andreas Bernard and Stephen Graham have noted the significance of elevators within skyscrapers as an important—but surprisingly little-studied—medium of movement and circulation, which has for the last hundred years played a key role in the organization of vertical space (Bernard; Graham, "Super Tall"). There is a rich literature that examines the expression and delineation of class or racial divisions via the organization of space along lines such as urban and rural, or inner city and suburb. Graham, however, expands on this literature to note that such separation also occurs along the vertical plane. He carefully traces how society's financial elites retreat from busy and congested cities by living in expensive high-rise apartments that offer abundant light, fresh air, and personal safety that is short supply on the ground and thereby transform city skylines (Graham, *Vertical* 174-220).

Such are the terms with which we tend to describe how humans climb the vertical axis in attempts to, among other things, mediate between heaven and earth, achieve large-scale non-verbal mass communication, and express power. The assessments of Schleier, Bertomen, Weizman, Graham, and others effectively emphasize the representational, political, communicative, and economic registers that shape so much of our thinking about towers. However, it is equally important, we argue, to complement these interpretations of verticality with ones more attentive to the material and infrastructural characteristics of towers and other "sky media" (Peters, *The Marvelous Clouds* 165). There is already some important work being done in this field, for instance, on the media archaeologies of Wi-Fi, radio, and other towers (Mattern), analyses of satellites and earth-observing media (Parks, *Cultures in Orbit*; Russill), and the politics of grain elevators on the Canadian prairies (Barney). Darin Barney, in this last example, argues that grain elevators serve as "unconventional media that structure temporal and spatial experience—and political possibility—on the Prairies" (5). In placing these archetypal rural towers (which have received almost no scholarly attention) on the agen-

da for communication research, Barney seeks to correct ignorance about the rural within contemporary theorizations of technology and politics, which continue to treat such settings with either nostalgia or simplicity. Author Ali Piwowar and photographer Kyler Zeleny echo such sentiments in their recent article for this journal, noting that the role of grain elevators in networks of economic and social activity, in addition to their architectural "monumentality," are essential to understanding grain elevators' intangible cultural heritage (Piwowar). Such work invites us to consider the modes of social cohesiveness that are produced by the cultural and material infrastructures entangled in the tower as monument.

These themes resonate with John Durham Peters's characterization of towers as "logistical media" that organize people and places in space and time ("Calendar, Clock, Tower" 37-38). A tower's ascendance up the vertical axis, Peters claims, facilitates the expansion of its reach along the horizontal, allowing humans to extend their communicative reach. Towers, for example, allow one to see and hear *over* a great distance, but also to be seen and heard *from* a great distance. They also represent exclusivity, as access to the tower from the ground is often limited. For Peters, these characteristics are part of the reason they are associated with divine and secular power (Peters, "Calendar, Clock, Tower" 36). The new perceptual vistas offered by towers open them up to an array of uses and functions that make them objects of awe, tourism, and also resentment (Peters, *The Marvelous Clouds* 234-40). Peters's insights build on Mumford's earlier understanding of time-keeping techniques in Benedictine monasteries that established basic rhythms of time according to the seven canonical hours, each marked by the ringing of bells. These techniques would eventually synthesize the optical (clock face) and acoustic (bells) data streams as part of the "cultural preparation" for modern "clock time" (*Technics and Civilization* 12). Alain Corbin also shows how the nineteenth-century bell towers of rural France symbolized community identity, ordered time, marked geographic territory, and characterized sacred or solemn moments by transforming auditory space during festivals, holidays, deaths, and church services (Corbin).

For Peters, towers—and a family of tall structures ranging from minarets to radio and television antennas—are platforms for dissem-

ination and markers of public space and time. In a similar register, the historical work of David E. Nye, Anne Cronin and David Nasaw points to the role played by advertising billboards, nighttime lighting, and electrification in the transition of nineteenth-century city life into an era associated with the "technological sublime" of modernity and its popular entertainments (Nye; Cronin; Nasaw). David Henkin neatly describes how the appearance of words on a variety of surfaces around New York City (such as on walls, handbills, and street signs) represented shifts in nineteenth century public culture caused by media innovation and urbanization (Henkin). Aurora Wallace details how newspaper owners made use of their office buildings for competitive advantage, displaying billboards of breaking news about sporting events, political developments, and other matters of public interest. These displays were soon replaced by stereopticon shows that were projected onto canvas sheets draped over buildings, and which sometimes displayed advertisements in between newsworthy images (Wallace 58).

Such work echoes Peters's larger point that for too long our tendency has been to think of "media" only as devices that send and receive signals, but, "[i]f we took towers, sundials, and clocks as media of communication, as they undoubtedly are, we would have to think freshly about where meaning comes from" (Peters, *The Marvelous Clouds* 240). For the remainder of this essay, we take this proposition seriously but wish to bring more specificity to Peters's general theorizations. Our two Canadian case studies will show how towers are ideally suited for considering the interaction between symbolic communication, vertical orientation, and mediality.

TWO CITIES, TWO TOWERS

If it is clear from our literature review that towers represent ideal forms through which to consider the interaction between the built and medial environments, it is more difficult to see why there appears to be so little written to address these issues—especially in the Canadian context. Perhaps the lack of attention paid towards them reflects the feelings that many people in Calgary and Toronto have about their towers. Though the CN Tower remains a key nodal

point in communication systems, as the main transmitter for 16 television and radio stations as well as microwave transmissions and fixed mobile communication, it is largely cut off from most circuits of mobility used by Torontonians, save those trekking to sporting events at the Rogers Centre or the newly built aquarium. It was not supposed to be this way. The CN Tower was originally conceived as part of a major revitalization project. Toronto's old rail yards were to be replaced by an expansive "Metro Centre" complex featuring a communication tower, a new headquarters for the CBC, and a transit hub to replace Union Station (which was to be demolished as part of the plan).

Figure 2: Early rendering of CN Tower as part of Metro Centre Complex

Though politicians of the day imagined the project as a vehicle by which Toronto would enter the pantheon of great world cities, its final result was considerably reduced. Only the CN Tower and a small plaza at its base were built, with the SkyDome to follow thirteen years later (in 1989).

This inauspicious start was a sign of things to come. The tower has occupied an uncertain place in the urban fabric of Toronto and the imaginations of its inhabitants from the start. The opening of its

doors on June 26, 1976 was greeted by press coverage that oscillated between excitement about the tower's scale (it was once the tallest free-standing structure in the world) and anxieties about lightning strikes, fire safety, earthquakes, and falling ice. Since then, article after article has acknowledged the CN Tower as, variously, an engineering marvel, a bland symbol of architectural largesse, or an elaborate white elephant devoid of cultural value. In one of the more famous early characterizations, *Macleans* columnist Allan Fotheringham referred to the tower as a testimony to "mechanical machismo," an "exercise in juvenile senility," and as "a collection of concrete piled higher into the sky than any other pile of concrete" (88).

Figure 3: CN Tower around the time of its completion, 1975 (Bois Spremow)

Arthur Kroker's 1984 book *Technology and the Canadian Mind* is significant as an example of the early scholarly discourse about the CN Tower, and for its effort to link it to other communications technologies such as "the railway, radio, television, telegraph, and microwave transmissions," which he sees as central to "Canadian discourse" and "Canadian identity" (9). For Kroker, the CN Tower is an "aggressive display of the architecture of hi-tech," a "phallocentric symbol of the union of power and technology in the design of Canadian discourse,"

and a "reminder of our immersion into the processed world of communication technologies" (9-10). He sees the CN Tower as an ideal symbol of the "in-between" nature of the Canadian position, "a restless oscillation between the pragmatic will to live at all costs of the Americans and a searing lament for what has been suppressed by the modern technical order" (7-8). This account draws upon themes from strains of English-Canadian thought, best exemplified in the work of Harold Innis and George Grant, which combines skepticism of Canada's surrender to technological imperatives and broader anxieties about American cultural imperialism. Kroker's skepticism regarding the CN Tower's "bold" yet "almost primitive" architecture should also be understood in the context of a general unease about the symbolic value of concrete, a building material that, as Julia Morgan Charles notes in her study of 1960s and 70s Montreal megaprojects, is frequently "blamed today for the homogenization of urban centres and the erasure of local architectural characteristics" (Kroker 10; Charles 56).

Calgary's tower has similarly struggled to match the scope of its conception. Stephanie White recounts that as early as 1963, architect W.G. Milne envisioned a "great golden spire" that could be, in his words, "admired and shown with pride […] visually apparent; an integral part of our day to day life and available to all" (qtd. in White 30). Milne pitched the project to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Canadian Confederation and create a sense of pride of place for Calgarians. The first part of his pitch was a difficult sell for Western Canadians, but for the second part found a receptive audience in Calgary's political and commercial classes, whose collective mood was jovial throughout the 1950s and 60s. The city's population more than doubled between 1950 and 1965, employment was at an all-time high, and coffers were full thanks to the continuing drift of the Canadian economy toward oil and gas as economic staples.

If Milne's idea for a golden spire was an easy sell to Calgarians, financing it was not, even in those halcyon days. It took a partnership between the City of Calgary, Husky Oil and Refining Ltd., and the Canadian Pacific Railway. As White recounts, Milne would not end up the tower's lead architect, nor would it be built on any of his proposed sites (31-33). When the tower finally appeared in 1968,

christened "Husky Tower," both his involvement as architect and his aspirations for nation-building had been scrubbed (architects think about nation and imagination, CEOs about economics and supply chain).

Figure 4: Calgary Tower under construction, 1968

The Calgary-Husky-CPR coalition arose from three separate though related goals. Milne had captured the imaginations of city council and planners and put them in a monumental mood. Meanwhile, the

Canadian arm of Husky Oil Ltd. had purchased all outstanding U.S. shares of the company in 1960, so it was eager to cement its position in Calgary's corporate scene and the Canadian economy more broadly. The tower project presented an opportunity to fulfill its practical need for office space with flair. Finally, CPR was eager to redevelop the land on which its old station had stood, which its newly minted real estate arm, Marathon Realty, still owned. In an inversion of what would happen in Toronto, it took a larger complex—including a shopping mall, parking, a new CPR station, and office space—to get Calgary's tower built.

In spite of Milne's everyday, egalitarian concept, the Calgary Tower now sits in a largely forgotten corner of the downtown core. As White notes, it is impacted on all sides, by commercial rail lines, major auto thoroughfares, and the historic Palliser hotel (35). Thus, like its Toronto counterpart, the Calgary Tower is disconnected from the city's major circuits of economic and cultural activity.

Figure 5: Lonely Calgary Tower, 2015 (Stuart Graydon, Calgary Herald)

Once the tallest structure in Western Canada, the Calgary Tower has been surpassed in height many times over, in Calgary and elsewhere, and is now visible only from relatively few areas of the city. When the tower does come into view, it offers quaint reminders of Calgary's mid-century emergence as economic engine of the "New West" and of the city's entrée onto the international stage as host of the 1988 Winter Olympic games. But such nostalgia doesn't typically assuage critics, who bemoan how its concrete and dwarfed proportions stand awkwardly amongst downtown's sleek glass surfaces (Spearman; Burgener). The Tower seems to have become, in the imagination, what it always was in material terms: *grey*. It is commonly described as boring, banal, and unspectacular, a conscientious architectural functionary without a function. Even the tower's "red spaceship" top, without the proper room to exhibit itself, is rarely admired (White 34). Flashy new structures from star architects, such as Santiago Calatrava's Peace Bridge and Norman Foster's The Bow, seem only to have further marginalized the Calgary Tower. As an editorial in the *Calgary Herald* put it in 1989, the tower "is just there" (Spearman).

If the Calgary Tower seems no longer to resonate in symbolic registers of nation, regional identity, power, or progress, it also resists being understood in logistical or infrastructural terms. Unlike the CN Tower, it is almost never used for communication or air traffic control purposes, and so does not readily send or receive signals in the sense we are used to towers doing. It has a carillon and radio antenna for "police and taxi use"; but these are rarely used or mentioned (Joynt). The Calgary Tower has no religious affiliation and so mediates heaven and earth only in the most tangential ways. There is no public square or central gathering place at its base. The Calgary Tower is haunted by these earlier medial functions, but seems to be denied the opportunity to act as its predecessors have and therefore struggles to live up to their lofty legacies. However, because it was not originally designed to function as a conventional medium of information storage, transmission, or processing, occasions when the Calgary Tower *does* adopt the position of media platform are conspicuous and sometimes confounding (two irresistible features for curious scholars). Furthermore, the Calgary Tower's limitations invite us

to cast terms like *platform* and *infrastructure* into wider registers. Infrastructure need not only describe the structures and systems upon which military affairs, communication, transportation, and habitation depend. Civic culture, too, requires infrastructure, and towers like Calgary and CN, in platforming other media and modes of communication, dutifully oblige. In what remains of this paper, we account for such functions by considering three medial registers that are activated by both towers. These bring together the symbolic, aesthetic, and material components of towers we have outlined so far in this paper.

RITUAL

Since James Carey's famous essay on the topic, the longstanding relationship between media technologies and various kinds of ritual has been well documented (11-28). Media commemorates important events; but they are just as important in structuring the more banal rhythms and rituals of daily life, from checking messages and e-mail on our phones in bed, listening to radio programs during morning commutes, to updating, curating, and otherwise maintaining social media newsfeeds all day-everyday-everywhere. Thinking of towers through a ritualistic lens allows us to consider how forms of architecture are part of spatial and temporal arrangements of people, places, and things within city life.

One of the most striking ritual features of the Calgary Tower is that, like the hilltops in Aeschylus's *Agamemnon*, it is a platform to disseminate the "elemental" medium of fire (Peters, *The Marvelous Clouds* 115). Atop the tower sits a natural gas cauldron capable of releasing flames of up to 10 metres. The cauldron was installed for the 1988 Olympic Winter Games and its illumination was one of the most memorable moments of the Games' opening ceremonies. This giant torch—which bears a striking, though coincidental, resemblance to the official torch of the Games—remained lit for the duration of the Games and still holds the record for highest Olympic flame. The tower provides a platform for fire to conquer vertical space, as the Olympic torch relay has traditionally done with horizontal space, and to mark durational time.

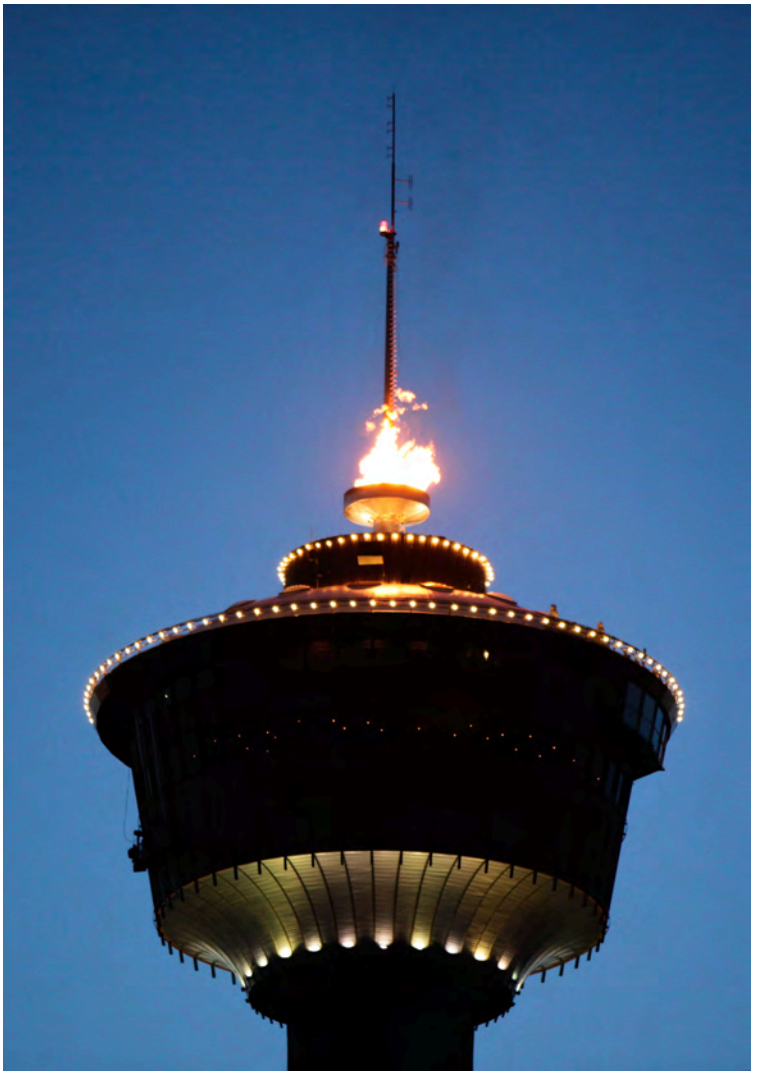

Figure 6: cauldron atop the Calgary Tower during the Vancouver Olympic Games, 18 January 2010

Today, the cauldron serves a wider array of ceremonial and commemorative purposes. It is lit to mark holidays like Canada and Remembrance Day as well as major sporting events (e.g. in celebration of every gold medal won by Team Canada in each Olympic Games since Calgary '88 and the more infrequent successes of the Calgary Flames NHL team, such as when it won the Stanley Cup in 1989). A recent initiative has resulted in torch lighting to memorialize local military and service professionals killed in action. The passing of famous Calgarians, such as its former Mayor and Premier of Alberta Ralph Klein, have also been marked with the lighting of the flame.

The Calgary Tower also hosts a sophisticated suite of LED lights, installed in 2015, that signals holidays, citywide events, and temporal phenomena such as seasons. The CN Tower has had a similar lighting scheme since 2007, and both towers are platforms for these ritual modes of communicating time. In Toronto, the LEDs are illuminated whenever one of Toronto's major sports teams makes the playoffs

Figure 7: Screen capture, CN Tower Lighting Schedule, May 2017

(until recently a rare occurrence). However, the tower also takes requests from non-denominational, nonpolitical registered national charitable events or causes. A look at a recent schedule, posted in part here (Figure 7), finds the tower serving as a form of information distribution about a range of social causes stemming from hypertension to Lyme disease, and from lupus to bladder cancer, each with its own distinctive color palette. Some structural lighting is dimmed for five minutes on the top of the hour throughout the night on the day a Canadian soldier is repatriated. In both cities, height and light proves to be an irresistible and formidable combination.

In focusing on the ritual elements of marking space and time we can see that towers are more than symbolic. They "platform" other media in complex ways; fire conquers vertical space via the Calgary Tower, in a convergence of logistical and elemental media. In such ritual uses, towers are central points upon which the gaze of the community becomes fixed at certain moments and according to certain rhythms. Like all towers, both CN and Calgary function, simultaneously, as platforms for relaying information, disseminating public virtue, and as ephemeral markers of public record. In so doing they complicate our tendency to associate such characteristics—gatekeeping, status conferral, production of collective experience—in sociological terms with traditional media like newspapers or public broadcasting.

The ritual register frames the Calgary and CN towers as objects to be looked at. But as Roland Barthes brilliantly understood, towers uniquely combine being seen with seeing. We should recall that these Canadian towers were built with looking in mind—they are consistently described as "freestanding observational towers"—and the views they open up of the cities below are important aspects of their role as media platforms.

PERSPECTIVE

In a special issue commemorating the opening of the CN Tower, the *Toronto Star* characterized it as the "King of the Clouds," reminding readers that "the only place higher man's stood is a mountain peak or the moon." From the tower's observation decks high above the city, Torontonians would be given "a view so vast …

on a clear day you can see Barbara Streisand" (King). The article gave the sense that the opening of what was then the world's largest freestanding structure would provide an experience of complete and comprehensive visuality that was a unique gift to the world and privilege of Torontonians.

The *Star*'s characterization also reminds us of how architectural structures and media technologies facilitate the creation and manipulation of sensory perspective, and, as Angela Miller explains, create panoramic views that convert nature into spectacular forms (Miller). Much of the literature exploring the relationship between architecture and media similarly links modernity's transformation of urban life with new cinematic and photographic media that emerged during approximately the same period. For example, we have an extensive literature on panoramas, as both mid-nineteenth-century forms of entertainment and as aesthetic transformations of visual perception that are the result of technological innovation (Huhtamo; Nye). Yet this literature is by and large inattentive to the role of the tower itself in mediating panoramic visions.

One exception is Barthes, who was transfixed by this function of the tower. As he wrote, the views offered by towers fundamentally reshape our perceptions and understandings of the cities that contain them. To view Paris from the Eiffel Tower, he argued, was to "read" rather than simply perceive the city—"to transcend sensation and to see things *in their structure*" (9). This visual mode, Barthes thought, offered a more playful and exploratory experience of the city than possible from below. From the top of a tower, sidewalks, roads, structures, and people are elevated from the usual functional relations we have with them on the ground. They are rendered open to inspection, contemplation, and comparison. New connections can be recognized or forged in this process of what Barthes called "intellection"—a process similar to what Marshall McLuhan, writing about different media phenomena, had earlier described as "pattern recognition" and associated with "cool" media like television (Barthes 9; McLuhan 23-33). From the platform of the Eiffel Tower, Barthes argues, the durational history of Paris is available for the eye to survey and the mind to consider. "Paris, in its duration, under the Tower's gaze, composes itself like an abstract canvas in which dark oblongs

(derived from a very old past) are contiguous with the white rectangles of modern architecture" (12). The eye skips from pre-modern to medieval to modern in a way that is impossible for a grounded body. The tower is the platform of such vision, offering something akin to ocular time-axis manipulation. We are now used to thinking about the way that techniques of visualization such as lists, diagrams, typeface, page layouts, and infographics forge new connections among and pathways through words, people, data, and things; but we are less used to thinking about how media platforms like towers enable the eye to scan the built environment in similar ways.

Figure 8: View from the CN Tower looking west, 6 March 2015 (Ken Lane)

Such views have always been central to the appeal and marketing of the towers in Calgary and Toronto. But if the vistas offered by their observation decks are panoramic surveys of immense spaces, those available through their glass floors are more microscopic in nature. One looks down at a framed, finite space and sees it teeming with movement. Pedestrians, cars, and bicycles uncannily enter, travel across, and exit this frame rather like the way people and objects enter and exit the frame of the cinema. Film's power lies in its ability to show movement, what Deleuze called "time itself," by rendering

the space of the screen as liquid and temporal (16). Here, through the glass floors, the movement of time is similarly presented to the eye.

Figure 9: View from the Calgary Tower's glass floor, 31 December 2005 (D'Arcy Norman)

A slice of the city is offered to the observer not to survey (a spatial act), but to watch unfold in time. If panoramic vistas from observation decks turn time into space, allowing the eye to make jump-cuts across layers of durational time, in these cases we see the reverse: glass floors turn space into time, unfreezing a more localized view.

SPECTACLE

Our final register, spectacle, recalls the images with which we began this essay. The Greenpeace activists in Toronto and Calgary understood the long relationship between towers and the spectacular. Of course, towers of any kind are obvious candidates for a Debordian critique of spectacle as "capital to such a degree of accumulation that it becomes an image"—a logic which, as David

Harvey observes, has transformed cities into dazzling visual displays of capitalist excess (Debord; Harvey 66-98). We should note, however, that towers were spectacular expressions of accumulated wealth and power long before capitalism. But Debord's spectacle is not the only sense in which towers activate the "spectacular." More simply, towers *tower*. They are eye-catching and extraordinary objects to behold—especially those, like Calgary and the CN Tower, built to stand apart. As such, towers synthesize these two aspects of spectacle, symbolic-ideological and sublime. They are platforms upon which spectacle is both crafted and experienced.

To cite a classic example: Throughout 1999, Paris leveraged the Eiffel Tower's spectacular status to become a global attraction for the countdown to the new millennium. Communities in Toronto and Calgary similarly, if less ambitiously, use their respective towers to craft "spectacular" media events for an array of civic purposes. For instance, charity groups often invite citizens to run or walk up the steps, as, for example, in Calgary's twenty-eight year running "Climb for Wilderness." Each year, newspaper articles about the event abound, recounting extraordinary cases of people, young and old, defying expectations for a higher cause. In spite of, or perhaps *because* of, such virtuous uses, towers also attract subversive uses. In addition to the Greenpeace banners, we might cite country musician and amateur pilot Cal Cavendish's infamous "manure run" of 1975, in which the disgruntled musician flew his plane over Calgary, twice buzzing the Calgary Tower in order to startle the diners in its restaurant before dumping 100 pounds of manure on the city's downtown ("The Day the 'Mad Manure Bomber' Struck without Warning").

Despite their potentially subversive uses, such spectacular vistas remain part of the attraction of towers and are marketed accordingly. Promotional material for the CN Tower, for instance, boasts about its "thrilling" high-speed glass elevators that "give you a breath-taking view as you race upwards at 22 kilometers per hour!" ("High Speed Elevators"). Since 2011, more adventurous visitors are able to experience "Toronto's most extreme attraction," the EdgeWalk. This is the "world's highest full circle hands-free walk" that takes place on the top of the tower's main pod, 356m above ground ("EdgeWalk Overview"). These more recent additions complement the many iter-

ations of restaurants and bars that have been housed at the top of the tower, from today's restaurant "360" to "Sparkles," a nightclub that began in the 1970s as a disco and which would go on to house other subcultural events including punk and rave shows (Benson).

As with other revolving restaurants in towers from Calgary to Vancouver and Niagara Falls, these offer visitors the opportunity to enjoy eating and dancing "in the clouds." During the 1980s and 90s, large video arcades and installations offering tours of the universe greeted visitors of the CN Tower's main level. Each of these different forms of amusement offers experiences of the latest technological innovations—whether video games, lasers and strobe lights, or early experiences with virtual reality—further entrenching the association visitors have between the CN Tower and the world of hi-tech. As such, the tower is consciously made and remade as a site for futuristic tourism and sensational thrills, a contemporary iteration of the "culture of attractions" often associated with early motion picture technologies (see Gunning).

In each of these examples, towers are platforms for spectacular events or experiences that arise in association with the material and symbolic significance of towers as well as their capacity to attract media coverage. Towers should thus be understood as important nodal points within broader networks of urban spectatorship and communal experience.

CONCLUSION

Towers are pillars of horizontal networks, the leverage points by which fantasies of connectivity and nation-building attempt to ascend the vertical axis. The CN and Calgary Towers are the vertical expressions of power and wealth amassed by the Canadian National Railway's conquering of horizontal space and Husky Oil's extraction of subterranean material. Yet, as our analysis shows, these towers are enmeshed in wider networks of activity—not just communal, symbolic, or space- and time-binding—but also ritualistic, perspectival, and spectacular. Through their uses as platforms for different communicative forms, in their capacity for storage, and as disseminators of information, towers can also exhibit medial char-

acteristics. All towers should therefore be considered in ways that move beyond conventional analyses that reduce them to monuments of capital accumulation, pillars of militarily logistics, or expressions of phallic symbolism.

We wish to conclude by emphasizing this point about verticality. Towers teach us the value of casting our eyes up, and their absence in dominant streams of communication and media theory shows a pronounced bias toward horizontal media and networks—railroads, fur trades, highways, telephone networks, and the like. We hope the medial functions of towers described above will provide some preliminary conceptual tools for considering other vertical intermediaries. For instance, how do Montreal's Mt. Royal, Sudbury's Inco Superstack, Halifax's Citadel, or St. John's Signal Hill (among many other possible examples in Canada and beyond) similarly stitch communities together across space and time (for better or worse)? How might a consideration of each site's mediality expand the scope of our understanding of civic culture, both urban and rural? Might analyses of Haida *Gyáa'aang* (totem poles) in terms of verticality open up modes of engaging these structures in ways that reject colonial optics that would diminish their community-binding functions?

Figure 10: Inco Nickel Smelter Superstack, October 2006

Future work might consider the relationship between verticality and mediality in more subtle terms. Recent research on "urban screens" or "media screens" in architectural and media studies literature has been instructive in this regard (see especially McQuire et al.). Such work explores the continued expansion of screens in urban life, from large "Jumbotrons" at sporting events to LED billboards in cityscapes along with buildings constructed with screens built into the form of the building itself (on "Jumbotrons," see Siegel). Might we also re-consider the Calgary Saddledome or Toronto's Scotiabank Arena as part of a more expansive understanding of Canadian media spaces? How can we hope to understand the effects of home-sharing platforms like AirBnB without considering the vertical transformation of many neighbourhoods, particularly in metropolises like Toronto and Vancouver, into arrangements of condominium towers that further separate rich from poor and displace long-term residents from city centres? Can we reconsider the nature of Canadian life by considering a range of media technologies—from in-flight services to flight

control panels—as part of the mediation of airspace? What role does height play in "flat" lands like the prairies? How might we consider things like mountainside chalets and ski hills as themselves medial in nature, offering forms of panoramic visuality that are provided to those visiting the CN and Calgary Towers? (see Dini and Girodo)

Our thinking along the vertical axis need not only move up. Unconventional media objects, practices, techniques, and technologies come into view when we also consider what lies beneath the Earth's surface. Recent work in this field combines media theory with geosciences to understand how the Anthropocene is inscribed into the strata of the Earth itself (Parikka). Digging, drilling, pumping, pulling, and other techniques of extraction, however, have been central to human culture for millennia. Recent research into "petrocultures'" shows that these activities continue to structure global political economy in Canada and beyond (Wilson, Carlson, and Szeman). At the same time, histories of tunnels and subterranean subterfuge remind us that people have taken advantage of the Earth's cover for an even longer time.

As our attention turns increasingly toward the mediation of culture and politics by digital platforms, we would do well to consider "platforming" operations over longer time horizons. We know that towers are central to communication and surveillance networks, as are other "sky media" like drones (Parks, *Rethinking Media Coverage*). But their verticality also provides a basis for conceptual and abstract modeling that might bring into focus phenomena of unthinkable sizes and scales, such as Benjamin Bratton's modelling of "planetary-scale computation" as The Stack (xviii and *passim*). Bratton's model helps us understand that computation exceeds the flat diagrams of nodes and links that have for too long dominated our conceptions of networked communication. Towers are stacks, too (as residents of Sudbury, ON well know). A collective imaginary biased toward two-dimensions and flat ontologies has limited our thinking about such issues. In facing uncertain futures, we need to turn our attention to structures like towers that have been teaching us about mediality along the vertical axis for a very long time.

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IMAGE NOTES

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Figure 6: Cauldron atop the Calgary Tower during the Vancouver Olympic Games, 18 January 2010 (Province of British Columbia). https://www.flickr.com/photos/bcgovphotos/4287684883/. Accessed 22 February 2019.

Figure 7: Screen capture, CN Tower Lighting Schedule, May 2017. Current calendar can be found at http://www.cntower.ca/en-ca/about-us/night-lighting.html.

Figure 8: View from the CN Tower looking west, 6 March 2015 (Ken Lane). https://flic.kr/p/rkBxmd. Accessed 22 February 2019.

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TERRAFORMINGS

VINCENT BRUYERE

***Abstract**: Terraforming, or planetary engineering, is a speculative domain of activity entertaining colonial solutions to extreme disaster and systemic crises in the age of spatial exploration. Since the 1940s, terraforming has provided an extremely fertile playground for science fiction writers, whose terraformed worlds have blown up to planetary dimensions the historical and narrative contours of a novelistic tradition born at the beginning of the eighteenth century on Robinson Crusoe's island. It is my contention that the speculative existence of terraformed worlds is always already informed by a cultural memory of oikos—the inhabited world. No less experimental in tone and intent than terraforming itself, this paper seeks to transform terraforming into a critical tool in visual culture: a mode of handling texts and images whose temporal parameters exceed that of traditional historiography.*

***Abstract**: La biosphérisation, ou terraformation, désigne le domaine d'activité scientifique qui se donne comme objectif d'imaginer des solutions coloniales à des désastres extrêmes et à des crises systémiques à l'âge de l'exploration spatiale. Depuis les années 1940, les mondes terraformés sont au cœur >de l'écriture de science-fiction, où ils donnent une nouvelle dimension à cette histoire du roman initiée au début du dix-septième siècle sur l'île de Robinson Crusoé sous les traits d'un projet colonial. En ce sens, l'existence des mondes terraformés, bien que spéculative, est toujours déjà enrichie d'une mémoire culturelle de l'oikos—le monde habité. L'argument poursuivi dans cet article, lui-même de forme expérimentale, cherche à transformer la notion de biosphérisation en un outil critique qui servira à approcher et assembler un ensemble de textes et d'images dont les ramifications temporelles excèdent leurs cadres historiques.*

> World-making, "making things happen," is one of the things our species does, and enjoys doing. We also enjoy (in the strong sense) bringing the past along with us, an effort that also requires imaginative activity. (Fradenburg 69)

Terraforming, or planetary engineering, exists at the juncture of two forms of enjoyment: imagination and memory. It is a speculative domain of activity entertaining colonial solutions to extreme disaster and systemic crises in the age of spatial exploration (Sagan and Druyan 329-49). In its colonial incarnation, terraforming envisions hospitable planetary systems and converted environments in preparation for a time where conditions of life on Earth will have become impossible. Since the 1940s, terraforming has provided an extremely fertile playground for science fiction writers, whose terraformed worlds have blown up to planetary dimensions the historical and narrative contours of a novelistic tradition born at the beginning of the eighteenth century on the island of Robinson Crusoe (Heise; Pak).

Walter Benjamin saw in the rise of the novel in Europe the "earliest symptom [of the industrial transformation of society] whose end is the decline of storytelling" (87). In the spirit of Benjamin's ecology of narrative forms, what historical transformation shall we divine behind the incipient rise of terraforming in the history of the novelistic enterprise?[1] A geological or deep-historical transformation perhaps, if, as Benjamin also argues, "one must imagine the transformation of epic forms occurring in rhythms comparable to those of the change that has come over the earth's surface in the course of thousands of centuries" (Benjamin 88). As such, terraforming invites geological time in the history of mimesis to open up a natural history of representation. Once again Benjamin can help us understand this extension of natural history to the history of mimesis. For him, the distinction between *Naturgeschichte* and *Historie* does not hinge on a distinction of agency (i.e., the idea that nature, rocks, season, and so on have no agency, see Povinelli 30-56). In this configuration, natural history (*Naturgeschichte*) does not only refer to the discourse of knowledge that emerged in Europe during the eighteenth century; but can apply as much to an explanation of those moments when human-made artefacts are reclaimed by nature in the process of their ruination (Santner 16-17). Or when the work of mimesis is

less predicated on the imitation of forms than on the imitation of a quasi-geological process depositing time into human-made strata. If there was a time when the "patient process of Nature … was once imitated by men [in the form of] miniatures, ivory carvings, elaborated to the point of greatest perfection, stones that are perfect in polish and engraving, lacquer work or paintings in which a series of thin, transparent layers are placed one on top of the other" (Valéry qtd. in Benjamin 92), today, the same display of miniatures, ivory carvings, and polished stones, next to the intricacy of a printed circuit board (PCB, compose a technofossil record: a preview of humanity in its fossil state (Zalasiewicz et al.)

Taken out of its context within planetary engineering and science fiction, terraforming becomes something like a critical tool: a mode of handling texts and images whose temporal parameters exceed that of conventional historical periodization and a way of querying literary and visual scenarios of being historical and hospitable in a time when both historicity and planetary hospitability are increasingly challenged by, "anthropogenic explanations of climate change," which "spell the collapse of the age-old humanist distinction between natural history and human history" (Chakrabarty 201).

Fig. 1: Still from *The Birds* Alfred Hitchcock, dir. US, 1963.

As an evolutionary pressure, long-term patterns of rising temperatures are creating pathways for fungus to colonize warm-blooded creatures and, in the process, rekindling human interest in parasitology and mycology (Kupferschmidt). In Siberia, thawing tundra provides ancient microorganisms trapped in permafrost with ecological opportunities to rise, thus breaking new grounds for potentially disastrous outbreak scenarios (Sirucek). In a scene, which, in retrospect, offers an image of uncanny resemblance to these tales of disturbed and dislocated fungi and microorganisms in search of new homes, Alfred Hitchcock concludes *The Birds* (US, 1963) with a depiction of quiet evacuation. As the surrendering survivors make their way out of the story, they leave behind the landscape of a world that does not want them in it. However, until the end, the screen that contained their cinematic life, will remain framed by the assumption that there is still a world outside Bodega Bay from which to watch and even mourn those who did not survive the feathered assaults. In other words, the world the evacuees leave behind remains a screen upon which reality endures as a representational problem. There must be a world in which to register the loss of a particular sense of dwelling as they knew it. What comes after or later—should the birds' rampage escalate into a planetary crisis—is for another ending to tell. This ending is the starting point of Alan Weisman's *The World Without Us* (2007), in which a hypothesis hands over the world to a thought experiment—what would happen to the Earth if all humans were to disappear overnight?"—allowing for a terraforming story in reverse to be told. The tableaus with which Hitchcock and Weisman leave us look like a still life painting by Balthasar van der Ast (1593-1657), in which critters invade the frame to take possession of what was formerly a human domain of representation.

Fig. 2: Detail from Balthasar van der Ast, *Still Life of Flowers, Fruit, Shells, and Insects* (c. 1629). 7 1/8 × 29 1/4 in. (43.5 × 74.3 cm). Birmingham Museum of Art. https://artsbma.org/collection/still-life-of-flowers-fruit-shells-and-insects/; https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Still_Life_of_Flowers,_Fruit,_Shells,_and_Insects_-_Balthasar_van_der_Ast_-_Google_Cultural_Institute.jpg#file

Commenting on Juan Sánchez Cotán's still life painting, Charles Sterling writes: "All Cotán's *bodegones* consist of simple, wholesome food standing on a still or held in the air by the hand of a geometer and poet adept at ordering a world of marvels: did he not suspend a quince and a cabbage at the end of a string, where they turn and glow like planets in a boundless night?" (95)

Fig. 3: Juan Sánchez Cotán, *Quince, Cabbage, and Cucumber*, 1602, oil on canvas, 68.9 cm x 84.5 cm. San Diego Museum of Art. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Quince,_Cabbage,_Melon,_and_Cucumber,_by_Juan_Sanchez_Cotan,_c._1602_-_San_Diego_Museum_of_Art_-_DSC06624.JPG

Glowing planetary views released by terraforming projections compose something akin to Cotán's suspended still life. In that regard, terraforming is a mode of assembling images of earth-like structures to simulate the allure and allurements of Venus or Europa (one of Jupiter's moons), endowed with a breathable atmosphere. Digital images of terraformed worlds transform interstellar chiaroscuro into a cinematic space: terraforming runs the trajectory of planetary life

like a movie. And like a cinematic image, the planetary glow of terraformed worlds exists in a space of constant referral and return to the big picture: Earth.

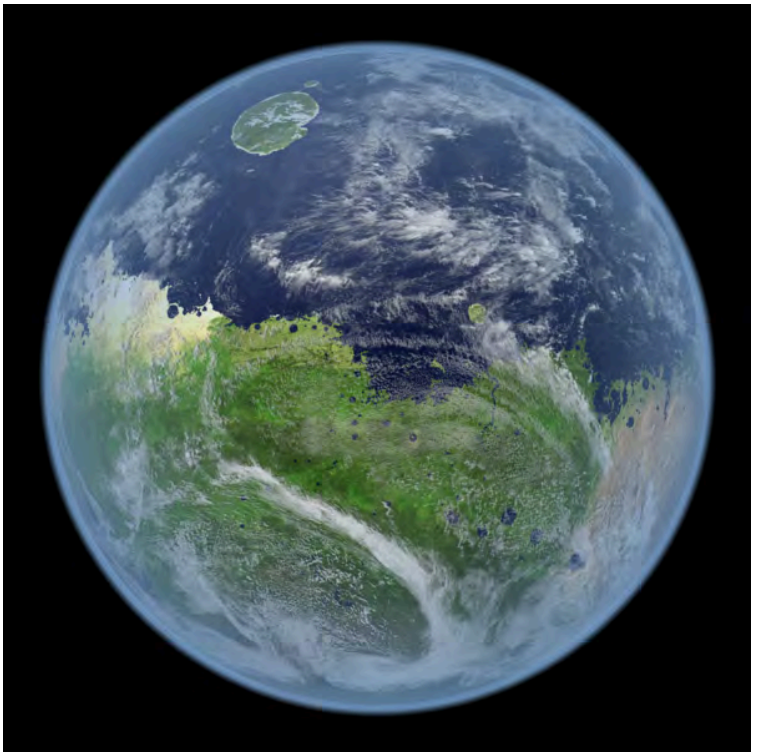

Fig. 4: Kevin M. Gill. "A Living Mars," (2012). https://www.flickr.com/photos/kevinmgill/8165909516

Terraforming an unhospitable planet consists in editing out the planetary scenes that do not add up to Earth-like conditions, thus leaving an infinite number of extraterrestrial sequences to a darkest night of possibility. In that sense, terraforming images colonize what was sublime in Immanuel Kant's night vision of a star-studded sky: "If we call sublime the sight of a star-studded sky, we must not base this judgment on a notion of the stars as worlds inhabited by rational be-

ings…. We must instead consider the sky as we see it, as a wide vault that contains everything" (Kant qtd. in De Man 126). Terraformed worlds turn the vaulted night containing Kant's musings about a world potentially emptied from human meaning and other teleogical projections into a monument to world-making, whose design would be entirely ours.

If there is a cinematic terraforming—a space of constant referral and return to the Earth—there is too, at least as a theoretical possibility, an "acinematic" counterpart to it (Lyotard, "Acinema"). In this pyrotechnic version of planetary engineering, images of terraformed worlds glow in a boundless night but by burning through the transformative potentials of imaginary worlds. This version of terraforming speaks to a certain experience of the world at odds with the image of the "Blue Marble," of the Earth as contained sphere, as form of containment, where precisely "what is contained is explosive and metamorphic" (Pinkus 66). Or to paraphrase Jean-François Lyotard: acinematic terraformed worlds glow like an incandescent matchstick that a child ignites gratuitously (Lyotard, "Acinema" 350), for nothing, for the heck of it ("*pour des prunes*"), with nothing in return but the sheer visual pleasure to see and be affected by a vision.

Between 1986 and 1991 with *Lime Hills*, Naoya Hatakeyama photographed limestone quarries in a recognizable landscape format, where rock formations stand still even if conspicuously carved, displaced, and remodeled by human activity. With stunning images of projected rocks and debris in suspended animation, the series *Blast* constitutes a further development in Hatakeyama's landscape photography reaching a point where it will seem quite appropriate to ask what is left of the landscape, both the format and the surface, or whether we have moved beyond it. The question reads at multiple levels by virtue of the semantic and historical layers of the term "landscape," but the paradox remains that, no matter how damaged or sullied the represented surface is, a blasted landscape remain a landscape (Mitchell, "Imperial Landscape" 15). What ends up being blasted by Hatakeyama is the history of landscape as an interface between land and a certain way of life. With *Blast*, the sub-surface surfaces in an extractive present that marks the passage between surfaces in the same way that in Émile Benveniste's linguistics the present as

tense marks the passage from past to future, and the coincidence between "the event described [and] the instance of discourse that describes it" (227). The extractive present is the other side of the exhausting present. It designates the fact that ongoing extraction is not necessarily a display of technique and mastery, but a state of affairs in which solutions are not sought, where a present dispenses itself from having to change by keeping on drilling and fracking.

Fig: 5: Naoya Hatakeyama. *Blast* #15 from a series of 17 chromogenic prints. 8 in. x 10 in (20.32 cm x 25.4 cm). San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, promised gift of Kurenboh © Naoya Hatakeyama, courtesy Taka Ishii Gallery. https://wsimag.com/art/18495-the-show-that-lost-itself

For anthropologist Anna Tsing, the future of the landscape also lies in its blasting. It pertains to a possibility to form transformative relationships across species (ponderosa pines, matsutake mushrooms, and humans), across scales (atmospheric, diasporic, and environmental), and across territories (Japan, Finland, and Oregon)—this possibility can be toxic or beneficent, depending on the circumstances (Tsing 87-88). The blasting is thus a modality of what Lyotard calls the "*dépaysement*" (Lyotard, *L'inhumain* 194)—literally "unlandscaping," and rendered as "estrangement" in translation (Lyotard, *The Inhuman* 183). This un-landscaping is the condition of possibility for landscape insofar as it brings forth a materiality that is not neces-

sarily that of the place—the face of a mother, for example, can be a landscape for her baby (Lyotard, *L'inhumain* 199)—and puts a place, a surface, a matter, an entire geography, out of reach.

Christina Olson comments on the terraforming properties of Andrew Wyeth's famed painting: "Andy put me where he knew I wanted to be. Now that I can't be there anymore, all I do is think of that picture and I'm there" (Olson qtd. in Griffin 36). There in *Christina's World* (1948), she finds herself immersed rather than standing in the wonderfully textured grassland that occupies most of the pictorial space under a narrow skyline. But Wyeth didn't just vicariously give her the world surrounding her farmhouse, which a form of muscular atrophy paralyzing her lower body prevented her to envision as landscape. He designed for her a pictorial prosthesis to make a genre accessible visually and affectively, charting a space of otherwise in the midst of a disabling environment.

Terraforming, redeployed as a critical tool, is a mode of trying on and testing out the power of images on defining a relation to the world. In an otherwise peripheral scene lost in a corner of the monumental collection of the *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, edited by Reuben Gold Thwaites, a missionary terraforms the planet on which he has landed. Jean de Brébeuf writes in his 1635 report to Father le Jeune, sent from the village of Ihonatiria in the Huron country:

> Et quand nous leur preschons vn Dieu, Createur du Ciel & de la terre & de toutes choses; de mesme quand nous leur parlons d'vn Enfer & d'vn Paradis, & du reste de nos mystères; les opiniastres respondent, que cela est bon pour nostre Pays, non pour le leur; que chaque Pays a ses façons de faire : mais leur ayant monstré par le moyen d'vn petit globe que nous avons apporté, qu'il n'y a qu'un seul monde, ils demeurent sans réplique. (Brébeuf 119)
>
> And when we preach to them of one God, Creator of Heaven and earth, and of all things, and even when we talk to them of Hell and Paradise and of our other mysteries, the headstrong savages reply that this is good for our Country and not for theirs; that every Country has its own fashions. But hav-

> ing pointed out to them, by means of a little globe that we had brought, that there is only one world, they remain without reply. (Brébeuf 120)

The image of the globe—the orb—is the ultimate rhetorical move, to the point that what Brébeuf displays in the end is less the authority of a conversion narrative than the silencing power and "dispossessing evidence" of an image (Sloterdijk 26). But the conversation is not over. The absence of a dialogue on the plurality of worlds and the difference between globe and planet defines the borders of an ongoing zone of conflict we call the present. The concluding clause, "*Ils demeurent sans réplique*," marks the spot left by a missing theory of the world. Moreover, it signifies to a theory of the world its limit, without logical transition, and indeed without a reply, without an image of the globe; for another translation might read: "They dwell without replica"—a proposition that centuries later in the context of postcolonial theory speaks to Gayatri Spivak's own anthropology of dispossession by the globe:

> I propose the planet to overwrite the globe. Globalization is the imposition of the same system of exchange everywhere. In the gridwork of electronic capital we achieve that abstract ball covered in latitudes and longitudes, cut by virtual lines, once the equator and the tropics and so on, now drawn by the requirements of Geographical Information Systems... The globe is on our computers. No one lives there. It allows us to think that we can aim to control it. The planet is in the species of alterity, belonging to another system; and yet we inhabit it, on loan. It is not really amenable to a neat contrast with the globe. I cannot say "the planet, on the other hand." When I invoke the planet, I think of the effort required to figure the (im)possibility of this underived intuition. (72)

What the Jesuit missionary claims to have foreclosed with a portable image of the world, a miniaturized version of totality, defines a discursive space presently occupied by ecology and conservation biology, climatology, planetary engineering, design theory, environmental ethics, cultural anthropology, predatory capitalism, and even to some

extent comparative literature—each of these fields raising the question of how many worlds the globe can accommodate?

Under what conditions does an image, a surface, or a volume become a territory?

BPA, or bisphenol A, is an organic compound used to produce solid transparent plastic. Patricia Hunt identified its endocrine disrupting properties in the late 1990s, when a control group of mice she used to study chromosomal anomalies in eggs started to present a high rate of chromosomal abnormalities that could only be explained by the plastic environment in which the control group was conditioned (Landecker). The disturbance registered within the experimental setting at the level of the distinction between background and foreground, that is, between what is inert and what is active (Csordas). It revealed the neutral space of the lab—a space within which objectivity depends on standard protocols of isolation—to have its own environmental dimension as a milieu of life. But it also revealed that the plastic consuming control group outside the lab setting is yet another test group enrolled in an open-ended experiment where toxic modes of belonging give to the floating world of its refuse the consistency of a territory.

Regardless of its consistency, motility, and dimensions, the Garbage Pacific Patch achieves a form of territoriality when an unmappable substance, trapped by the North Pacific Gyre, appears embedded in the bird's remnants photographed by Chris Jordan. It becomes territorial when albatrosses at Midway Atoll feed their chicks with plastic pellets and DDT and PCB-laden food (Van Dooren 21-44).

Fig. 7: Chris Jordan, Midway: Message from the Gyre, 2009. http://www.chrisjordan.com/gallery/midway/#CF000313%2018x24

"What does it mean," asks Adriana Petryna, "to be alive in a heavily contaminated environment controlled by science and the sovereign power of the State?" (196). She recalls the story of how she met Anna and her family while conducting fieldwork in southwestern Ukraine in 1992. She listens to them in their small kitchen as they rehearse for her the story of how the Chernobyl incident entered "the history of their own mortality" during a trip to Kiev in May 1986 (214). Their history totters through a space of disjuncture opened between a demand for truth and accountability (exacerbated by the volatile nature of radiation) and a demand to live, or in other words, a demand to learn from the past that is also a demand to live with it. Then comes Petryna's turn to narrate and bear witness:

> Anna told me that the number of suicides occurring off the bridge by local inhabitants had risen that year from one to ten. She explained that most of those individuals were older and, in

> her opinion, could not cope with the unpredictability of the future and their lives any longer. The moon was full. As we continued walking, Anna started to repeat in English, "I am crazy, I am crazy." This startled me, but she was unaware of my reaction and began telling me dreams of launching into flight. She loved to fly, she said, as she floated her hand over the bridge and in the night air. My eyes moved restlessly, not knowing what part of Anna's body to look at. Maybe her eyes, because here was the linchpin of a specific kind of rationality and assurance that would at least get us off the bridge and back into this world—this world changed by radiation whose untameability had so baffled early researchers... I was asking her to trust me (to believe in my belief that it is possible to live in a place where uncertainty of this kind can prevail), to locate her willingness to live in me, at least momentarily, so that we could get off the bridge. (211-12)

In this passage, the notion of terraformed world becomes a theoretical proxy in Adriana's bridging address ("I was asking her to trust me") for how representational objects and formulas add up to something quite brittle, both materially and affectively, and yet sturdy enough to be held in, or to hold on to, in a toxic environment that does not want her—or any of us for that matter—in it, even if it is only provisionally or vicariously.

Gabrielle Roy's novel *The Tin Flute* (*Bonheur d'occasion*, 1945) contains a two-page, semi-grotesque pastoral fantasy that re-roots the generic premises of the French-Canadian colonial novel ("*roman de la terre*") in the urban wasteland of 1940s Montreal. Set in the middle of a novel of social exhaustion and impoverished agency, this fantasy tells the tale of a pieced-together world of trash, salvaging in the process leftover narratives of a good life:

> C'a été un temps qu'y avait un vrai village là-bas : un ramassis de bâtisses un peu plus hautes que des niches à chien. T'avais pas besoin de demander un permis pour te bâtir ni de chercher des planches bien longtemps. Mon vieux, c'était une vraie bénédiction tout ce qu'y avait su la dompe de matériaux: des montants de lits, des morceaux de tôle, pis du gros carton pas

> trop sale. Tu rapaillais là-dedans, à ton choix, une feuille de tuyau, quatre plaques de tôle pour la couverture, et tu choisissais un lot à une place pas trop puante, drette au bord de l'eau. (274-75)
>
> Those days there was a whole village in that place, a collection of shacks about the size of a dog kennel. You didn't need a building permit and you didn't have to look far for boards. I tell you, you can't believe all the material there was at that dump: bed frames and sheets of galvanized iron, and heavy cardboard, not too dirty. You'd piece together bits of pipe, four sheets of tin for the roof, and you chose a lot where it didn't stink too bad, right down by the water. (307-308, modified translation)

The tale functions as a provisional and precarious translation of the rhetoric of home and settlement within a world of industrial displacement and waste. It pays off its debt to an affective geography of belonging and agency showcased in an earlier generation of novels like Antoine Gérin-Lajoie's *Jean Rivard, Settler* (1862), in which a self-made, ax-wielding, and able-bodied hero leaves the ploys of the urban *bildungsroman* behind to find in woodlands his way to domesticity and reproduction.

It is Pierre Nepveu's contention that "Modern Quebecois literature was born the moment it could say: In the beginning we do not exist" (100). The possibility to say "*Nous*," to map its locus, to mourn its sovereignty or to die in its name, organizes a discourse of literary history into categorical oppositions between novel and poetry, epic and lyricism, historical consciousness and the temptation of mythology—between poems by Paul Chamberland, Gille Hénault, and Gaston Miron that, in the mid 1960s, dreamt of foundational narratives and storytelling, and novels that tried to recover the evocative power of the myth. Looking at the opening paragraph of Anne Hébert's novel *Les Fous de Bassan* (translated as *In the Shadow of the Wind*), we might say that at the beginning there was no narrative: "La barre étale de la mer, blanche, à perte de vue, sur le ciel gris, la masse noire des arbres, en ligne parallèle derrière nous" (9) ["A strand of sea poised between tides, white, as far as the eye can see, and against the gray

sky, in a parallel line behind us, the black bulk of trees."]. In this syntactical environment no verb floats above the primordial waters. No predicate confirms an attachment to the littoral streak.

At the beginning of the film *Pour la suite du monde* (1963) was the word of Jacques Cartier:

> Mes petits amis, après avoir lu les grandes aventures de Jacques Cartier, dans son voyage de 1535, j'ai trouvé un bout que je crois qui va vous intéresser. Donc je vas essayer de vous le lire le mieux que m'en pouvoir par rapport qu'il est écrit sur le vieux français: "Le sixiesme jour dudict moys, avecq bon vent, fismes courir amont ledict fleuve environ quinze lieues, et posasmes à une ysle, qui est bort à la terre du nort. Icelle ysles contient environ quinze lieues de long et deux de laize. Et c'est une fort bonne terre et grasse, pleine de beaux et grantz arbres de plusieurs sortes. Et entre aultres, il y a plusieurs couldres que nous trouvasmes fort chargez de noisilles et pource, la nomasmes YSLE ES COULDRES."
>
> My dear friends, after having read the great adventures of Jacques Cartier, in his voyage of 1535 I found a bit that I think will interest you. I'll try to read it to you as best as I can as it is written in Old French: "On the 6th day of the said month, with a fair wind, we made our way upstream for about 15 leagues and landed on an island off the north shore. This island is about 3 leagues long and 2 leagues wide. The land is good and fertile full of beautiful and tall trees of many kinds. And, among others, there are many hazelnut trees that we found heavily laden with hazelnuts. And for that reasons, we named the place 'Hazelnut Trees Island.'"

Fig. 8: Still from *Pour la suite du monde*. Dir. Michel Brault and Pierre Perrault. ONF-NFB, 1963.

A voice, a word, a world, and its image come together in a powerful cartographical effect that, on the one hand, locks up the island in its insularity, but on the other, "baits us to ponder the fact that *who we are* or whomever we believe ourselves to be depends, whether or not our locus is fixed or moving, on often unconscious perceptions about *where* we come from and may be going" (Conley 3). A fold on that map, the elusive beluga-whale functions as a collective bait for narratives of origins: who is behind the ingenious yet defunct mode of capture reenacted in front of Pierre Perrault and Michel Brault's camera to give birth to Quebecois cinéma-vérité? Opinions on the subject diverge and clash. For Alexis Tremblay, one of the elders of the insular community, it is a First Nation legacy. Leopold, his son, credits early Norman settlers for the invention. To settle the debate, the father turns to an ambiguous passage in Cartier's account much to the disbelief of the son. The "fish" remains elusive until its capture by the ingenious structure made of thin and long wooden sticks planted

in the sand to create a solid littoral net redefining the borders of the island.

In Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron* (1551/1552), water exists in two states. It is a healing element whose properties drive a cosmopolitan crowd to thermal baths in southwestern France. But it is also a destructive force that leaves ten travellers stranded with many stories to tell each other on the premises of Giovanni Boccacio's *Decameron*. Indeed, the return from the healing waters is interrupted by the surge of water. Streams turned torrents redraw topographies and rewrite the Scriptures—"il sembloit que Dieu eust oublié la promesse qu'il avoit faicte à Noé, de ne destruire plus le monde par eau" ["it seemed as though God had forgotten the promise He made to Noah never to destroy the world with water again"] (1). Healing waters are also at work in the essay Montaigne devotes to his kidney condition (II, 37). But in "Des Cannibales" (I, 31), water exists as a geomorphological force that shapes and reshapes embankments and erodes estates:

> Quand je considere l'impression que ma riviere de Dordoigne faict de mon temps vers la rive droicte de sa descente, et qu'en vingt ans elle a tant gaigné, et desrobé le fondement à plusieurs bastimens, je vois bien que c'est une agitation extraordinaire: car, si elle fut tousjours allée ce train, ou deut aller à l'advenir, la figure du monde seroit renversée. Mais il leur prend des changements: tantost elles s'espendent d'un costé, tantost d'un autre; tantost elles se contiennent. Je ne parle pas des soudaines inondations de quoy nous manions les causes. En Medoc, le long de la mer, mon frere, Sieur d'Arsac, voit une siene terre ensevelie soubs les sables que la mer vomit devant elle.
>
> When I consider the inroads that my river, the Dordogne, is making in my lifetime into the right bank in its descent, and that in twenty years it has gained so much ground and stolen away the foundations of several buildings, I clearly see that this is an extraordinary disturbance; for if it had always gone at this rate, or was to do so in the future, the face of the world would be turned topsy-turvy. But rivers are subject to

> changes: now they overflow in one direction, now in another, now they keep to their course. I am not speaking of the sudden inundations whose causes are manifest. In Médoc, along the seashore, my brother, the sieur d'Arsac, can see an estate of his buried under the sands that the sea spews forth. (151)

In the context of the still recent discovery of the Americas, whose rumored marvels pervade the essay, erosion signals the emergence of a world that resists appropriation and even Montaigne's call for topography: "Il nous faudroit des topographes qui nous fissent narration particuliere des endroits où ils ont esté" ["who would give us an exact account of the places where they have been"]. Here, topography is not simply a descriptive and narrative enterprise. It is a response to the perceived plasticity of the surface.

What it means for the earth to slip under one's feet is bracketed in the first sentence of the essay:

> Quand le Roy Pyrrhus passa en Italie, apres qu'il eut reconneu l'ordonnance de l'armée que les Romains luy envoyoient au devant: Je ne sçay, dit-il, quels barbares sont ceux-ci (car les Grecs appelloyent ainsi toutes les nations estrangieres), mais la disposition de cette armée que je voy, n'est aucunement barbare.
>
> When King Pyrrhus passed over into Italy, after he had reconnoitered the formation of the army that the Romans were sending to meet him, he said: "I do not know what barbarians these are" (for so the Greeks called all foreign nations), "but the formation of this army that I see is not at all barbarous." (150)

What Pyrrhus sees and recognizes, the difference between what he sees and recognizes are relational propositions contingent upon the lexicon available to him to designate foreigners. The footing Pyrrhus finds in language is positional. Throughout the essay "Des Cannibales," Montaigne describes old and new worlds at war, from the military organization of Tupi societies in Brazil to the civil unrest in sixteenth-century France. Erosion is a different kind of war that entails a different form of geopolitics—a politics of strata rather than a poli-

tics of territory (Clark 2830). Or in Jussi Parikka's words: "The water that was understood as anomalous, or difficult to control and define in the political space of old Europe, becomes once again a determining factor of the geopolitical Earth, but this time because rising ocean surfaces flood coastal areas and metropolises" (37).

Plastiglomerate is an emergent geological formation composed of melted plastic, beach sediment, basaltic lava fragments, and organic debris (Corcoran et al.). An interdisciplinary team of geologists identified plastiglomerate among specimens collected on Kamilo Beach in Hawaii by as a potential marker of the Anthropocene. By contrast, the geology that subtends the world of nineteenth-century French novelist Emile Zola is emergent by virtue of having entered into the conversation it keeps on interrupting. Minerality is everywhere *Germinal* (1885), deposited, extracted, and vaporized in the form of coal dust that coats every inner and outer surface of the novel. It surfaces in the inaugural dialogue between Etienne, a vagrant looking for a job, and Bonnemort (literally "Good-death"), a retired coal miner:

> Une crise de toux l'interrompit encore. – Et ça vous fait tousser aussi ? dit Étienne. Mais il répondit non de la tête, violemment. Puis, quand il put parler : – Non, non, je me suis enrhumé, l'autre mois. Jamais je ne toussais, à présent je ne peux plus me débarrasser... Et le drôle, c'est que je crache, c'est que je crache... Un raclement monta de sa gorge, il cracha noir. – Est-ce que c'est du sang ? demanda Étienne, osant enfin le questionner. Lentement, Bonnemort s'essuyait la bouche d'un revers de main. – C'est du charbon... J'en ai dans la carcasse de quoi me chauffer jusqu'à la fin de mes jours. Et voilà cinq ans que je ne remets pas les pieds au fond. J'avais ça en magasin, paraît-il, sans même m'en douter. Bah ! ça conserve ! (9)
>
> A spasm of coughing interrupted him again. – "And that makes you cough so," said Etienne. But he vigorously shook his head. Then, when he could speak: – "No, no! I caught cold a month ago. I never used to cough; now I can't get rid of it. And the queer thing is that I spit, that I spit..." The rasping was again heard in his throat, followed by the black expectoration. – "Is it

> blood?" asked Etienne, at last venturing to question him. Bonnemort slowly wiped his mouth with the back of his hand. – "It's coal. I've got enough in my carcass to warm me till the end of my days. And it's five years since I put a foot down below. I stored it up, it seems, without knowing it; well, it embalms! (6, modified translation)

Minerality is simultaneously extracted, reabsorbed, and spit out again—whether by the industry it fuels or by the coal-coughing creature it simultaneously kills and keeps alive. It marks the soil to form yet another layer and creates another set of relations between cohabiting forms of life, between organic life and mineral life alive of a life that threatens to turn organic life into its archive. It is in that sense that occupational epidemiology and geological medicine documenting toxic forms of mineral exposure (pneumoconiosis) too could be understood as the sites of emergent geologies.

In "Conservation and Color," Lyotard remarks that in principle, in the confines of a museum, "posed paint will not 'pass,' it will always be now" (Lyotard, The Inhuman 144). In the Lascaux cave, however, this present is at risk. Its paleolithic paintings are threatened by algae developments and calcite recrystallization. The threats can be linked to the modification of the gaseous composition within the cave following the intensive touristic exploitation of the site since 1948. Now that Lascaux cave paintings are facing extinction, as a headline found on the International Committee for the Preservation of Lascaux (ICPL) website suggests, they come to life, "not just as an object of description … that comes alive in our perceptual/verbal/conceptual play around it, but as a thing that is always already addressing us (potentially) as a subject with a life that has to be seen as 'its own' in order for our descriptions to engage the picture's life as well as our own lives as beholders" (Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?* 49). Breath is both a contaminant and a port of entry into the historical existence of prehistoric paintings whose very "survival" is a matter of intensive care. Air filtration devices, fungicides, biohazard mitigation protocols, and an ongoing replication process mediate the relation of toxic co-presence between the paintings and the CO2 releasing now: Lascaux 2, a partial three-dimensional repli-

ca, opened in 1983 on the same hill as the original cave. Initiated in 2012, Lascaux 3 is an itinerant, interactive, and international exhibit of movable panels reproducing some of the cave's most famous painted scenes. The latest of the Lascaux avatars—Lascaux 4—proposes a complete replica of the cave and its painting; but it also mimics the sensorial qualities of a subterraneous atmosphere. The prehistoric images are safe. They survive elsewhere under various formats. Their relation to time, to loss, and to transformation might be what is presently endangered. They survive in a terraformed state thanks the dematerialization and recomposition of geological structures afforded by cave replicas. Is it another case of reverse terraforming? Here, it is not the future that conservation efforts seek to engineer, but rather a past exposed to the vagaries of an unhospitable present—a terraforming present, as it is, defined by contact, gaseous exchange, and a dark, damp, and muffled assemblage of carnal relations.

No less experimental in tone and intent than terraforming itself, this paper has sought out to register terraforming projects that are not necessarily located in a future planetary state of affairs but in a memory of the inhabited earth at odds with linear and developmental narratives of settlement. For the speculative existence of terraformed worlds is always already informed by a cultural memory of *oikos*—the inhabited world, the world one longs to return to, or for Eugene Thacker, the "*world-for-us*" (by opposition to the world-in-itself and in tension with the word-without-us) (Thacker 4-5). But what is terraforming if not a prosthetic memory of *oikos*—that is, a mode of curating prospects of continuity in the present that disposes of them like end credits?

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NOTES

1. Benjamin equates the decline of storytelling in industrial societies to the disruption of a fragile ecosystem: "the more natural the process by which the storyteller forgoes psychological shading, the greater becomes the story's claim to a place in the memory of the listener, the more completely is it integrated into his own experience, the greater will be his inclination to repeat it to someone else someday, sooner or later. This process of assimilation, which takes place in depth, requires a state of relaxation which is becoming rarer and rarer. If sleep is the apogee of physical relaxation, boredom is the apogee of mental relaxation. Boredom is the dream bird that hatches the egg of experience. A rustling in the leaves drives him away. His nesting places—the activities that are intimately associated with boredom—are already extinct [*ausgestorben*] in the cities and are declining in the country as well" (Benjamin 91). ↵

IDENTITY WITHOUT SIMILARITY: THE RELATION BETWEEN THE INDIVIDUAL AND HER PICTURE

MAJA TABEA JERRENTRUP

***Abstract**: "This is me" we tend to say about photographs of ourselves—which is remarkable given that the image with which we identify is a two-dimensional visual taken from a very specific moment in our past. And yet the image is interpreted as an icon or an index of our present being. The problem of seeing similarity where there is difference seems to be increasing with the rise of hobby models—a niche demographic made up of mostly women between the age of 16 and 40, who enjoy posing for the camera even if they aren't getting paid for it. This paper investigates the social and psychological motivations behind hobby modelling in the German-speaking context.*

***Résumé**: «C'est moi», tendance à dire à propos des photographies de nous-mêmes, ce qui est étonnant étant donné que l'image n'est qu'une version à deux dimensions prise à un moment précis de notre passé. Et pourtant, l'image est interprétée comme une icône ou une référence de notre présent. Le problème du rapport à l'image semble s'accentuer avec la montée en puissance des modèles-photo qui s'exercent comme hobby – principalement pour des femmes âgées de 16 à 40 ans, qui aiment poser pour la caméra même si elles ne sont pas rémunérées. Cet article examine les motivations sociales et psychologiques du passe-temps de mannequin dans le contexte germanophone.*

"This is me," we say when talking about photographs. It is quite astonishing how much we identify with a picture, which reduces us to a two-dimensional image and only shows us a specific moment already in the past.

A close connection to identity accompanied photography from the beginning: "Photography … began historically as an art of the Person, of civil status, of what we might call, in all senses of the term, the body's *formality*" (Barthes 79).[1] For Roland Barthes, photography is constitutive not just of personal identity, but also of cultural identity—mediating both the body of the person and, in the process, his or her "civil status." We find a similar dialectic in Jacques Lacan's research on the discrepancy between an initially fragmented self-awareness and the consistent image of self achieved through the mirror stage in early childhood. Sylvia Brodersen uses an analogy to photography to explain the alienation by which this image of self is obtained in Lacan's mirror stage: "As the 'I' in the experience of the mirror is based on an image, tthe identification of the subject with its self-image in the mirror is based on alienation. Like the mirror, photography turns the subject into an image" (Brodersen 145, translation MTJ).[2] This is an alienation, however, that now seems to be regularly overcome by today's typically media-experienced user, who casually asserts *this is me* when confronting her photographic likeness.

For the maintenance of this likeness, a thoroughly chosen styling, complete with costume, make-up, posing, and setting is necessary today more than ever (Lauser 469-80; Pavis 174; Shukla 5). As Walter Leimgruber observes,

> The increasing emphasis on the body is often explained with the fact that because of disintegrating social boundaries and the disappearance of traditional social classes, which are tied to the social distribution of roles, it has become necessary to position and differentiate oneself through deliberately developing an individual style. An active self-marketing through performative strategies of image cultivation and staging of the self, in which the body plays a central role, has gained in importance. (Leimgruber 213-14, translation MTJ)[3]

Waltraud Posch similarly mentions as an example TV shows that deal with creating the self through the body (see Posch 19). Following this trend, Kerstin Brandes sees the topic of "visibility and identity" increasingly treated both in art and politics (Brandes). Connected to this focus on visual identity is a consideration of communication through visual mediation. These approaches come together in photography, as photography "function[s] as a tool for identity formation and as a means for communication" (Van Dijck 58).

PHOTOGRAPHY AS STAGING

The specific moment of taking a picture is–especially if the photographer does not hide his action—coined by various aspects, that make the "photography-I" differ from reality (on the problem of defining reality in this context, see Dörfler 11-52 and Venohr 47). In fact, photography naturally brings out people's tendency to pose for the camera and adopt certain facial expressions to communicate something (for the meaning and interpretation of posing, see Freund 75). This is evident in photographs taken to mark special occasions, such as parties, holidays, or trips. In model photography, it is the taking of the photograph itself that becomes the occasion.

Typically, one only understands these last kind of photographs to be staged because in model photography the (only) "declared objective … is the two-dimensional picture," (Weiss 50, translation MTJ) and strategies of staging are not hidden .[4] But staging and posing are not exclusive to model photography. In both model and occasional photography the picture is shaped by factors on both sides of the camera, from dress and make-up to light set-up and handling. As Daniele Muscionico writes, "Photography does not just show a certain event, but creates it through the pure existence of a picture showing it" (Muscionico, translation MTJ).[5] Events often gain attractiveness and relevance through the *picture-ness* that photography creates. This is especially evident when looking at Instagram and Facebook: without an (attractive) picture, a moment becomes uninteresting, nearly not worth experiencing or existing. The post-production following the act of taking pictures has been made very simple even for amateurs

by smartphone apps such as "Beauty Plus" and is now an integrative component of occasional photography.

Despite all these "manipulations," photography is still seen by most people as being truthful. The supposed facticity of photography is especially notable when pictures are used to document or prove something (for the problem of the truth claim, see Lackner). In fact, one can feel so much unity with a picture that one calls the image "I." The relationship between photography and the person being photographed has been interpreted in various ways: using semiotic terms, the photographic image can be seen as an index (one leaves a trace on a film or a chip), as well as an icon (one is similar to it) (see Larsen). But if due to styling, make-up, retouching, and so on, there is hardly any similarity left, the image should lose its status as an icon and, after post-production, also the features of an index—the *this-is-me* feeling of identity no longer seems to obtain.

THE MOTIVATION FOR BEING PHOTOGRAPHED

In the preceding section, I examined the experience of people that belong to the scene of staged photography associated with model photography because here certain tendencies are more obvious and possess an overt "avant-garde" influence, for example, on fashion trends. Nonetheless there are clear parallels and overlaps between professional models and groups of bloggers, Instagram and Facebook stars and starlets, and other social media users that practice hobby modelling. The wish to earn money with their pictures, however, does not have priority for most hobby models. My data is based on several years (2008 to the present) of observation and participant observation in the scene of staged people photography, mainly in the German-speaking context (Germany, Austria, and Switzerland), in front of the camera as well as behind the camera. This experience gave me the opportunity to develop an emic perspective and to come up with suitable questions for semi-structured interviews. I conducted these interviews with 40 hobby models in 2018. Thirty-eight of them were women, reflecting the fact that women are far more active as models than men. To reach more models and to offer more ways to interact with them, I also conducted

online surveys in model photography groups on Facebook in 2018, offering to receive answers anonymously via e-mail. This triangulation of methods should help to compensate for each method's limitations.[6]

The approach underlying this paper is interdisciplinary and relies on thick description and semiotics for its arguments. I am a cultural anthropologist, but questions about identity that matter to anthropologists have also been addressed by sociology and psychology. I therefore do not want to limit my approach to one discipline. For the hobby models participating in this study, the *this-is-me* feeling is of higher relevance than for "ordinary" people looking at their photographs. Models regularly invest a lot of time and money in producing and later presenting these pictures as "themselves"—pictures which are characterized by thoughtful selection, retouching, different costumes, make-up, retouching styles, and played-at scenarios. How do the self and the staged image of self relate to each other? How do the "this" and the "me" interact to form the *this-is-me*?

First of all, people need an incentive to get photographed that exceeds the pure documentation of life or other necessities that make it compulsory to get pictures. They need an incentive that sees photography and/or the resulting pictures as purposeful in themselves. A critical examination of our society that brings the scene of staged people photography into view shows that the body is understood as malleable and closely connected to social status:

> Whoever wants to lead a happy, fulfilled and socially acceptable life adopts a corresponding lifestyle that incorporates trendy sports, which mould and train the body, as well as a certain diet. Depending on the specific group or subculture, these demands are complemented by certain rules of behaviour as well as clothing, jewelry, language, and gestures, but also body-related accessories such as tattoos and piercings. (Leimbruber, translation MTJ)[7]

As numerous casting shows demonstrate, being a model obviously constitutes a dream for many, connected to fantasies of fame, status, glamour, and money. The first "presentation ladies" in the nineteenth century did not have a stellar reputation (Wolak 44). Nowadays, how-

ever, being a "model" is regarded as a desirable job, which opens up many opportunities and carries social prestige (see Müller-Schneider 27; Evans; and David):

> Beauty has great social power. Appearance influences the way a person is seen by others, and therefore also how he himself [sic] experiences the many encounters with other people. Beauty is a tool to get recognition and privileges. Appearance is important for our interaction with people. It can open up life chances or close them. The power of beauty lies in the fact that it can influence and shape our lives. (Posch 229-30, translation MTJ)[8]

In a similar fashion, Annette Geiger talks about the "beauty turn" (11). Photography and modelling, hobby or otherwise, are further bolstered by the illusion of equal opportunity: "Ever since the introduction of the bourgeois Happy Ending" it is astonishingly easy "to imagine the red carpet underneath one's own feet. It seems that one has just to grab the opportunity" (Schilling 226, translation MTJ).[9] This fantasy can be acted out in either staged model photography or on one's own Instagram account. However, in the latter case, the distinction between model and supermodel suggested by Anthony Curtis Adler no longer applies: "The moment that a model is more recognizable than the product she advertises, she becomes a supermodel, who is no longer really a model sensu stricto but a center of gravity that draws things into her orbit" (Adler 169). In the case of hobby modelling, it is not about advertising products, but rather advertising oneself, and every model would like to be seen as a "centre of gravity" herself. In addition, it should be mentioned that within the scene of staged people photography, not only classical beauty, but also special or extraordinary looks and styles are appreciated:

> the question remains: when are we going to get tired of all this immaculate regularity? Pervasive smoothness might lose its appeal not just in the retouched image, but also in everyday life, when Botox and cosmetic surgery can help ever larger numbers of people to get an optimized "normal face." The beautifully morphed picture that everyone can put on his ID card or on his application will not create anything but boredom... Even some models shown in *Vogue* or similar magazines no longer seem to simply intend to match the

> image of childlike beauty, but are rather a grotesque exaggeration of it, a "childlike monster," as it were, which attracts the gaze through its anomaly. (Geiger 13, translation MTJ)[10]

However, provocative pictures are quite rare. Within the scene, there is hardly ever any criticism leveled at the look of the model due to an unspoken code of conduct.[11]

CHARACTERISTICS OF HOBBY MODELS

The models I observed and interviewed come from different social classes, but the majority could be regarded as middle or upper middle class. This might be due to two factors. Firstly, modelling is an expensive hobby. Poor people simply cannot afford it. Secondly, hobby modelling also requires some organizational talent, which is more common among better-educated people.

Most of the models are between 16 and 40 years old, with a majority between the ages of 20 and 30. They often can be characterized by one or more of the following features, which are in many cases connected to each other (for more on the following, see Jerrentrup 12).

Preoccupation with One's Own Body

In addition to a model's self-declarations, there are visible signs of a preoccupation with one's own body, which range from heavy weight loss to extreme haircuts and hair colours to big tattoos or even auto-aggressive behaviour such as self-cutting (see Orbach 37 and Wimmer-Puchinger et al. 42; on the specific situation of women, see Wimmer-Puchinger 4). Photography is apparently regarded as an opportunity to approve of the body, insofar as photography implies that the body is worth a picture. Positive feedback while shooting and "likes" on social media might increase this impact (for the incorporation of corporeal displays of physical attractiveness into social activist movements, see Pham).

However, many models seem to be aware of the ambivalences of beauty and mere corporeality. "Beauty characterizes an inconsistency. On the one hand, everyone would like to have it, to enjoy it, and to feel the power it has, on the other hand, it seems to be something which is only superficial and is regarded as a banal externality" (Wolak 17, translation MTJ).[12] Such assumptions are reflected in some scenarios staged for photography, as well as in quotes, sayings, and short interpretative statements that accompany the pictures. Stated approval of one's own body does not necessarily imply that one understands the body as "beautiful". It can also include accepting its deficiencies or interpreting them as unique peculiarities. As one model I interviewed commented, "Through modelling, I can finally accept my looks and feel valuable and beautiful for the first time in my life" (Model R., translation MTJ).[13] Another model, who wanted to be photographed as a mermaid, observed, "I can identify with Disney's Arielle because I also always wanted to have a different body. This is what photography enables me to do" (Model H., translation MTJ).[14]

Experience of Deficits

Some models stress in informal interviews, as well as in comments on social media, that they experience deficits in their personal life stories, which for example result from problems in their homes or with their relationships. Many of these models thus understand photography to act out experiences and interests that, for personal or historical reasons, have been denied to them (see Gyr 362 for the yearning for kitsch; see Venohr 47 for the yearning for authenticity). The help photography offers in this context is twofold: it makes yearnings and fears manageable by condensing them into pictures, and further supplements the model's first-hand experiences with vicarious experiences. "I miss romance in my life, this is why I like romantic topics in photography. Life is so grey" (Model N., translation MTJ).[15]

Search for Identity

Many people active in the modelling scene are or were members of a subculture. Subcultures represent an "interference in the orderly sequence which leads from real events and phenomena to their representation in the media"—"a kind of temporary blockage in the system of representation" (Hebdige 121). What starts as emancipation, however, later gets integrated into the mainstream, a process that reappropriates the subculture's signs and, in the process, redefines behavioural norms (Marchart 114-15). Being part of a subculture can be understood as a search for identity. Brodersen sees this search for identity as typical of the present age: "In a time in which traditional boundaries such as class, origin or religion have lost their importance and in which there are many opportunities for every individual to create his life and his look, youth cultures can offer a feeling of belonging" (Brodersen 158, translation MTJ). This might be overstating the facts, as social classes still exist and often play an important role. Yet it illustrates how class might not offer (enough) feelings of identity to the individual.

Subcultures usually carry their own meanings and ideals of beauty. Not all subcultures, however, require their members to adhere to these meanings and ideal permanently. The boundaries defining playful or "part-time" subcultures such as cosplay or LARP are flexible (see Geiger 22), whereas subcultures such as Gothics, Punks,

and Lolitas intend to be a more permanent counterpoint to the mainstream. As Geiger observes, it is a "very old cultural technique to refuse all fashion trends to the point of making oneself 'outrageous'—for example, by living in rags in a barrel or shocking all the well-adjusted and pseudo-individuals with piercings, tattoos, and mohawks" (Geiger 22, translation MTJ).[16] This preoccupation with outward appearance and its connection to the inner self is often a fundamental component of subcultures. Nevertheless, subcultures tend to develop fashion statements that are similar to the mainstream or have a tendency to be absorbed into the mainstream. The model's quest for individuality and uniqueness is never permanently fulfilled and therefore never permanently maintained. "Who am I… I am not sure… I could be so much but am so little… always searching… never finding… it is very fluid… but photography can fix it, at least for a tiny moment" (Model F., translation MTJ).[17]

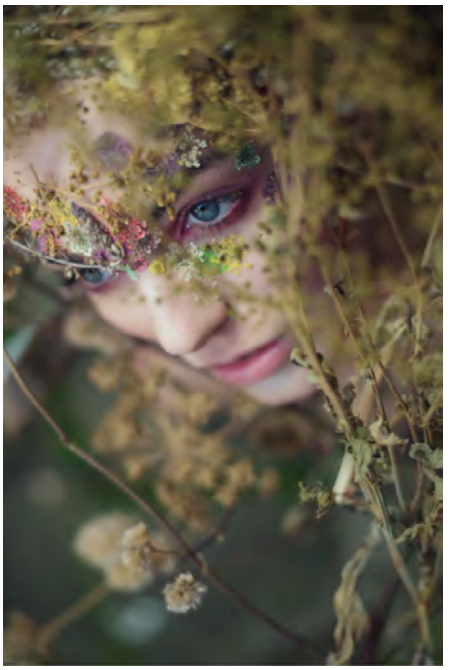
Indulgence of Variety

Over a period of time, a model usually adopts different looks. Even if one of her initial motivations was, for example, a yearning for the romantic, she might also want to stage herself wearing leather rags with hot pants and a skateboard. Often, these different looks a model adopts are only held together by her social media appearance as a whole (i.e., her profile) and have hardly anything in common with each other or her real life appearance, which is usually much less interesting by comparison. One model notes, "I have modelled as an elf, as an angel, as a dominatrix, as an avant-garde fashion model, as a freak. It is never boring. I like looking different in every picture. I experiment" (Model V., translation MTJ).[18] Another model states, "Sometimes I do not even recognize myself. I scroll down on Facebook thinking 'what a great pic, what a cool girl'—and then I notice, it was me" (Model Z., translation MTJ). [19] The sheer number of pictures circulating on social media in which people present themselves in various staged poses suggests that people derive positive experiences from these pictures. Yet the obvious advantages of such pictures—namely getting to know new people or acquiring a circle of fans—are not sufficient to explain this phenomenon. Why do people want to model in such different ways and why do they feel like be-

ing one with these pictures, especially if the pictures themselves bear very little resemblance to their real appearances or life situations?

Distorted Concepts of Self

The most obvious reason for feeling one with these pictures must result from a misperception of self. Frequent, diverse, and heavily retouched pictures in the context of exciting costumes and settings actively produce a concept of self that diverges from reality. But when the *this-is-me* effect is achieved, this divergence is negated, or at least overlooked. Nonetheless hobby modelling can become a conduit for realistic self-appraisals at the same time that it distorts self-image. As one model observes, "I like myself much better [now] than before modelling. I know that I am not great and that I am not a top model, but I don't hate my looks anymore. I gained more self-confidence and learned to get along with my body" (Model D., translation MTJ).[20]



A POSSIBLE WORLD

A second explanation, however, modifies the previous one. The models may believe that their pictures are an approximation—that they convey optimized, but *possible*, versions of themselves. What they enact in front of the camera are trial runs of alternate identities. The *this-is-me* effect becomes a *this-could-be-me* effect. The model understands the persons shown in her pictures as possible versions of herself. Rebecca Coleman describes this development in contrast to Barthes's theory of the origin of photography: "For Barthes, the desire is for photography to 'capture' a particular way of being, a personality for example, and render this as it (actually) is. However, for the girls [the subject of research are young girls and their online portfolios], the desire is for photography not to capture a personality as it is but rather a body as it might be" (Coleman 110). This attitude is reinforced by the models' own statements. As one model observes, "The body, after all, is malleable material" (Model X., translation MTJ).[21] Another states, "I have just one life. This is not enough. I want to try out what all I could be. The way I look is just the base in this game" (Model K., translation MTJ).[22] This is similar to Coleman's and Gilbert Shang's assertions that on the internet people are showing ideals of the body and the self, rather than their authentic beings: "The dominant motif of photography on Facebook is the presentation of the ideal body/self. This ideal body follows, but sometimes deconstructs a repertoire of normalized social body etiquettes popularized by mainstream and showbiz cultures" (Shang 242). What constitutes this ideal, however, is always changing. My interviews and observations suggest that even with pictures shown on so-called *social* media, real communication is not intended. Instead, the model's activity is mostly self-referential. Thus intense feedback is not necessarily wanted or even very important for the *this-is-me* effect to be achieved. In front of a picture-centred backdrop, which characterizes today's everyday culture, one might need one's own picture to help structure one's life, to condense experiences and emotions into two dimensions and, in so doing, make them manageable and easier to remember: "A product of shootings is often the creation of memories of situations, which would not have existed without photography… and often there is no picture matching what

should be the real memory—the colours might be changed in the process of retouching, the atmosphere might be altered, the room might be replaced, the figure and the make-up improved" (Jerrentrup 124, translation MTJ). As such, the resulting pictures are close to false memories. Profiles on social media become diaries of false memories. "When I look at my pictures I see little stories as if they were real" (Model V., translation MTJ).[23] These fabricated memories are more directed to one's own self than others. A "like" is just minimal communication. Even introducing various kinds of "likes" on Facebook does not allow for much evaluation—is it courtesy, is it a return service, is it lecherous or enthusiastic or just something one does out of boredom? Any medium in which this is the main type of communication is not a social, but rather an asocial, medium. The user has created her profile as a means for self-affirmation, in which she herself is the centre and all communication partners around her are merely uplifted thumbs or simple hearts. "Pictures for the children" (*Bilder für die Kinder*)[24] is the title Model B. chose for her model portfolio on Facebook even though she does not have any children yet. This has various implications, not just that these pictures are very personal to her, but also that by modelling, she creates her "image," the way she would like to be remembered.

MEDIA IDENTITY

The reality surrounding the model and her media "reality" might be kept separate insofar as she ignores the former. This is not about Irving Goffman's front stage, but rather a parallel world, which, similar to many online games, takes place detached from the body (see Goffman). Thomas Lackner refers to the need for an immaterial, spiritual reality, which since the Enlightenment has lost its relevance:

> Modern science has increasingly disregarded the immaterial, "spiritual" reality... and called it deprecatingly a question of belief.... It is assumed that with the help of technology in the form of the computer, which is a product of modernity, spiritual reality could be regained. Cyberspace, therefore, is a vision of a new spiritual, immaterial reality, with which the discomfort and the soullessness of

> the material can be overcome.... One of the main visions of cyberspace ideologues is the wish for incorporeality ... the human body is considered an unnecessary burden, which needs to be overcome. (Lackner 95-96, translation MTJ)[25]

In the incorporeality of cyberspace, a kind of transcendence can be found that defies bodily imperfections and transience. This parallel world—be it in countless video games or in model photography—is built around a body, which is then overcome by replacing it with an image that can be easily re-shaped and re-fashioned (see Entwistle). In the parallel world, this malleability is standard and establishes the person as a typical and respectable part of this cyberspace. The model sees her self as being in unity with her pictures. This identity is achieved not by ignoring the immense effects of styling and retouching, but by embracing all of this because it is what confirms her identity as a model. *This is me* in this case means *this is a part of my identity, this is me as a model* or *this is my social media self*. In this sense, the person photographed shows sophistication in handling identity, being conscious of the fact that identity (today) is a process, a "doing identity": "'Identity'—as the idea of a subject identical with themselves as well as signification of one's belonging(s)—designated the henceforth impossible moment of fixing or being fixed, which constituted the permanently preliminary product of an unfinishable process of manifold, contradictory as well as rule-governed identifications" (Brandes 15, translation MTJ). As one model suggests, a certain satisfaction can be derived from having one's identity unfixed."Many of my friends don't know much about me as a model. It is a world I keep separate—not because I am embarrassed about it, but just because it is not relevant to my friends outside the scene" (Model B., translation MTJ).[26]

As Zygmunt Bauman observes, "If the modern 'Problem of Identity' was mainly constructing an identity and keeping it stable, then the postmodern 'Problem of Identity' is mainly the avoidance of any fixation and keeping options open" (Bauman 133, translation MTJ; see also Finkelstein 3).[27] Bauman's assumption of an entirely fluid identity is often criticized (see Antweiler 24). A stable self might be regarded as outdated; but it is still the basis on which most human commu-

nication relies (see Shang 242). Nevertheless an important, if not the most important, characteristic of identity for the hobby model lies in identity's instability. Among photographers and models, the term often used to describe and to characterize this feature positively is "mutability." Thus, the idea of identity seems to dissolve on one level: one identifies today with this, tomorrow with that—what stays as a base is not the content, but the form, the condition of constant change.

THE PICTURE AS A SYMBOL

Finally, one more option is possible, which correlates identity on a more abstract level: the *this-is-me* effect as referring not so much to the external but to the inner world of dreams, desires, and fears. In this case, the relationship of the photograph to the person being photographed is not, as initially stated, that of an icon or index (see Peirce 65), but a symbol—a picture which stands in for motifs that the person being represented understands as relevant to her inner life. Therefore, it is not important whether there is visual congruence. The picture is regarded as relatively independent of the appearance of a specific person, as a creative outcome that evolves around a specific topic or thought process important to the model's inner world, rather than pertaining to the person's outward appearance. Barthes' description of photography as "an art of the Person" (see Barthes 79), her identity, her civil status applies only partly in our case. Staged people photography is not the art *of* the person, but art *about* the person. As one model puts it, "These pictures matter to me. With them, I want to express what is important to me. It might be easier than doing it with words. A picture can tell more than a thousand words, and it is more fun to do it and works on a less technical, more emotional level than words" (Model S., translation MTJ).[28]

This is me—is this an expression of delusion or reflection? The answer might vary a lot among individuals. Yet there are hints that more is at stake than a narcissistic belief in a distortive self-image: even if the use of social media for creating a concept of self is controversial, almost all of these models assert that modelling helps them to

feel better in the long run, whereas pure narcissism or egocentrism usually results in negative outcomes and leads to discomfort.

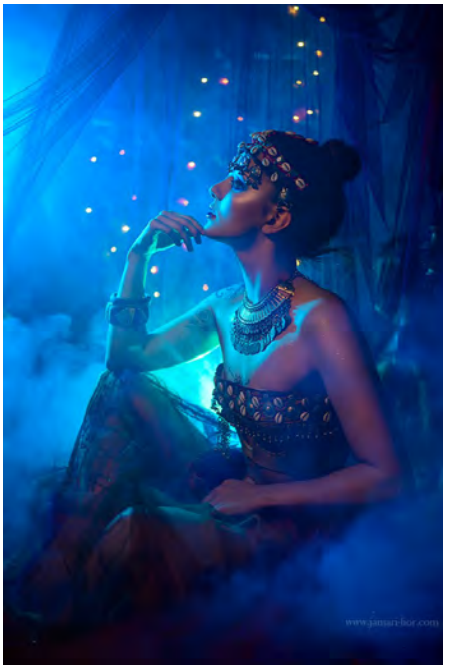


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IMAGE NOTES

All the pictures show the same woman, model Viola Julia von Hoesslin. For years, Viola has been embodying very different characters or concepts in her numerous shootings. There is no consistency and no main topic regarding her work in front of the camera. She enjoys staging herself, or being staged, in many different ways.

NOTES

1. "Die PHOTOGRAPHIE hat …, historisch gesehen, als Kunst der Person begonnen: ihrer Identität, ihres zivilen Standes, dessen, was man, in jeder Bedeutung des Wortes, das An-und-für-Sich des Körpers nennen könnte."

2. "Da das Ich der Spiegelerfahrung auf einem Bild basiert, liegt der Identifikation des Subjekts mit dem Selbstbild im Spiegel eine Entfremdung zugrunde. Ebenso wie der Spiegel verwandelt die Fotografie das Subjekt zu einem Bild."

3. "Die zunehmende Betonung des Körpers wird häufig damit erklärt, dass durch die sich auflösenden gesellschaftlichen Grenzen und das Verschwinden der klassischen sozialen Schichten mit der damit verbundenen gesellschaftlichen Rollenverteilung die Notwendigkeit entstehe, sich durch bewusste individuelle Stilbildung zu positionieren und zu differenzieren. Eine aktive Vermarktung des Selbst durch performative Strategien der Selbstdarstellung und -inszenierung, bei denen der Körper eine zentrale Rolle spielt, gewinnt an Bedeutung."

4. "Erklärte(s) Inszenierungsziel… das zweidimensionale Bild."

5. "Die Fotografie bildet nicht ein Ereignis ab, sondern sie kreiert es mithin durch die pure Existenz eines Bildes davon."

6. For an extended discussion of methods and a detailed explanation of triangulation, see Jerrentrup 24-27.

7. "Wer ein glückliches, erfülltes und gesellschaftliches akzeptiertes Leben führen will, pflegt einen adäquaten Lebensstil, zu dem etwa Trendsport-

arten, die den Körper modellieren und trainieren, und eine entsprechende Ernährung gehören. Je nach Gruppe oder Subkultur werden diese Forderungen ergänzt mit Verhaltensvorgaben und Regeln für Kleidung und Schmuck, Sprache und Gestik, aber auch mit körperbezogenen Accessoires wie Tattoos und Piercing."

8. "Schönheit hat große soziale Macht. Das Aussehen beeinflusst die Art, wie ein Mensch von anderen wahrgenommen wird, und dadurch auch, wie er selbst die zahllosen Kontakte mit anderen Leuten erlebt. Schönheit ist ein Werkzeug, um Anerkennung und Privilegien zu bekommen. Das Aussehen ist für unsere Interaktion mit anderen Menschen wichtig, es kann uns Lebenschancen eröffnen oder verschließen. Die Macht der Schönheit liegt darin, unser Leben zu beeinflussen und zu prägen."

9. "Seit der Einführung des bürgerlichen Happy Ends" fällt es erstaunlich leicht, „sich den roten Teppich unter den eigenen Füßen vorzustellen. Es scheint, als müsse man nur zugreifen."

10. "[D]ie Frage bleibt, wann wir uns an so viel makelloser Regelmäßigkeit satt gesehen haben? Die allgegenwärtige Glätte könnte sowohl als retouchiertes Bild seinen Reiz verlieren wie auch im Leben, wenn Botox und Schönheits-OP auch den breiten Massen zum optimierten Normalgesicht verholfen haben. Das schön gemorphte Bild, das jeder von sich in den Ausweis oder in die Bewerbung kleben kann, wird wohl nichts weiter hervorrufen als Langeweile… Auch manches Model in der *Vogue* o.ä. scheint nicht mehr nur das als schön empfundene normierte Kindchenschema darstellen zu wollen, sondern eine maßlose Übertreibung desselben - ein ‚Kindchenmonster' gewissermaßen, das gerade durch die Abweichung die Blicke auf sich lenken wird."

11. Exceptions are extremely thin or fat models, which are often an occasion for discussion. In the case of extremely big models, there are usually many positive reactions, but also expressions of disgust. In the case of extremely thin models, it is often assumed that the photography team propagates an unhealthy beauty ideal.

12. "Schönheit charakterisiert eine Widersprüchlichkeit. Einerseits wollen alle sie besitzen, sie genießen und die Macht, die von ihr ausgeht, spüren; andererseits scheint sie nur etwas Oberflächliches zu sein und gilt als banale Äußerlichkeit."

13. “Durch das Modeln kann ich mein Aussehen endlich akzeptieren und fühle ich mich zum ersten Mal in meinem Leben wertvoll und schön.”

14. “Ich kann mich mit Disneys Arielle identifizieren, weil ich auch schon immer einen anderen Körper wollte und Fotografie ermöglicht mir das.”

15. “Ich vermisse Romantik in meinem Leben, daher fotografiere ich gerne romantische Themen. Das Leben ist so grau.”

16. “Wie stünde es nun um das andere Extrem, jene ebenfalls schon sehr alte Kulturtechnik, das ganze Mode-Treiben dahingehend zu verweigern, dass man sich absichtlich ‘unmöglich’ macht und – z.B. in Lumpen gehüllt in einer Tonne zu wohnen oder mit Piercings, Tattoos und Irokesenschnitten all die Überangepassten und pseudo-individualisierten Originale tüchtig zu schockieren.”

17. “Wer bin ich… ich weiß es nicht… ich könnte so vieles sein, aber ich bin so wenig… immer auf der Suche… niemals angekommen… es ist sehr fluide… aber Fotografie kann es festhalten, wenigstens für einen winzigen Moment.”

18. “Ich habe als Elfe gemodelt, als Engel, als Domina, als Avantgarde-Fashion-Model, als Freak, es ist nie langweilig. Ich sehe auf jedem Foto anders aus. Ich experimentiere.”

19. “Manchmal erkenne ich mich selbst nicht, ich scrolle auf Facebook runter und denke ‘was für ein mega Foto, was für ein cooles Mädel’—und dann merke ich, dass ich es bin.“

20. “Ich mag mich selbst viel lieber als vor dem Modeln. Ich weiß, dass ich jetzt nicht gerade großartig bin und kein Topmodel, aber ich hasse mein Aussehen nicht mehr. Ich habe mehr Selbstvertrauen gewonnen und gelernt, mit meinem Körper klarzukommen.”

21. “Am Ende des Tages ist der Körper formbares Ausgangsmaterial.”

22. “Ich habe nur ein Leben. Das ist nicht genug. Ich will ausprobieren, was ich alles seien könnte. Wie ich aussehe, ist nur die Basis in diesem Spiel.”

23. “Wenn ich mir meine Fotos ansehe, sehe ich kleine Geschichten, als wenn sie wahr wären.”

24.

25. “Die moderne Wissenschaft blendete die immaterielle, ‚geistige Realität‘ … immer mehr aus und bezeichnete sie abwertend als Frage des Glaubens… Man glaubt mit Hilfe der Technik in Form des Computers, also einem Produkt der Moderne, wieder geistige Realität zu erlangen. Der Cyberspace ist demnach eine Vision einer neuen geistigen immateriellen Realität, mit der das Unbehagen und die Seelenlosigkeit des Materiellen überwunden werden kann… Eine der Hauptvisionen der Cyberspace IdeologInnen ist der Wunsch nach Körperlosigkeit… der menschliche Körper gilt als unnötiger Ballast, den es zu überwinden gilt.”

26. “Viele meiner Freunde wissen nicht viel von meiner Modelei. Das ist eine Welt, die ich getrennt halte, nicht, weil ich mich dafür schäme, sondern weil es für meine Freunde außerhalb der Modelfotografie nicht relevant ist.”

27. “Wenn das moderne ‘Problem der Identität’ hauptsächlich darin bestand, eine Identität zu konstruieren und sie fest und stabil zu halten, dann besteht das postmoderne ‘Problem der Identität’ hauptsächlich darin, die Festlegung zu vermeiden und sich die Optionen offenzuhalten.”

28. “Diese Fotos bedeuten etwas für mich. Mit ihnen kann ich ausdrücken, was mir wichtig ist. Es ist vielleicht leichter als mit Worten. Ein Bild kann mehr als tausend Worte sagen, und man hat mehr Spaß daran und es funktioniert weniger technisch, mehr emotional als Worte.”

"SHARP SYBARITIC" RETROFUTURISTIC DECO REALISM: SOME PRELIMINARY NOTES ON THE 1980S AIRBRUSH ART

URSULA-HELEN KASSAVETI

***Abstract**: Originating in the late 19th century, the airbrush spray gun was widely used in the mid-20th century as a photo retouch tool in advertising, while it contributed to the introduction of Photorealism in the early 1970s. The "LA scene" of the same decade popularized airbrush art through masterful illustrations. Using a variety of different representations, the 1980s airbrush art became the distinctive postmodern popular style of the decade, especially through the publication and distribution of posters and postcards, as well as in advertising. Although the 1990s saw its decline, in the late 2000s the 1980s airbrush art seems to be resurgent thanks to the Internet, providing an escapist narrative for the post-2007-2008 financial crisis landscape.*

***Resume**: Apparu à l'origine vers la fin du XIXe siècle, l'aérographe a été largement utilisé au milieu du XXe siècle comme un outil de retouche photo dans la publicité, tout en contribuant à l' introduction du Photoréalisme au début des années 1970. Dans la même décennie, la "scène L.A." a popularisé l'art de l' aérographie au travers d' illustrations magistrales qui ont déployé divers thèmes artistiques. À l' aide d' une variété de représentations différentes, l' art aérographe des années 1980 est devenu le style populaire postmoderne distinctif de la décennie. Notamment, on le reconnaît dans la publication et la distribution d' affiches ou de cartes postales, ainsi que dans la publicité. Bien que les années 1990 aient été témoins de son déclin, l' art de l' aérographie des années 1980 semble maintenant resurgir de l' oubli grâce à Internet, fournissant un lieu d' évasion dans le paysage de crise financière post-2007-2008.*

Shortly after the global financial crisis of 2007-2008 and the European debt crisis of 2008, many of us started to look back to the decades of the twentieth century, confirming, to some extent, Svetlana Boym's assertion that, "nostalgia inevitably reappears as a defense mechanism in a time of accelerated rhythms of life and historical upheavals" (Boym 2001 14). Trying to distance ourselves from those harder times, many of us headed towards a better "home," even if the latter was only available in the digital world. New online social platforms became the hotspot for nostalgia allowing users to dig through and collate photographic remnants of past aesthetic movements, and re-shape an image of a shinier past, part real and part imagined.

During these years of financial instability and hardship in the first and subsequent decade of the 21st century, visual imagery from the popular culture and cinema of the 1980s especially resurfaced on the internet thanks to micro-blogging platforms like Tumblr and online social networks that focus on images like Pinterest (Munteanu). Through a vast network of user accounts (most anonymous), Tumblr and Pinterest uploaded thousands of scans of books, postcards, and details from posters, which together present a clear and fascinating record of airbrush art from the 1980s.[1] New publications in art history were also encouraging a renewed interest in the longer history of airbrush art: Norman Hathaway's *Overspray: Riding High with the Kings of Airbrush* (2008), for example, shed light on the life of important airbrush artists mainly from the 1970s (Charles E. White III, Peter Palombi, David Williardson, and Peter Lloyd), and deepened airbrush enthusiasts' understanding of their influential work.

However, the long story of airbrush art could begin even earlier in the late 1960s with the use of a spray gun, which resembled the proportions of a fountain pen and had been used in the USA since 1888 (Van Hamersveld 16). This invention, attributed to Charles Burdick, could spray "pigments onto a surface without ever touching the surface itself" (Van Hamersveld 16). While airbrushing with gouache or acrylic paints, artists used masking paper to create different shapes, shadows, or color effects. As Bill Jonas, a former editor of *Airbrush Action* magazine, argued, the airbrush was ideal "for rendering subtle gradations (i.e., flesh tones) and shadows, and metallic surfaces" (8)

and for emulating "mist, light, smoke, vapor … and beautiful blendings with the slightest pull of a trigger" (Tennant 9).

From its first use in the 1880s up until the 1980s, airbrushing has been applied in various artistic fields: fine art, advertising illustration, self-promotional art, architectural design, and technical illustration. However, it was in the late 1970s and the 1980s that airbrush became a prominent, popular style, particularly in illustration and where it became interwoven with the popular culture of the era. Its imagery consisted primarily of variations on different themes: female portraits, tropical landscapes, cars, fruits, various consumer goods, and architectural interior design. Such imagery was intertextual, as it tended to adopt and blend decorative elements from earlier aesthetic movements Art Deco, Photorealism, Memphis style, and retrofuturism. The airbrush art of the 1980s was produced by artists from various countries (the USA, UK, Italy, and Japan) as a postmodern form of expression; but it should not, at the same time, be considered as a unified artistic movement, as there were many different foci and styles located around the world.

The global popularity of 1980s airbrush art in many ways hinged on the circulation of prints and posters as an important element of interior decoration. Describing some of the decorations of 1980s homes, Wayne Hemingway remarks that:

> Any chrome and tech room isn't complete without an Athena print. Athena in the 1970s and early 1980s brought affordable prints to us all. No house was complete without a red-lipped beauty sucking suggestively on a cherry, or a racy siren morphing into the bonnet of a red sports car. Prints of exotic cocktails on the window ledge of a glamorous hotel room looking onto Hong Kong Harbour, or images of Parisienne ladies with wide-brimmed hats and high heels, fulfilled dreams of foreign travel.... (26)

The purpose of this article is to provide a short historical overview of the kind of airbrush art described by Hemingway and to identify its characteristic elements and influences. My research was carried out by reviewing existing publications on American, European, and

Japanese airbrush art and its artists from the fifteen-year period (1977-1992) that witnessed the emergence, style, and applications of airbrush art as a dominant aesthetic. I also made use of a series of postcards, posters, and LPs featuring airbrush art, which were collected by three Greek collectors. These archival objects provided me with vivid paradigms of 1980s airbrush art. It should be noted, however, that it was extremely difficult to locate and make contact with other artists, and to preserve the respective rights to publish their illustration in a paper. So, inevitably, this article's focus has been narrowed to a particular set of artists and artworks; but the hope is that the ground it covers will be expanded by those who have been granted access a wider range of archives. The article explores the diffusion and popularity airbrush art achieved through the circulation of prints by companies like Athena International, which renewed and influenced the visual imagery of this popular style through their iconic and vibrant retrofuturistic posters (such as *Long Distance Kiss* by South-African illustrator Syd Brak—one of the most prominent 1980s airbrush illustrators). In conclusion, I theorize the reemergence of airbrush art in the 21st century, drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of "chronotope" to argue that—amid the vast image collection that comprises the Internet—nostalgic and escapist presentations of airbrush art in the post-2007-2008 landscape operate as a chronotopic habitat of 1980s prosperity.

AIRBRUSHING AS A TECHNIQUE: FROM THE 1920S TO PHOTOREALISM

At the beginning, airbrush was an auxiliary tool for artists and photographers; it was only later that it gradually transformed into a key element in the production of a realistic visual style. In the 20th century and, especially, during the roaring 1920s decade, the airbrush was heavily used as a photo-retouching tool. According to Van Hamersveld, the premier airbrush illustration "appeared in the New York Director's Annual in 1928" and was created by Samuel Otis (42). In Europe, and particularly in France, the interest in the "pochoir (*stencil*) printing process" resulted in various experiments with airbrushing in the fashion illustrations of the women's magazines of the era, such as *Le Gazette du Bon Ton*, and in

advertisements illustrated by artists such as A. M. Cassandre and Jean Carlu (Robinson 22-23). As Alistair Duncan observes, during this period of growing improvements in manufacturing techniques and the consequent abundance of consumer goods, advertising came to play a crucial role in developing consumer habits. In this context, minimalist posters set out on "colonnes d'affiche" in Paris with their "sharp linear compositions, floating on flat areas of background color quickly drew the eye" of potential customers (Duncan 150). Meanwhile, Bauhaus artists like László Moholy-Nagy used the tool to "soften the differences between the various elements of a photomontage" (Van Hamersveld 24; see also Kaplan 128-29 and Hariu 2-3). In succeeding decades, fashion and men's magazines, like *Playboy* or *Esquire*, started featuring airbrush illustrations by popular artists, such as pin-up illustrator George Petty and fashion illustrator Alberto Vargas.

After facing a short decline during the 1950s (excepting its frequent use by Push Pin Studios led by graphic designers Seymour Chwast, Milton Glaser, and Edward Sorel), the airbrush began to be used again in Rock 'n' Roll posters and was legitimized as a tool and technique in the following decade, the era of Photorealism. After going through a variety of different articulations, such as "Super-Real, Sharp-Focus, Radical Real, Hyperreal (in France), Romantic Real and Magic Real," Photorealism was at last coined in 1968 by the American collector Louis K. Meisel (Meisel, *Photorealism* 12).[2] The term was first used to describe the re-emergence of Realism in painting, associated with the "Twenty-Two Realists" exhibition at the Whitney Museum in January 1970, and artists that used the camera and other mechanical or semi-mechanical means to transfer visual information to the canvas alongside a newly refined technical capacity to give the finished work a photographic appearance.

The laborious techniques adopted by Photorealist artists, such as Chuck Close, Audrey Flack, Ben Schonzeit, and Don Eddy, depended upon two tools: the classical bristle brush and the airbrush. The latter was used for smoothing blended surfaces, but also, as photorealist artist Chuck Close contends, for "reasons that involve [the artists'] philosophical and conceptual approaches to painting," which he identifies as, "impersonality, system, surface" (Close qtd. in

Meisel, *Photorealism* 15).[3] According to art historian Frederick Hartt, airbrush was used by everyone, who created artworks in the "sharp sybaritic realist" vein, a term which was first coined by Spanish surrealist painter Salvador Dali (Hartt 948-49; Dali 4-5).

The re-emergence of the airbrush technique in the 1970s thus secured the popularity of the medium for the 1980s, and the enduring influence of new artistic trends associated with realistic and laborious representations. It was also in the 80s that this style began to be adopted by illustrators or advertisers, who explored its new possibilities and established its intertextual character by appropriating elements from even older styles and aesthetic movements.

SHAPING THE 1980S AIRBRUSH ART STYLE: INFLUENCES AND THEMES

Exploring the formal characteristics of the 1980s airbrush art, we come across a modern revival of the older styles that were the first to influence airbrush art. In a decade that saw the rise of postmodern aesthetics in Europe and the USA, the 1980s airbrush art is also recognizable as a style that shares specific postmodern attributes (Siegel 2).[4] Airbrush art produces a highly aestheticized, nostalgic art language that is curiously devoid of "genuine historicity" , and, at the same time, uses this method of pastiche in a manner that "subverts dominant discourses" by creatively merging of different artistic styles and popular culture elements in a way that challenges the once characteristic dichotomy between "highbrow" and "lowbrow" culture (Jameson 17-19; Hutcheon 46), such as in the case of American illustrator Patrick Nagel.

In addition to Hyperrealism's photographic rendering of painted reality, the influence of Art Deco was central and formative for the look of 1980s airbrush art, providing it with many of its most common motifs. Art Deco, as the "last truly sumptuous style, a legitimate and highly fertile chapter in the history of applied art," evolved its basic iconography from avant-garde painting (Cubism, Futurism, etc.) and a series of vernacular characteristics (such as zigzags, chevrons, flowers, high fashion) during the 1920s in Europe and in the 1930s in the USA, when the splendor of machinery and aerodynamic de-

signs affected its various forms (Duncan 7). After its decline, Art Deco was revived many times later, as "an artistic amalgam" (Duncan 8). According to Nancy McClelland, Art Deco not only proved to be a "useful language" for the Pop Art of the late 1960s, revolving around "the flat colors and hard-edged shapes of the Deco graphics," but also achieved rebirth in different fashion trends and film in the 1970s (McClelland 251-53; Guffey, *Retro: The Culture of Revival* 86).[5] Art Deco's revival had been one of the decisive factors in shaping the popularity of airbrush art in the 1970s in the USA, and specifically in Los Angeles. American airbrush art was incredibly popular: "It was everywhere—magazines, album covers, high up on billboards; on clothing, as fine art, and in the film"; and its aesthetics were based on the imagery of "metal, plastic and streamline" which were reflected in the modern American city (Salisbury 7 and 10). Influenced by the pre-war nostalgic images created by Push Pin Studios, the LA scene's airbrush artists, such as Peter Palombi, Charles White III, and Dave Williardson, deployed Art Deco or Tropical Deco motifs in their airbrush art, creating stunning visual examples of imaginary and almost non-temporal still-life compositions and portraits.

The dawn of the 1980s saw yet another revival of the Art Deco style in Europe: the seminal design collective Memphis, based in Milan and led by Ettore Sottsass, was inspired by older Art Deco aesthetics, blending them with popular Milanese culture, the traditions of the Orient, and elements of *Streamline Moderne* (Horn 20). At the same time, the rich European style was assimilated into the American culture, resulting in the birth of Tropical Deco architecture in Miami, Florida, which "evolved out of a softer palette and had a different vision from 'Big City' or 'Industrial Deco'" (Capitman; Cerwinske 11). For Cerwinske, Tropical Deco was "an architecture designed to evoke feelings of delight" and its soft pastels, streamlined aesthetics, glass block windows, curved angles, and geometric compositions were some of the most frequently recurring themes of the 1980s airbrush art (12).

In this regard, the 1980s airbrush art could be seen as a natural extension of its 1970s version. Apart from technical illustration, which stuck to the smallest representational elements, a heavy Deco influ-

ence can be traced in the attention given to the slightest details of the 1980s airbrush art, and is evident in both still-life illustrations and portraits from the era. These still-life compositions revolve around recurring themes, such as food and beverages (colorful and shiny cocktails, sundaes, and so on) (Image 1), deco buildings, palm trees, and vases with flowers. The same attention to detail, however, is evident in airbrush portraiture. Mal Watson, a British airbrush artist, produced a series of female portraits or "ladies," such as *Oriental Lady*, *Chic Lady*, and *Midnight Lady*, which depicted various *femmes fatales* in different urban landscapes. Echoing Art Deco and Japonisme, those female portraits were clad in high 1930s fashion, drank cocktails, wore sexy heels, and had New York's Chrysler building or the San Francisco bridge as backgrounds (Image 2). They deploy various decorative Art Deco motifs (i.e., the glamorous female sitters that could be seen in older fashion illustrations), using clear outlines, cool colors, while attention is given to the realistic depiction of a central female figure. Sometimes, in addition to its preoccupation with the "roaring 1920s," airbrush art would also revolve around representations of the 1930s, in which Art Deco style or *Streamline Moderne* elements were prominent.

Image 1: *Long Drinks* by Laura Rigo © Arti Grafiche Ricordi – Milano. Postcard.

Image 2: *Chic Lady* by Mal Watson © Athena International London. Postcard.

Pierrots were also a recurrent theme. As Duncan observes, fashion illustrators from the 1920s, such as Georges Barbier, Georges Lepape, and André Édouard Marty, "mixed 18th-century pierrots, columbines, powdered girls and crinolines with the depiction of young women" clad in haute couture fashion, and, therefore, were the first to popularize the pierrot motif. Pierrot-inspired portraits from European illustrators, like Luigi Patrignani, show the creative accumulation of Art Deco motifs in the 1980s postmodern airbrush art (Image 3). *Sad Pierrot* by Patrignani presents the viewer with a tension between clear and blurred lines tracing the outline of the figure's face and clothing. These lines merge in a tense photo-realistic style that is as vivid as it appears to be empty, devoid of underlying or "hidden" concepts.

Image 3: *Pierrot* by Luigi Patrignani © Arti Grafiche Ricordi – Milano. Postcard.

It should be noted that retrofuturism also occupied a privileged space in the airbrush art of the 1980s. Guffey and Lemay argue that retrofuturism in the culture of the 20th century identifies the future as a "style," infused with "nostalgia, irony, and time-bending dislocation" (434). Retrofuturist imagery offers futuristic visions articulated in a retro style, creating a back-and-forth dialogue between the past and the future, as in the exemplary work of Japanese artists Hajime So-

rayama and Pater Sato.[6] *Shooting Wide* by Brak is an exemplary illustration in this vein (Image 4). Featuring cool and warm colors, three identical punkish female sitters with a gun in their hand appear in movement, manifesting their sensuality. The artist faithfully records their facial features (hair, eyes, etc.) and masters the textile form of their clothing in bright sequins and other textures. They appear against a horizontal, non-realistic, and futuristic background made of neon lights. They seem to be shooting towards a prospective era, somewhere in the near future.

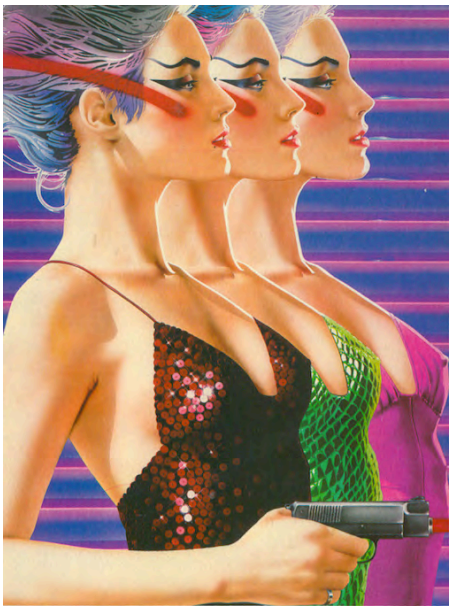

Image 4: Shooting Wide by Syd Brak © Athena International London. Postcard.

Nostalgia for other decades, such as the 1950s and the 1960s, can be traced in the airbrush works of artists like Martin Alton, who delved into imagery of 1950s popular stars, diners, jukeboxes, ads, and so on. In the 1980s, Alton produced a series of portraits depicting 1950s film and music stars like Marilyn Monroe, Marlon Brando, Elvis Presley, and James Dean. These portraits,which focus in on the slightest detail, also include a miniaturized full-body sketch of the

star against a plain background placed at the bottom of the composition. The Presley portrait looks like a faded photograph, employing cool pastel tones, while Elvis's mellow gaze reveals a yearning for older and better days (Image 5).

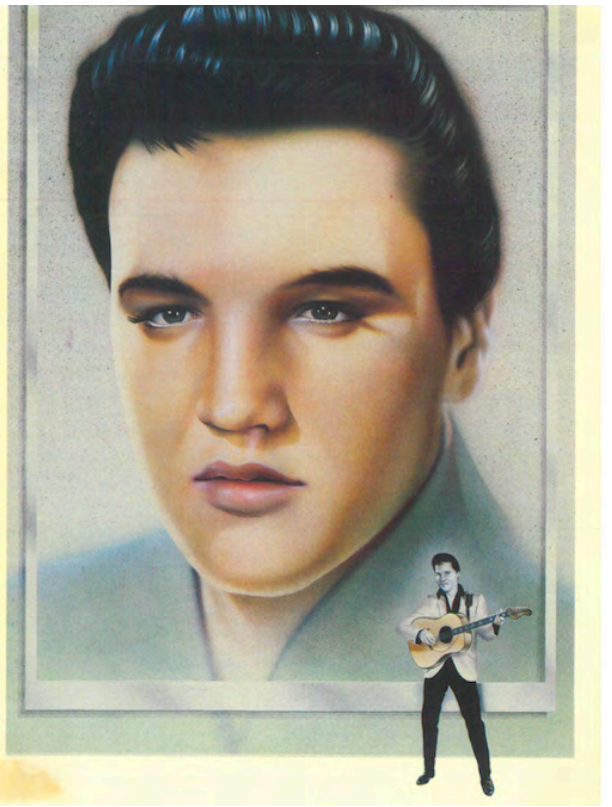

Image 5: *Elvis* by Martin Alton © Athena International London. Postcard.

A final point should be made about the similarities between airbrush works that results from recurring subjects and themes and copycat productions that try to imitate the success or popularity of other artists. While this repetition and reduplication is troubling from the standpoint of originality and authenticity, it expands the notion of airbrush art's intertextuality that reinforces the meaning of the expe-

rience, rather than undermining the aura of the work's authenticity. In the case of Barry Lepard's *Reflections* (Athena International) and Patrignani's *New York Reflections* (Paperclub, Arti Grafiche Ricordi), the eye area in each portrait constitutes for both illustrations the focal point—covered by either a mirror hat or huge sunglasses—that initiates an interplay between light and shade. The reflected images in each illustration indicate New York as the sitter's most likely location. The main subject of such illustrations is life in the modern metropolis, seen not from different, but complementary, perspectives.

Image 6: *Reflections* by Barry Lepard © Athena International London. Postcard.

Image 7: *New York Reflections* by Luigi Patrignani © Arti Grafiche Ricordi – Milano. Postcard.

ACHIEVING POPULARITY: AIRBRUSH ART ON POSTCARDS, POSTERS, ALBUM COVERS, AND STATIONARY

Despite the fact that the airbrush style shared some highbrow characteristics with Photorealism and that some airbrush artists exhibited their work at art galleries, airbrush art was nonetheless considered a popular medium and mode of artistic expression tied to the circulation of prints, posters, and postcards, featuring still life, portraits, and landscapes. As everyday commodities, these iterations of airbrush art bore the twin characteristics of most popular graphic design artifacts: they were mass reproduced and therefore affordable (Jobling and Crowley 1 and 3).

The American stationary company Paper Moon Graphics became one of the first stationary companies to publish postcards with various artworks by 1970s airbrush artists like Peter Palombi. However, it was graphic designer and illustrator Patrick Nagel, who gave prominence to the poster as an artistic form. As Elena G. Millie observes, "Nagel's posters have been in the forefront of the contemporary trend to move advertising art away from the product to other images; they also have an independent existence … tending to obliterate the line between the fine and applied arts" (6-9). Nagel's line was imaginatively adopted by stationery companies, such as Arti Grafiche Ricordi from Milano in Italy, Verkerke from the Netherlands, and Athena International from the United Kingdom.[7] The latter two released a series of printed posters and postcards of airbrush art, which decorated hundreds of teenage bedrooms as well as various shops, cafeterias, and clubs in the 1980s.

Some of these prints and posters operated as a synecdoche for airbrush art per se. The South-African illustrator Brak, for example, admired the pin-ups by Alberto Vargas and the Palm Beach style and blended popular culture, iconic fashion elements, and nostalgia in many of his famous airbrush illustrations.[8] When Brak arrived in London, Punk was a dominant aesthetic trend, but, according to the illustrator, "it lacked style," as it was "slightly dirty and unfinished" (Email communication). So, he re-imagined and re-designed the Punk look in "a fashionable Milanese way" (Email communica-

tion).[9] Seen in this light, the story behind the release of *Long Distance Kiss* in print—one of the most iconic Athena posters created by Brak—was, in fact, a narrative of what was happening in the popular culture of the era (Image 8). As Brak recalls:

> A company called Athena produced and sold art prints derived from famous artists like Monet, Degas etc. This was a limited market and they were in financial difficulties. They approached me to produce a series of posters, which would appeal to a wider market. I suspected that any expansion would come from a younger market so this took my interest back to the punk look. The task I set myself was to produce aspirational images for teenagers. I conceived emotional messages but using a punk approach to identify with the teenager. As I said I found the Punk look slightly dirty and unfinished. I, therefore, imagined the Punk look applied in a fashionable Milanese way. The result was the "Kiss" series of which "The Long Distance Kiss" became the world's bestselling poster for two years running and revived the fortunes of Athena. The success of this look led to The New Romantics era. (Email communication) [10]

Image 8: Long Distance Kiss © Syd Brak, 1982. Poster.

Long Distance Kiss took everyone by surprise, as it actually represented a departure from the classic airbrush style and an initiation into the stunning world of fashion, music, and youth. It features an

interchange of harder and softer lines, bright and shiny reds in the photorealistic vein. It exemplifies Brak's choice of depicting heads in profile, while attention is drawn to the melting telephone, a medium of communication and, apparently, a love confession. Brak's female portraits may resemble the high fashion queens of the 1920s in terms of grace and style, but they also appeared as an extraordinary example of the successful integration of older and newer visual codes. It should be stressed that fashion illustration was also enjoying its heyday at this time, with artists like Antonio Lopez and Nagel, whose art was published in *Playboy* magazine, allegedly defining the female portrait of the decade (see Caranicas).[11] Brak's airbrush works, including the well-known *Long Distance Kiss* and *Lost Love*, are designed with the same technique: hyper-exposed faces emerge from the illustration's background and are confined to some basic facial features. The bright reds on the lips or cheeks of the sitters of Brak's designs provide a youthful tone, while their eyes stand in for the total absence of hair, ears, neck, and body. In the meantime, no time and space are suggested, forms float in an imaginary "time space," which can partially be indicated thanks to the vibrant fashion details that echo the trends and the subcultures of the decade.

Within a constant intertextual play, the airbrush art of the 1980s was not only informed by older styles, but also kept in view what was actually happening in popular and youth culture through the negotiation of its various meanings and their visualization (Barnard 83-85). Being inspired by the subcultures and fashion trends of the 1980s, the *Kiss* became a synecdoche for the dreamy and colorful airbrush style that followed its release, as well as the type of the female figure it featured, following the tradition of the 1980s grand female portraits created by other graphic designers and illustrators like Nagel.

Brak's influence on the contemporary airbrush art of the 1980s could be traced in the work of different airbrush artists. His female prototype, as represented in *Long Distance Kiss*, was widely reproduced in Verkerke's stationery imagery, while his airbrush works were also released by the Dutch publishing company, which focused its attention also on airbrush art through different artists, such as the German partners Gilda Belin and Fred-Jürgen Rogner. The pastel palette of their Palm Beach landscapes and interiors and their female min-

imal portraits with bold pink blush have been on magazine covers, as well as postcards, posters, and teenager's bags. During that time, Verkerke also produced stationery products and bags, which featured the work of Belin-Rogner and Alton's homage to airbrush portraits of 1950s film and music stars, which had previously been featured on Athena postcards. The illustrator "Gerry the Cat" also conceived airbrush works in the manner of Brak, which were released as stickers, or were featured on notebooks and various accessories.

The airbrush art of the 1980s played a vital role in the various fields of visual communication, including advertising, illustration, and graphic design both in the USA and Europe. Even in the era when popular music was mainly promoted by MTV, the first television channel ever to broadcast music video-clips, the album art of the vinyl record jackets still contributed to the sales of an LP. Record covers became cultural "artefacts," offering consumers "an attractive site and sight, where the look of authenticity is actually more crucial to the collector than the effective authenticity of the object" (Roy 126). As Steve Jones and Martin Sorgen observe, "genres of popular music are not entirely musical but also visual, and … music listeners typically bring with them a good knowledge of visual styles" (84). These visual styles are often associated with other merchandising (t-shirts, bags, posters, and so on) featuring graphic design(s) replicated across a number of products.

Many popular record sleeves of the 1980s were designed by airbrush artists, some of whom tried to reproduce the Brak prototype and featured characteristic female airbrush figures.[12] One such example stems from Canada: Lime, the HI-NRJ duet and husband-and-wife project, had their record sleeves designed by Graffiti Studio of Montreal in the characteristic airbrush style, beginning with their *Lime II* (1982) and continuing with *Lime III* (1983). Their record sleeves for *Sensual Sensation* LP (1984) and onwards feature artwork that is reminiscent of Brak's airbrush portraits: bathed in the band's trademark color (lime), a female figure is positioned opposite a cold cocktail, one of the recurring themes of 1980s airbrush art (Image 9). Employing clear outlines with marvelous radiations and hues in green, this jacket illustration produces a simultaneously tropical and postmodern sensation.[13]

Image 9: Record Sleeve for Lime's *Sensual Sensation* LP, 1984 © Graffiti Studio of Montreal.

A LONG DECLINE, A FRESH REVIVAL

I now want to theorize the reemergence of the 1980s airbrush art in the present, using Bakhtin's concept of the "chronotope" (from "chronos" for time and "topos" for space). As Bakhtin notes, the term was first employed in the context of Einstein's Theory of Relativity; his "Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel," however, seeks to redeploy it as a conceptualization of the merging of space and time "artistically expressed in literature" (Bakhtin 84). It is in the "chronotope," Bakhtin says, that time "thickens" and becomes "artistically visible" (Bakhtin 84). Here, space responds to "move-

ments of time, plot and history" and, in so doing, becomes, charged with historicity (Bakhtin 84). In this sense, time interweaves with space (and vice versa) and allows us to understand the way history is represented by a text and the way images of both elements are articulated and related to one another.

As "no artifact of culture [including airbrush art] ever exists outside of particular moments in historical time and space" (Haynes 104), the notion of chronotope could be useful as a "metaphor of society and one of the principal generators of artistic meanings in both literature and painting" (Best 291). In this light, airbrush art could be interpreted as a "chronotope" of the 1980s' popular culture and art emerged through the decade of the Wall Street Boom, the New Conservatism of the US President Ronald Reagan, and conspicuous consumption (see Phillips-Fein; Batchelor and Stoddard 3; and Thompson 15) of hard goods, fashion, etc. Filtered through a nostalgic, Art-Deco lens and producing images of retrofuturity punctuated by tropical intervals, the airbrush chronotope, implicitly or explicitly, could be also a reference to the 1980s metropolis "high life" and consumer luxuries, as well as lavish glamor.

Throughout the 1990s, the airbrush art that had previously flourished in advertising, the posters and postcards of Athena and Verkerke publishing companies, and on vinyl jackets started to show signs of formal decline: the repetition of styles and themes and the recycling of ideas, which resulted in the emergence of schlock aesthetics and soulless copies of older successful artworks. In this regard, the 1980s airbrush art was instantly associated with the notion of kitsch and outdatedness, as the new developments in the 1990s graphic design, especially due to the emergence of the digital technology, posed the outlines of a fundamental change in the poster itself (Guffey, *Posters: A Global History* 231). Against that background, digital design tended to concentrate attention on new forms of communication, discourse, and aesthetics, while raising questions about craftiness, form and content.

At the end of the first decade of the 21st century and at the beginning of the following, the 1980s airbrush art resurfaced thanks to the Internet: Athena or Verkerke posters with airbrush illustration are now,

for example, regularly sold in virtual marketplaces, such as eBay or Etsy. The rise of micro-blogging sites (like Tumblr) and image/photo-sharing applications designed to create visual collections (like Pinterest) allowed users to upload scanned images of rare airbrush-illustration books, paper cuts, and postcards. As a result, users began creating and curating image collections under headings like "airbrush," "80s art," "hyperrealism," or "syd brak," making airbrush art widely available on the World Wide Web. Using these platforms, users tried to organize their memories and to identify and share their nostalgia for the themes of the 1980s airbrush art and the memories they associated with them.

Such activities bear a specific significance, that of creating a state of *off modernity*. Overcoming the tradition of the "postmodern condition" and its discontents—the death of the subject and what Jean-François Lyotard identified as "incredulity towards metanarratives"—the *off-modern* is instead concerned with worship of these same ruins (on the "postmodern condition," see Lyotard xxiv). As Boym argues, *off-modernity* is revealed "in the form of a paradoxical ruinophilia," allowing us to "frame utopian projects as dialectical ruins," which are then to be incorporated back into the here and now (36). How could these scanned airbrush artworks be simply regarded as pure "ruin" or nostalgia? This would be a rather naive approach. Cleary they bear the trace of utopian longing as well.

Without any doubt, the manifold character of the 1980s airbrush art with its own representations, rhetoric, and its constant intertextual interplay evokes complex feelings of nostalgia that represent "the past with a sadness that is blended with a small measure of pleasure"—a yearning, in other words, for the past decades (the 1930s, the 1950s) and the era during which airbrush flourished the most (the 1980s) (Guffey, *Retro: The Culture of Revival* 19). However, this type of utopian nostalgia emerged not only due to the interactivity between the users and the Internet through the aforementioned platforms. One crucial factor should also be located in the financial crisis of 2007-2008 in the USA and in Europe, whose devastating effects led to the reinvention of new survival tactics and the rise of vintage markets (Cassidy and Bennett). As Elena Oliete-Aldea argues,

> With the financial crash that burst the period of economic abundance, replacing the optimistic belief of a linear progression of history for the better by the idea of history as decline, leading to fragmented societies and identities, with individuals lacking autonomy and spontaneous expressivity. With not only an uncertain future, but an unstable present, 21st century societies affected by the economic crisis tend to look back nostalgically to the past. (351)

Within this framework, the 1980s airbrush art offers a clear vision of a luxurious "escapist" world, where airbrush craftsmanship undermines the alienation of postmodern digital amenities. Airbrush illustrations, like other popular art forms, thus bear a kind of utopian sensibility: whatever the crisis one is experiencing in the outside world, one's bedroom, adorned again with his posters, could become a safe harbor for the dreams the young and old alike. [14] These airbrush female portraits or landscapes call one like a Siren to escape into the near future or the long-forgotten past with an explosion of pigments.

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NOTES

1. Tumblr accounts, such as "palm and laser" (http://palmandlaser.tumblr.com), upload scanned images from 1980s books on interior design and illustration like *Restaurant Design* (1987), and *Bathroom Design* (1985).

2. The term "Photorealism" describes this wide corpus of works, but, according to Meisel, does not constitute a "movement" (Meisel, *Photorealism* 20). Works included in this canon must have been exhibited by 1972.

3. "Impersonality" refers to the nature of the photographic material used to create a painting; "system" relates to the series of techniques used to render a photorealist artwork; and "surface" is associated with the thin surface of photorealist paintings due to the frequent use of the airbrush (see Meisel, *Photorealism Since 1980* 8-10).

4. As Bonnie Clearwater argues, the year 1979 could be considered as "watershed," as it coincided with the return of painting, which was considered dead in the USA in the late 1960s, and opened a critical dialogue about the definition of postmodernism at the beginning of the next decade (Clearwater 7). During this time, New York still operated as the "arbiter of contemporary art history" and centered on neo-expression-

ism, post-structuralism and Neo-Geo, or, the New Geometry (Clearwater 7). This mainly "European, and predominantly painterly, upsurge" was evident in various exhibitions around the world (Nairne 17).

5. Barbara Hulanicki's "Biba" was an English fashion store, which was based in London during the 1960s until the mid-seventies. It mixed some major Art Deco and Art Nouveau influences on clothing, accessories, and 1930s-inspired objects. Films such as *Bonnie and Clyde* (Arthur Penn, 1967) invoked the popular culture of the 1930s, including mass entertainment (i.e., radio shows) and fashion trends. In the 1970s, *The Boyfriend* (Ken Russell, 1971) and *Cabaret* (Bob Fosse, 1972) further explored the Deco iconography and paid dues to its distinctive imagery. The 1980s Deco revival can also be traced in films such as *Liquid Sky* (Slava Tsukerman, 1982) and *Un Sapore di Paura (Pathos)* (Piccio Raffanini, 1987).

6. After working as an illustrator in advertising and independently, and after his previous interest in pin-ups or erotic art, Japanese artist Hajime Sorayama drew the first of his "Robot" series in 1978; his Sexy Robots were published in 1983. Defining himself as a "super-realist" illustrator, he also created retro-futuristic imagery with female and male robots—even their "robot" pets—in erotic poses, set in an unidentified future. Sorayama's robots go beyond the marvels of the 1980s technology; they represent "the true icons of the millennium that is now drawing to a close, produced by the mating of the insatiable consumer-world with the cyberworld that is overtaking us" (*Airbrush in Japan I* 4). In fact, they become a cynical comment on the overwhelming power of consumerism and technology and their effects on everyday humans, as represented in his MASKS series. It is also within this context, and with a multiplicity of interests in airbrush art (fashion illustration, and erotic art for *Playboy*), Japanese airbrush artist Pater Sato evolved a unique style, which combined the brilliant femininity of Syd Brak's portraits with futuristic details.

7. Arti Grafiche Ricordi published airbrush posters and postcards from Italian airbrush artists and illustrators, such as Luigi Patrignani, Laura Rigo, and M. Santambrogio. They recycled the same airbrush themes and represented a series of romantic female portraits and pierrots as well as abstract compositions with Coca-Cola tins, red hearts, and ice creams.

The company was popular in Europe, and, particularly, in Greece where its posters could be seen hanging in record shops, cafeterias and bars, as documented in the short-lived Greek direct-to-video film production (1985-1990), which was associated with kitsch aesthetics and employed often airbrush posters as a settings decor and in Greek television shows or series (such as *To Retire* / *The Penthouse* (1990-1992, MEGA Channel or *O Kanonieris ke I Vendetta* / *The Striker and the Starlet* (1991, ANT1).

8. Other airbrush works by Brak further develop his visual "jargon." He deploys and displays elements of the Tropical Deco vocabulary in his airbrush work *California Dreams*, which features three girls in jeans riding their bicycles through a tropical landscape with tall palm trees. In addition to his use of bright colors, Brak also worked with darker hues, as, for example, in his *1984* piece, which features a woman in black clothing and a helmet etched with "Ministry of Love" (in homage to George Orwell's dystopian novel *1984*).

9. According to Simona Reinach, it was in the late 1960s that Milano became the new driving force behind Italian fashion with designers, such as Elio Fiorucci. In the beginning of the 1970s, the city had already emerged as the international capital of fashion, where fashion designers, artists and photographers "contributed to consolidating the relationship between the intellectual world, the art world, and fashion" (242).

10. See also Webb (8-9). The New Romantics stemmed out of the so-called The Blitz Kids, post-punk habitués of The Blitz Club in London, where they used to socialize and compete in eccentric clothing. Their style ranged from medieval to postmodern mix-and-match aesthetics with a corresponding make-up style—especially the blusher on their cheekbones, taken straight out of *Long Distance Kiss*.

11. Brak's portraits appear to be something more than the respective versions of Nagel and Lopez. His portraits are minimalistic, usually set on a monochromatic—usually white—background. His pictorial device is clearly the airbrush, which allows him to use colors just like he were using transparent, but brilliant and bold, water colors. Female sitters are clad in sparkling paillettes, faces are sharp with tiny decorative elements, which shine like metal. In the same vein, Brak's work *Wired for Sound* appears to use more visual information, dense and colorful, as if his pre-

vious models finally emerge from light. With a total control of the mastering of the sitter's heads, he uses basic colors again, such as red and blue, and intersects romanticism with technology, music and reverie, using two almost twin models with punkish hair, daydreaming in sound.

12. The "pioneers" of the L.A. West Coast airbrush style, such as Peter Palombi or Charles White III, also engaged with record sleeve design, infusing it with their particular aesthetics. Palombi had designed sleeves for Eddie Harris's *Is It In* (Atlantic, 1974) and Michel Polnareff's self-titled LP (Atlantic, 1975). Charles White III did design for Sammy Davis's *When The Feeling Hits You* (Reprise Records, 1965) and The Trammps' famous *Disco Inferno* (Atlantic, 1976). Three decades later, Brak's *Long Distance Kiss* and *Wired to Sound* were featured on Jupiter Black (ft. Fred Ventura), *Hold Me* (2007) and Alba (ft. Fred Ventura), *Without You* (2011).

13. Lime's other LPs, such as *A Brand New Day* (1988) and *Caroline* (1991), feature more photorealistic female torsos, using trademark lime-colored details associated with the band. Over the years, the Brak prototype has been transformed, especially when it was visually recreated for Italo Disco jacket illustrations. Although made with airbrush, they poorly replicate the older archetypes in an attempt to recreate their exotic or retro-futuristic aura that characterized the cover of *Tropical Classics… at its Best!* (Unidisc, 1989), which features a dense cover with a Brak female on an orange background. However, the most characteristic example of the mistreatment of Brak's aesthetics was the record sleeve of Italo Disco act LaLa. Their 12" single *Johnny Johnny* (Academy, 1986) is based on Brak's *Electric Kiss*. The illustrator, however, seems to have erased the basic details, but the main form, a female giving a passionate kiss, still remains and has been re-masked by other media.

14. I use the term, utopian, in the manner proposed by Richard Dyer and applied to forms of popular entertainment: "Two of the taken-for-granted descriptions of entertainment, as 'escape' and as 'wish-fulfilment,' point to its central thrust, namely, utopianism. Entertainment offers the image of 'something better' to escape into, or something we want deeply that our day-to-day lives don't provide. Alternatives, hopes, wishes—these are the stuff of utopia, the sense that things could be better, that something other than what is can be imagined and maybe realized" (Dyer 20).

DIS/CORPORATIZATION: THE BIOPOLITICS OF PROSTHETIC LIVES AND POSTHUMAN TRAUMA IN *GHOST IN THE SHELL* FILMS

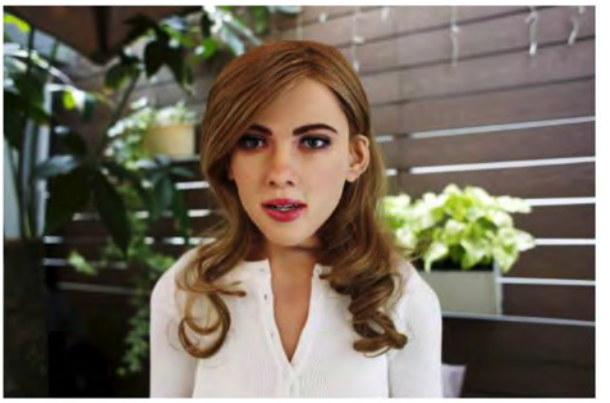
DONNA T. TONG

Abstract: *This paper explores the biopolitics both implicit and explicit in Mamoru Oshii's film duology Ghost in the Shell. The prostheticization of life for Major Motoko Kusanagi is based upon an objectification of a cyborg self enabled and literalized through technology that is also a (mis)representation that conflates the biological self and technological self, and Oshii further problematizes this representation with the complication of the commodification and trafficking of posthuman lives, explicitly examined in more critical detail in the second film, Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence. In other words, Oshii arguably imagines the extreme end of biopower in a posthuman world as human trafficking structured by a globalized political economy.*

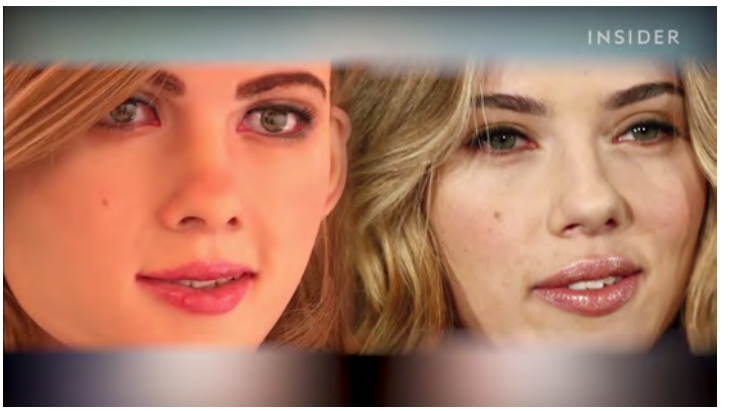
Résumé: *Cet article explore la biopolitique implicite et explicite dans la duologie de films de Mamoru Oshii Ghost in the Shell. La prothésisation de la vie pour le Major Motoko Kusanagi est basée sur une objectivation d'un cyborg habilité et littéraire à travers la technologie qui est aussi une présentation déformée qui confond le soi biologique et technologique, et Oshii problématise encore cette représentation avec la complication de la marchandisation et le trafic de vie posthumaines, examinés explicitement dans des détails plus critiques dans le deuxième film, Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence. En d'autres termes, on peut avancer que Oshii imagine la fin extrême du biopouvoir dans un monde posthumain comme un trafic humain structuré par une économie politique mondialisée.*

PROSTHETIC LIVES AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

In April 2016, media sources reported on how Hong Kong designer Ricky Ma had spent more than $50,000 USD to create and build a robot in the likeness of Scarlett Johansson (Glaser).



"The Scarlett Johansson Bot Is the Robotic Future of Objectifying Women" by April Glaser. Image: BOBBY YIP/REUTERS



"$50,000 robot that looks like Scarlett Johansson." *Insider*. YouTube. YouTube, 1 Apr. 2016. Web. 6 Jan. 2018.

This particular use of current technologies in 3D printing, prosthetics, and robotics is positively uncanny given the previous year's announcement of the same actress' controversial casting in a live-action adaptation of Mamoru Oshii's animated film *Ghost in the Shell*, a cyber-punk, dystopic film centered on cyborg technologies in a posthuman future.[1] Margo Kaminski observes that the ScarJo robot not only underscores the current "age of interactive celebrity," but also takes it to its technological endpoint. What is frightful about this new reality is not just the potential for privately or commercially manufacturing life-like robots (eerily actualizing Oshii's "gynoid," or sex robot, from *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence*), but that the fact, as April Glaser points out, "Johansson is literally being objectified" (Glaser). But what is the legal status of such usage of Johansson's image? According to Kaminski, "The commercial use of one's face or name without permission can be thought of as a privacy harm, founded in autonomy, dignity, or personhood," and is grounded in concerns about misrepresentation and resulting potential harm (Kaminski). As such, right of publicity cases where such misrepresentation is alleged "employ a trope of 'involuntary servitude,'" implying that using "a person's face without permission is like forcing that person to work at a job, harming their dignity" (Kaminski).

Interestingly, these issues of consent and (mis)representation involved in "involuntary servitude" are already entangled in Oshii's *Ghost in the Shell* duology. In the first film, *Ghost in the Shell* (攻殻機動隊 *Kōkaku Kidōtai* "Mobile Armored Riot Police"), Major Motoko Kusanagi and her partner Batou discuss her recent disenchantment with their work as agents for Section 9, a "public-security" government agency.[2] Kusanagi agrees with Batou that they are not enslaved to Section 9, but only up to a point: "We do have the right to resign if we choose, provided we give the government back our cyborg shells…and the memories they hold." How such memories might be "given back," however, is in no way clear. As a "fully-cyberized" being, Kusanagi apparently only retains her original organic brain; the rest of her body is literally manufactured and maintained by cybertechs employed by Section 9. In the second film, *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence* (イノセンス, *Inosensu*), which begins several years after Kusanagi's disappearance at the end of the first film, Batou ad-

mits to his new partner Togusa that, "Her brains and hardware were government property and her entire memory, including the classified information, were part of the deal." Under these circumstances, resignation would be a kind of literal termination. As such, Kusanagi's "prosthetic life" amounts to a form of "involuntary servitude," compelling continued employment as a public-security agent in order to preserve her continued existence and thus "harming" her dignity.

Many critics of Oshii's *Ghost in the Shell* films have focused on their representation of the posthuman from different angles.[3] In this paper I focus specifically on their biopolitics, which intertwine present and future-oriented concerns about the posthuman. The prostheticization of life for Kusanagi is based upon an objectification of a cyborg self enabled and literalized through technology that is also a (mis)representation that conflates the biological self and technological self. This problematic conflation is already hinted at in the characters' inability to distinguish their own memories from data, the latter of which can be appropriated as private property. This conflation of memory and data is widespread and undergirds many of our own misconceptions about human thought processes. In "The Empty Brain," Robert Epstein succinctly denounces popular-culture fantasies that equate the human brain with a computer. As he points out, unlike computers, humans are "*not* born with: *information, data, rules, software, knowledge, lexicons, representations, algorithms, programs, models, memories, images, processors, subroutines, encoders, decoders, symbols, or buffers*" (Epstein, original emphasis). To demonstrate the difference between human memory and data storage, Epstein recounts having a student draw a one-dollar bill from memory and then letting the student use an actual bill as an exemplar. The first drawing is invariably less detailed and accurate and shows that human beings do not "store" representations of objects as computers do, that people are "much better at recognising than recalling," since remembering, for humans, involves "try[ing] to relive an experience" rather than retrieving data from storage (Epstein). Thus, the idea of erasing or implanting memories already assumes that human brains are equivalent to computers; but this is a false assumption that the films elide.

In Oshii's dystopic future this conflation of the biotic and the technological, in fact, becomes the central means by which posthuman lives are commodified and trafficked. In *Ghost in the Shell*, Kusanagi's body is, in effect, owned by the state. Her status is implicitly one of indentured servitude. Since the construction and the continued maintenance of her cybernetic body are costly and moreover beyond her own means, discontinuing her employment would mean "returning" those highly-expensive parts, not to mention her memories as "data," back to the government that claims them as its rightful property. The film suggests that her individual subjectivity and quality of life would be so diminished by such forfeitures that she is essentially trapped in a technologically-enabled and -constructed posthuman slavery. In *Innocence*, Oshii presents us with gynoids, or what are fundamentally sex-bots, who are explicitly property to be made, sold, traded, and so on, and whose value lies in their adolescent appearance and affect. In other words, Oshii arguably imagines what might be the extreme outcome of biopower in a posthuman world where human trafficking is aided and abetted by a globalized political economy and technological infrastructure. I am not contending that technology is inherently antithetical to human existence, but rather observing that Oshii depicts some of the dangers that should be addressed when we consider humanity's relationship with technology. In Oshii's highly technologized world, corporeality is contingent, commodified, and constantly under attack. In this regard, Michel Foucault's theory of biopower can help us consider how power operates in the literal construction, maintenance, and circulation of the cyborg, and the envisioned psycho-social ramifications of this, including the ways in which practices of power in/form the subjectivity or otherwise impact the subjectivation of the cyborg.

RECOGNIZING/(RE)DEFINING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The audience first meets Major Kusanagi when she is tasked to assassinate an ambassador helping a defecting computer programmer. However, the focus of the film and Kusanagi's main mission are the identification and arrest of the Puppet Master, a villainous hacker who "ghost-hacks" the "cyber-brains" of various persons running the gamut of all walks of life from diplomatic trans-

lators to refuse collectors. After hacking them, the Puppet Master's victims are unable to remember their childhoods, personal histories, or dreams and life goals. In the course of solving the mystery and apprehending the Puppet Master, Kusanagi questions her identity as a cyborg, and challenges what it means to be human, especially in a world in which people, like computers, can be "hacked" and have their memories tampered with. Towards the end of the film, the Puppet Master downloads into a female cyborg shell also manufactured by the same corporation as Kusanagi's, and professes to be artificial intelligence who "became self-aware" from "wandering various networks" and requests asylum from Section 9. This shell is immediately stolen by Section 6 agents; but Kusanagi and her partner Batou recover the Puppet Master's cyborg body, and "she" confesses that "she" took a corporeal form in order to meet and merge with Kusanagi to transcend the limits of both of their existences. Ultimately, Kusanagi agrees; but both cyber-bodies are destroyed by Section 6 agents at the moment of their merger, leaving Batou to recover Kusanagi's "brain shell" and attempt to resuscitate her by implantation in a black-market cyborg body. She revives, and, after a brief conversation with Batou, departs, destination unknown, but with the understanding that, "The net is vast and limitless."

The second film *Innocence* commences with Batou and his partner Togusa arriving at a grisly crime scene. Batou follows a literal trail of blood to decapitated police officers and an adolescent-looking gynoid, naked under an untied red robe with an iris behind her ear, holding the head of one of the police officers in her lap. She attacks Batou, and, when he throws her back, she whispers, "Help me," as she rips open her own torso, in a cybernetic allusion to Hans Bellmer's *Rose ouverte la nuit* (*Rose open at night*, 1946).

Bellmer, Hans. *Rose Open At Night*, 1934. *WikiArt*. "Hans Bellmer: Famous Works," N.d. Web. 13 Jan. 2018. <https://www.wikiart.org/en/hans-bellmer/rose-open-at-night-1934>

Oshii adds his own twist by having panels of the gynoid's face also bursting open in a grotesque mirroring of her torso.

Thus begins Batou and Togusa's investigation into the malfunctioning, murderous Hadaly 2052 gynoids, manufactured by the multinational company Locus Solus.[4] Following the clues from the bloody killing of Jack Volkerson, consignment inspector for Locus Solus, Batou and Togusa question the local yakuza, leading to a messy shootout. Afterwards, Batou is given a cryptic message about being "in the kill zone" right before his e-brain is "hacked," causing him to shoot his own arm, nearly killing bystanders. Continuing with the case, Batou and Togusa seek out Kim, a disgraced ex-special forces operative, and at Kim's decrepit mansion of automatons, puppets, and tableaux vivant, Kusanagi makes a brief cameo in her borrowed cyborg body from the end of *Ghost in the Shell* to leave clues for Batou. Batou and

Togusa discover through Kim that Locus Solus is holding the kidnapped girls so that their "ghosts" can be copied onto the gynoids, presumably to make the gynoids more realistic and therefore valuable to customers. Batou infiltrates Locus Solus's floating manufacturing plant and faces the murderous gynoids. Just as they seem to overwhelm Batou, Kusanagi downloads into a gynoid body to help him. She confesses to be behind the cryptic warning about being "in the kill zone" when Batou was hacked. After shutting down the plant, they find and release one of the only still-conscious girls who explains that, with the help of a remorseful Volkerson, she tried to circumvent the three-laws programming of the gynoids in order to "make trouble" so that someone would notice and investigate.[5] The film concludes with Batou being reunited with his dog while Togusa gifts his young daughter, who had been dog-sitting, with a porcelain doll.

What is the connection between these two cyberpunk films and human trafficking? To begin with, it might be instructive to define human trafficking. According to the website for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), "Article 3, paragraph (a) of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons defines Trafficking in Persons as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving

or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation" ("What Is Human Trafficking?"). Exploitation as explained by the UNODC "include[s], at a minimum, the exploitation or the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs" ("What Is Human Trafficking?").[6]

While Oshii's *Ghost in the Shell* duology does not purport to depict real or even allegorical representations of human trafficking, it nonetheless does imagine a posthuman future where technology and globalization create the structural conditions that propagate human trafficking in ways that disturbingly parallel the trends which Kathleen Kim and Grace Chang pinpoint in "Reconceptualizing Approaches to Human Trafficking: New Directions and Perspectives from the Field(s)." A report published by Human Rights First claims that, "An estimated 21 million victims are trapped in modern-day slavery" ("Human Trafficking by the Numbers"); however, as Kim and Chang observe, our attention is usually only focused one particular aspect of human trafficking, forced prostitution. In the first *Ghost in the Shell*, Kusanagi's situation of a legalized indentured servitude is not sexual slavery, but a broader mix of "forced labour or services" brought about by the exigencies of a global political economy, where even the defection of a computer programmer is criminalized as violating an arms export treaty. To counter the consequences of "[t]he advance of computerisation" that portends the extinction of "nations and ethnic groups" (as explained in the opening titles), cyborg agents like Kusanagi are required to maintain public security; their technologized bodies, however, leave them beholden to their employers. As mentioned earlier, Kusanagi's employment is voluntary up to a point; if she or any other cyborg agent discontinues working for Section 9, they must "give the government back [their] cyborg shells… and the memories they hold." Her body is not hers, but is instead literally government property.[7]

Innocence thus takes the implicit theme of human trafficking or forced servitude from *Ghost in the Shell* and makes it explicit through its use of gynoids. The gynoids themselves are a very obvious case of human trafficking, fitting into the dominant understanding of hu-

man trafficking as primarily "the prostitution of others." In solving the mystery of the murderous gynoids, Togusa and Batou find that a black market in kidnapping adolescent girls is what provides the infrastructure for creating these sex dolls in the first place, thus adding another layer to the film's representation of the trafficking of sentient beings, made obvious through the implications of sexual exploitation. The gynoids are *tabula rasa*, in contrast to Kusanagi whose cyborgization is meant as an extension of and/or complement to her already existing abilities. Yet, these differences arguably highlight the ways in which Oshii's posthuman future projects a political economy where cyborgs and technology are not only embedded in structures of power, but where the enslavement of female cyborgs also scaffolds this hegemony. These two films thus highlight and critique the biopolitics that constitute and enable such exploitation, and the films make visible the ways in which these anxieties about technology and the self, while allegorically imagined through cyborg and gynoid bodies, are becoming more and more salient with each technological breakthrough.

BIOPOWER AND CORPORATIZATION OF CYBORGS

In *Society Must Be Defended*, Foucault asserts that biopolitics is best explained through a tidal shift in the exertion of power by the state where, "The right of sovereignty [which] was the right to take life or let live" becomes "the right to make live and to let die" (241). Where the apotheosis of the monarchial state's power lies in the king's order or stay of execution, the contemporary state's ability to withhold or offer life-saving or life-extending measures and technologies illuminates the dark path that the intersection of the biotic and the technological may portend. As such, Foucault's biopower and biopolitics are particularly pertinent to discussing Oshii's vision of a posthuman world where technology is so ubiquitous that there seem to be almost no characters without some sort of modification and therefore dependence on the biopower of the state. This is not to say that the state no longer retains "the right to take life or let live" (as evidenced in capital punishment), but to highlight that a turn to biopolitics inaugurates a sweeping organizational and infrastructural change to the workings of the state. As Foucault notes, "I wouldn't

say exactly that sovereignty's old right—to take life or let live—was replaced, but it came to be complemented by a new right which does not erase the old right but which does penetrate it, permeate it" (241). Biopolitics, unlike the older politics from which it is differentiated, "deals with the population, with the population as political problem, as a problem that is at once scientific and political, as a biological problem and as power's problem" (245). Biopolitics is thus not merely about a shift in the organization and exertion of power, but about how that shift is itself inextricably linked to and embedded in different knowledges and structures. In *Innocence*, for example, even Togusa's daughter seems unable to escape the touch of biopolitics as made uncannily evident in her "innocent" joy in her gifted doll, which is now hers to own and control.[8]

The politicization of the *bio*logical, of *life*, is made very evident in Oshii's films, and Kusanagi's indentured servitude itself offers a very concrete example of biopolitics, since her life is only made possible through her continued employment at Section 9. Her particular circumstances also highlight the myriad social and political relationships necessary to give rise to such a situation. Oshii's *Ghost in the Shell* establishes Section 9, in contrast to Section 6 whose purview seems to be domestic matters, to be devoted to counter-terrorism, or securing the nation from external threats. It is unclear, however, whether technology is positioned on the side of counter-terrorism or against it. The opening explanatory titles assert that, "The advance of computerisation… has not yet wiped out nations and ethnic groups," implying the iconoclastic potential of technology. Section 9 therefore works to secure the continued existence of the nation as a nation, using the very technology that paradoxically portends the annihilation of the nation itself.

This paradox no doubt stems from anxieties resulting from a posthuman society that seems to draw ever nearer. Indeed, with the (increasing) interpenetration of the organic body with the technology by which different medical advances that have been realized, the cyborg has become a particularly contentious figure in both our cultural imaginaries and in fact. These very scientific advances themselves call into question not only the wholeness of the organic being, but also the status of the human. Donna Haraway's "Cyborg Mani-

festo" very famously ruminates on the cyborg's potential to blur and perhaps even dismantle ossified categories of race, gender, sexuality, and so on through its hybrid nature. In "Sex and the Single Cyborg: Japanese Popular Culture Experiments in Subjectivity," Sharalyn Orbaugh argues that,

> The cultural products that engage the notion of the cyborg help us to come to terms with the meaning of this new relationship between the human body and technology as that relationship unfolds: narrative helps us to work through the fears and desires of a particular historical-cultural moment. We are each of us already compelled daily to face the breakdown of the distinction between the mechanical/technological and the organic/biotic. Cyborg narratives allow us, in Jennifer Gonzalez's phrasing, to personify, condense, and displace the anxieties and hopes raised by this situation. (436)

Some of these anxieties and hopes are articulated by and through those living lives altered or enabled by technology as in the case of Neil Harbisson, "the world's first cyborg activist" implanted with an antenna connected to a sensor in his brain that "translates colour into sound" (Jeffries). While Harbisson's self-coined "eyeborg" was initially meant to "help him counter a rare form of colour blindness called achromatopsia," he had the device upgraded to be Bluetooth-enabled so that he "can either connect to devices that are near [him] or [he] can connect to the internet" (qtd. in Jeffries). Harbisson claims that such technological enhancements go beyond deciding to become a cyborg and are also "an artistic statement— I'm treating my own body and brain as a sculpture" (qtd. in Jeffries).

Yet, perhaps the most interesting and telling feature of Harbisson's account is precisely what it is missing. His narrative of his journey "on the superhighway to transhumanism," although it declaims artistic freedom, bodily autonomy, and cyborg rights, does not account for the way that race, gender, or even class might inflect cyborg experience (Jefferies).[9] There is, for example, a jarring contrast between his story and that of Vanilla Chamu, a Japanese woman who became briefly famous after appearing on a Japanese variety show in 2013 and who admitted to having undergone more than 30 elective surg-

eries and procedures "to look like a French doll" (Ashcraft). The television show, however, did not introduce her as "a living doll" as she desired, but as a "cyborg" (Ashcraft). The label implies "that she no longer looks totally human" (Ashcraft). The contrast between the two narratives, and who has control over them, is suggestive of Harbisson's privileged position, which allows him to disregard gender and race in ways that are denied to Vanilla Chamu. For him, becoming a cyborg gives him agency over his body and subjectivity in a way that Vanilla Chamu is pointedly denied. Her story is very blatantly shaped by constructions of race and gender, from a childhood of being bullied for being "busaiku," or "ugly," to spending more than $100,000 USD (Ashcraft) on various procedures to erase or rewrite that past trauma, and even her unwanted appellation as a cyborg. As a child, she was bullied and perhaps ostracized for failing to meet beauty norms set for women in Japanese society, but she also responds to this social rejection by revering porcelain French dolls. In some ways, this response also implies an internalized racial hegemony that privileges whiteness and white as beautiful (more beautiful than Japanese).

These real-life accounts of "cyborgs," as both embraced or externally imposed identifications, demonstrate a kind of schizophrenic polarization in cyborg experience. This polarization is reflected in Oshii's films where cyborgization is imagined both as allowing humans to surpass their original biological limits and as dehumanizing. There is admiration and, at the same time, disdain for the cyborg. Oshii's *Ghost in the Shell* films imagine the cyborg in contradictory, politically-charged ways, veering from a fixation on the super-human, gendered bodies of its female characters to a violent disregard for the same. This violent disregard arguably stems from the commodification of the cyborg. In "From Wooden Cyborgs to Celluloid Souls: Mechanical Bodies in Anime and Japanese Puppet Theater," Christopher Bolton points out that, "At the story level, the major [Kusanagi] is both a strong heroine who has become powerful by internalizing technology and *a technological object possessed by others*" (733, emphasis added). The first film, as Bolton points out, vacillates between a valorization of the technology that has enhanced her abilities, conveying a "message of bodily transcendence," and an apparent fixation

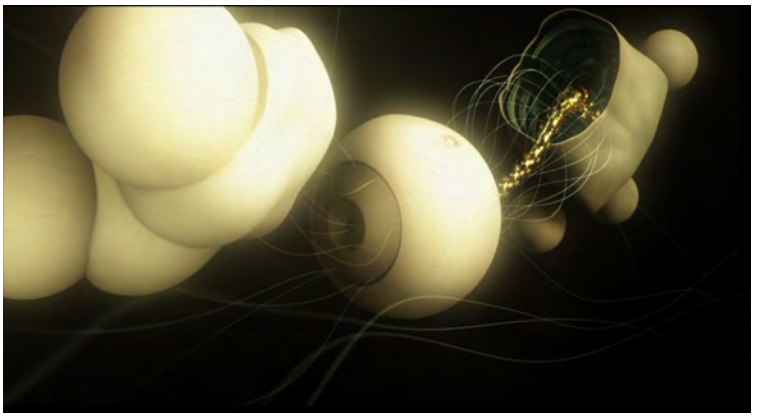
on female sexualization and the body (736)—hence the gratuitous nudity which is only superficially excused by the character's constant need to disrobe in order to make use of optical camouflage embedded in her skin. Kusanagi's cyborgization suggests that, "the gendered body is not transcended by technology but, rather, objectified and commodified to a greater degree" (Bolton 735). Where Bolton goes on to contextualize *Ghost in the Shell* within critical theories on puppetry and animation, I wish to concentrate instead on the issue of commodification. The films themselves centralize this commodification, making it fundamental to the structural underpinnings that inform the biopolitics of the cyborg.

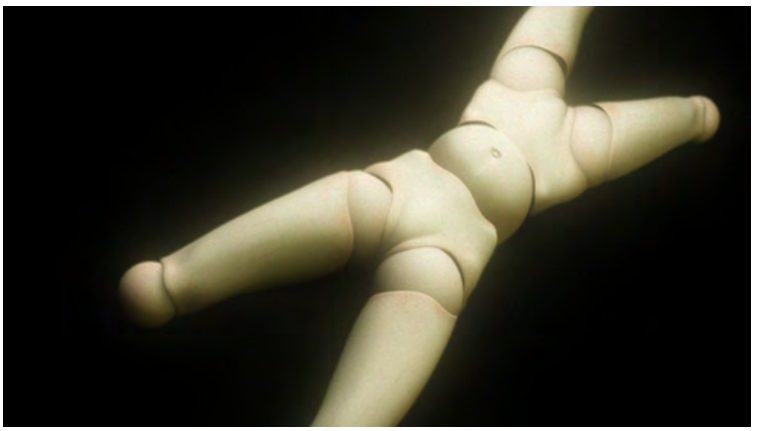
The two films highlight the construction of the cyborg (or gynoid), spending approximately five minutes showcasing the process in each movie, in ways that question the status of the cyborg in human society (and thus what it means to be human). Set to Kenji Kawai's now-iconic musical score "Making of a Cyborg," the opening titles present a filmic catalogue of Kusanagi's "shell."[10] The sequence begins *in media res* with a metal skeleton already wrapped in fibres mimicking muscles and tendons. The sequence calls attention to Kusanagi's "brain" with a montage of a limited-side, high-angle shot of a metal skull in several connected pieces with the "frontal bone" joining the rest of the skull, followed by a green-light rendered scan of a brain, and then finally a back-shot of the metal skull closing up, presumably with an organic brain inside.[11] The depictions of medical imaging of Kusanagi's body or body parts are usually followed by frames of her body in "real-time"—except for her brain. Besides leaving the question of Kusanagi's *a priori* biological self unanswered (is she fully artificial with false memories *à la* Ridley Scott's 1982 *Bladerunner*, or is her organic brain the only remaining component of her original biological self?), the catalogue also shows a complete lack of human involvement; every aspect is automated. Cybernetic technicians, doctors, and staff are only shown observing and taking notes during the "birthing" process.

The mechanization of birth not only dissociates cyborgs from humans in very literal ways, but also demonstrates the interpenetration of political economy and biology. In "All That Matters: Technoscience, Critical Theory, and Children's Fiction," Kerry Mallan de-

scribes "The 'birth' of the Major … as a result of computational numbers and codes" (157).[12] The mediated procedure highlights the predominance of mechanization and presumably computer technology, dissociating the cyborg from human society through its completely automated "birth." Moreover, as Sharalyn Orbaugh observes, a "feature of organic reproduction as we know it is the importance of place—the space of embodiment. One is born from a specific place, the body of the mother, into a specific place. This happens only once, in that time and that place" ("Sex and the Single Cyborg" 447). This singularity, however, does not hold for Kusanagi, who can always be reconstructed, "emerg[ing] time and again from the same process" (Orbaugh 447). An anxiety about replaceability and replication haunts the film and is especially evidenced in a sequence, set to Kawai's score "Reincarnation," in which Kusanagi, traveling by ferry along the canals of the city, meets the eyes of her doppelganger, visually and aurally implying that the other woman is also a cyborg.

After the bloody scene with decapitated police officers and a half-nude gynoid that opens *Innocence*, Batou and his temporary partner Togusa go to confer with the local police forensics specialist, Haraway (obviously named after the theorist and scholar Donna Haraway). In her macabre lab filled with dismembered, deactivated, and defunct gynoids hanging in yellow-tinted bags, Haraway explains that the Hadaly 2052 is "equipped with organs unnecessary in service robots," obviously "intended for particular functions"; that is to say, the particular model "is a sexaroid." Haraway's conclusion casts the making of the gynoid in an even ghastlier light than the one that haloed the making of Kusanagi's cyborg shell.[13] The gynoid, in contrast to Kusanagi's cyborg, does not mimic the musculoskeletal structure of a human body, but instead pays distinct homage to Hans Bellmer's Dolls. Visually, like Bellmer's "artificial girls," Oshii's gynoids are constructed from ball joints, wires, and tubing, reminiscent of puppetry and signaling a kind of uncomplicated (or less complicated than in Kusanagi's cyborg) construction that can be easily mass-produced and thus commodified. The anxiety about replaceability and replication in *Ghost in the Shell*, previously oblique, is made very blatant in *Innocence*.





La Poupée, Hans Bellmer, *International Center of Photography*, web, n.d., 10 Feb. 2018, https://www.icp.org/browse/archive/objects/la-poup%C3%A9e-5

Indeed, the visual allusions to Bellmer's works are not just about the uncanny and the potentially endless production of doppelgangers that the army of gynoids at the end of the film realizes, but also about the biopolitics at work in the creation of this eerie legion of gynoids. Livia Monnet's "Anatomy of Permutational Desire: Perversion in Hans Bellmer and Oshii Mamoru" provides an in-depth history and analysis of Bellmer's "artificial girls" made out of "two life-size mannequins" (Monnet 286). In her follow-up, "Anatomy of Permutation Desire, Part II: Bellmer's Dolls and Oshii's Gynoids," Monnet considers their influence on Oshii's film, and how the animated feature expands on Bellmer's ideas. Indeed, in one part of the

"birth" sequence, Oshii "includes the brief appearance of a variation of Bellmer's Torso Doll; the splitting of his Bellmerian prototype into two identical articulated dolls that float toward each other until their lips touch in a chaste kiss" ("Anatomy of Permutation Desire, Part II" 154). While Monnet analyzes this scene in terms of Bellmer's art and theory of desire and perversion, I wish to concentrate on how this Bellmerian homage is also about replication. It extends in macro what the construction catalogue begins in the micro: the gynoid forms from what seems to be cell division, but then visually morphs into mechanical and puppet-like structures. Unlike the cyborg of *Ghost in the Shell* with its intact and complete corporeal frame, this "birth" sequence starts with separated body parts. This is a body that can be easily deconstructed and whose parts are easily interchangeable. The title of Kawai's accompanying music for this "birth"—"The Ballade of Puppets: Flowers Grieve and Fall"—evokes the gynoid's lack of individuality and uniqueness as well as their temporal brevity.

The biopolitics of the gynoid in *Innocence* are about this pervasive system of commodification and corporatization of what are not typically considered commodities to be bought and sold. At the first debriefing about the case, Batou and Togusa are given the specifics about the Hadaly model, including that it was "developed for testing" and was "provided free of charge to contractors." It is unclear what kind of "testing" could have been involved; but the gynoid, as a "pet" model designed specifically to be able to have sexual intercourse, is itself a kind of currency, "gifted" to various personages, including politicians and "retired Public Safety official[s]," hence requiring Section 9's involvement as Chief Aramaki explains. The gynoids not only stand in for trafficked girls, but are themselves replications of trafficked girls, "ghost-dubbed" from those kidnapped and held hostage by corporations like Locus Solus. The film seems to suggest that while the biological girls are somewhat finite commodities, the gynoids can be infinitely produced even as their organic progenitors deteriorate from the "ghost-dubbing" process. There are also some dark implications that the gynoids are not only market commodities themselves, but also, like the Puppet Master program of *Ghost in the Shell*, might be collecting data for exploitation. In the final

scene of the birth of the gynoid, the view rotates around her upper torso, ending on a close-up of her left eye, which opens to reveal a cornea whose outer rim mimics that of a camera lens. Possession of a "sexaroid" like the Hadaly 2052 is, in the words of the forensic specialist Haraway, "Nothing to brag about to your neighbors but hardly illegal," though its manufacturing origins and possible use of it for surveillance and non-consensual recording definitely are illegal.

DIS/CORPORATIZATION OF CYBORG BODIES AND POSTHUMAN TRAUMA

In addition to their adroit imagining of the encroachment of biopower into society via the cyborg, Oshii's *Ghost in the Shell* films also quite deftly question subjectivation and subjectivity under such circumstances. What is "self" if brains can be transplanted, e-brains can be hacked, and people can be "ghost-dubbed"? The duology seems to dramatize a Cartesian mind-body duality that favors the metaphysical over the physical. Indeed, the disdain for the physical is literally violent in the films, as corporeal forms are torn limb from limb. Orbaugh's provocatively and pertinently titled essay "Who Does the Feeling When There's No Body There?" poses the fundamental question that haunts such dis/corporatization of humans and sentient beings.

While Orbaugh brings Donna Haraway's early writings on the cyborg to bear on Oshii's cyborg films and vice versa, she doesn't really answer the question in her title, and I would argue that this lack of answer is due to two interrelated issues: posthuman trauma and the limits of dis/embodiment. Orbaugh notes that *Innocence* was conceived in response to a question in an interview in which Oshii was asked, "If humans have no memory and no body, in what sense are they still human?" (204). For Oshii, if one is without memory and bodiless, what remains is *omoi*, which, as Orbaugh explains, "can be translated as thought, feeling/emotion, or even love, depending on the context" (204). Thus, the epigram from *L'Ève future* that starts *Innocence*—"If our gods and hopes are nothing but scientific phenomena, then it must be said that our love is scientific as well"—seems to gloss the film as indirectly celebrating the capacity for love as the

ultimate *raison d'ètre* for existence while never answering "who" or "what" is doing the loving; it is simply enough that love exists. This interpretation is suggested by Orbaugh's observation that Oshii's *Innocence*, like Haraway's theories about companion species, also explores the inter-subjective world between dogs and humans through Batou's love for and care of his pet basset hound. On one level, this love is very clearly "scientific" since, as Batou explains to Togusa and Ishikawa, his dog is a clone from the original (implying that the original may be deceased, or else suggesting, as was the case in Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, that owning "real," biological animals is a status symbol reserved for the rich and therefore beyond Batou's means). However, even these "innocent" loves between man and companion-animal are clearly fused with biopolitics, and thus challenge such an "innocent" exegesis.

A large part of the "dark" narratives that belie a simple valorization of love as the defining aspect of being human is the trauma that haunts the films. Posthuman trauma is invoked right from the start of the first film. When Kusanagi first appears on-screen, she is covered in a dark trench coat with sunglasses covering half her face, even though it is nighttime. There are competing streams of sounds that simulate multiple radio channels playing at once as she tries to hack or electronically eavesdrop on her targets, only to be interrupted by her colleague's calling her name. She facetiously dismisses his questioning of the "static" in her brain with the comment, "It's that time of the month" (even though as a cyborg, she cannot reproduce biologically). While seemingly humorous, her dead-pan delivery, combined with the viewer's later knowledge of her cyborg status, make the dialogue more morbid than lighthearted. I think that beyond being darkly humorous, this moment and others indicate a kind of body dysmorphia.

A sense of disconnection from her own corporeality plagues Kusanagi throughout the film, from the moment when she "wakes up" in her apartment after the "making of a cyborg" sequence all the way through to Batou's resurrection of her in a jarringly adolescent cyborg shell at the end of the film.[14] After interviewing the hacked garbage man, Kusanagi muses to Batou about what makes up an individual: "A face to distinguish yourself from others. A voice you aren't

aware of yourself. The hand you see when you awaken. The memories of childhood, the feelings for the future." The visual narrative of the film makes clear that these are elements that can be falsified or copied ad infinitum, from Kusanagi's own face which she sees replicated on her doppelganger to her voice that can be "reprogrammed" to her hand that is mass-produced by a cyborg construction company (not to mention, memories that can be hacked and changed).

Kusanagi is clearly at odds with her own corporeal existence. Her apathy towards her cyborg body is reflected in her indifference to her own nudity and her deep-sea diving hobby which could end in her death if the floaters that counter the weight of her heavy cyborg body fail. Her body dysmorphia is most pronounced when she forces her own bodily destruction attacking the tank that protects the shell of the Puppet Master, which was requisitioned by Section 6 to prevent Section 9 from discovering that this artificial intelligence was initially and illegally created as an espionage program. The film grotesquely highlights the ruptures of muscles, tendons, joints, and even bone as she futilely wrenches away at the top hatch of the tank, literally tearing apart her arms and legs as the force exceeds her own bodily capacity: "As Kusanagi struggles with a tanklike [sic] armored juggernaut, her artificial muscles bulge and swell until she assumes Arnold Schwarzenegger-like proportions, finally exerting such enormous forces that she literally pulls herself apart" (Bolton 733). As Bolton observes, "Portrayed in studied slow motion and accompanied by Kawai Kenji's eerily low-key score, the major's final dismemberment has a violent but curiously affectless quality that highlights her disregard for the physical form" (733). He argues that this disregard for her body aligns with her desire to be free from Section 9: "Kusanagi's body is destroyed and only her brain remains intact, [this is] an outcome that frees her from that body and from Section Nine" (734). Moreover, her merging with the Puppet Master allows her "to transcend the body" so that "she nearly escapes embodiment altogether" (735). I agree that the film's narrative trajectory supports this analysis, but it obscures the implicit posthuman trauma of which her lack of affect is a symptom.

This posthuman trauma in Oshii's *Ghost in the Shell* films brings together the increasing atomization of the body (and its commodifi-

cation) and subsequent psycho-social effects. The medicalization of the body, as Foucault cogently argues, is not only linked to the rise of disciplinarity (i.e. the rise of the sciences as disciplines producing what he calls a "medico-sexual regime"), but also disciplinary power in general—in other words, biopower (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* 42). As Lesley Sharp notes in "The Commodification of the Body and Its Parts," "scientific forms of knowledge currently fragment the body with increasing regularity" with the material effect of "a proliferation in the marketability of human body parts… [and] the ever increasing atomization of the medicalized body" (289). Oshii's films literalize this fragmentation, highlighting the ways the market challenges an "assumed human desire to protect personal boundaries and guard body integrity" (Sharp 287).

There are no real-life analogues that could capture the degree to which Kasunagi experiences the attendant trauma of collapsing boundaries and bodily integrity brought about by her cyborgization. The closest procedure would be a head transplant, such as Valery Spiridonov volunteered to undergo. Spiridonov suffers from "Werdnig-Hoffmann disease, a genetic disorder that wastes away muscles and kills motor neurons—nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord that help move the body" (Kean). While "many scientists and ethicists have slammed the project, accusing the surgeons involved of promoting junk science and raising false hopes," Sam Kean notes, "The past few decades have been a golden age of transplant medicine" with "[n]ew surgical techniques [making] reattaching delicate structures easier, and powerful new drugs … all but eliminate[ing] the threat of rejection" (Kean). However, beyond the excruciating costs (estimated anywhere from $10 million to $100 million) and intensive labour (approximately 80 surgeons are involved), there are more intangible costs. Anecdotally, Teri L. Blauersouth, LPCC, discussed with me stories of patients with heart valve implants complaining about feeling emotionally blunted or numbed by the simple fact of the heart valve regulating their cardiac rhythm to the point that their hearts literally no longer raced when excited, nervous, fearful, and so on. Such anecdotal accounts highlight the intangible costs of such procedures for something certainly less intensive and encompassing than a head transplant.

Perhaps the closest frameworks for attempting to understand the possible trauma from becoming a full-body cyborg are from psychological research on body concept and image.[15] In "Mental Representation of the Body: Stability and Change in Response to Illness and Disability," John D. Mayer and Myron G. Eisenberg discuss not only how body concept and body esteem may be involved in "central aspects of the self-concept," but also how such aspects may influence a person's health and vice versa (155). For instance, illness may lead to lower body esteem and therefore may damage one's body concept. Under these circumstances, illness may cause negative self- and body-concepts. In a related scenario, if a person has negative self- and body-concepts, then such views may depress the immune system and cause or otherwise exacerbate suboptimal health conditions.

It is clear that Kusanagi does not have a positive body concept and esteem, as evidenced by her complete disregard for her cyborg self, from her disregard of her own nudity (which cannot be cultural as Batou invariably turns away from her nude body in embarrassment or tries to cover her with his jacket) to her own consciously self-destructive actions. Orbaugh agrees that "Kusanagi's lack of shame is not depicted as a moral issue" because "Kusanagi in a sense stands for the inauthenticity of the body/shell, and it is therefore not surprising that she exhibits no affective connection with it or through it" ("Emotional Infectivity: Cyborg Affect and the Limits of the Human" 162). Part of Kusanagi's negative body concept no doubt stems from the commodification of her corporeality as Bolton argues; but traumatization from such extensive bodily modification cannot be denied even as it is rarely directly referenced or addressed in the film.

In the case of the gynoids and kidnapped girls of *Innocence*, the trauma is both more straightforward and yet oddly absent from the narrative. Being abducted and held in what are metal cocoons are obviously traumatizing experiences, and the effective catatonia of the majority of the girls can be seen as traumatic responses to their captivity and confinement beyond the supposed degradation caused by "ghost dubbing." (It is unclear whether the degradation is physical, mental, or a combination of the two, only that as Kusanagi explains, "In past animal experiments, scientists mass replicated interior copies but had to abandon the practice as it destroyed the original being.") The girls'

trauma is indicated through their physical confinement, eerie silence, and lack of responsiveness. The rows of cocooned girls, with only their unmoving faces and closed eyes visible through a small portal in each metal coffin, present an uncanny visualization of their trauma and reiterate anxieties about replication and replaceability previously raised in *Ghost in the Shell*. In this instance, the girls' faces appear identical and their non-responsiveness further suggests a lack of individuality. They, like their gynoid counterparts, are an army of identical bodies, made by their dis/corporatization. Where the cyberization process in *Ghost in the Shell* highlights the mechanical and technological replication of (cyborg) bodies, here the "ghost dubbing" of *Innocence* dramatizes the traumatic duplication of (biotic?) subjectivities.

However, the film does not fully explore the traumatic connection between the kidnapped girls and the gynoids. Firstly, the trauma experienced by the gynoids is completely off-screen, implied only by the near-nudity of the murderous gynoid that Batou shoots at the start of *Innocence* and the forensic investigator Haraway's explanation of "extra parts" that pet- or work-model robots would not have. The police procedural film only uncovers and explicates that the girls are abducted to be "ghost-dubbed" and that, "It was the ghosts that made Locus Solus gynoids so desirable" to their clients. But what does it mean that the gynoid is "ghost-dubbed" (or "realistically" copied) from an adolescent girl? There are some very dark implications that the clients do not value the gynoids merely for their girlish appearances, but also for their girlish reactions, which would involve traumatic responses since unwanted sexual contact would inevitably be traumatizing. Thus, the fragmentation of the body that is arguably at the root of Kusanagi's traumatic body dysmorphia in *Ghost in the Shell* is extended in *Innocence*'s posthuman world to the "ghost" or subjectivity that was seemingly reified at the expense of corporeality in *Ghost in the Shell*. This is demonstrated by Batou's harsh rebuke of one rescued girl that she and Volkerson didn't "consider the victims"—"Not the humans," but "the dolls endowed with souls." In this light, the gynoid's murderous rampage is not just about "making trouble" so that the kidnapped girls can be eventually rescued, but also a traumatic response to sexual slavery.

POSTHUMAN WARFARE

In *Society Must Be Defended*, Foucault asserts that, inverting Clausewitz's proposition, "Power is war, the continuation of war by other means" (15). Power is inevitably and inherently war-like since "power is not primarily the perpetuation and renewal of economic relations, but that it is primarily, in itself, a relationship of force" (15). Oshii's *Ghost in the Shell* duology dramatizes the inherently combative disposition of power, made very obvious in the biopolitics of Kusanagi's indentured servitude to Section 9 and in the construction and circulation of the gynoids. The explanatory titles at the start of *Ghost in the Shell* inadvertently reveal a great deal about power's historically inimical nature even while ostensibly gesturing towards the possibility of equality: "In the near future corporate networks reach out to the stars, electrons and light flow throughout the universe," suggesting a transcendence of a merely human individuality, but for the time being"the advance of computerisation…has not yet wiped out nations and ethnic groups." On one hand, "wiping out nations and ethnic groups" is a nod to the, at the time, growing association of electronic frontiers and freedoms with computerization as dramatized in films like *Hackers* (1995). In *Hackers*, one hacker's manifesto proclaims, "We [hackers] exist without nationality, skin color, or religious bias" in this "world of the electron and the switch, the beauty of the baud." Together, the two films, which premiered a few months apart, demonstrate the increasing correlation of digital boundlessness and liberation with computer technology in popular culture. However, on the other hand, these opening titles for *Ghost in the Shell* are also imbued with great violence since "wiping out nations and ethnic groups" has been historically accomplished through colonialism and military warfare; it has never been benign or uplifting, despite colonial logics and rhetoric. And indeed Kusanagi's indentured status can be construed as ultimately embodying a kind of neo-imperial logic of securing the nation with technological advances and computer coding rather than relying solely on physical force.

In this manner, Oshii's film duology imagines and stages the ways in which war is further internalized within civil society, even apart from the state centralization of the authority to wage war. As Foucault

notes in *Society Must Be Defended*, "The State acquired a monopoly on war"—"with the growth and development of States throughout the Middle Ages and up to the threshold of the modern era"—so that "it gradually transpired that in both de facto and de jure terms, only State powers could wage wars and manipulate the instruments of war" (48). He argues that, "The immediate effect of this State monopoly was that what might be called day-to day warfare, and what was actually called 'private warfare,' was eradicated from the social body, and from relations among men and relations among groups" (48). In the *Ghost in the Shell* films, biopower is not about presenting a shift from extraterritorial conflicts to interior ones, or the substitution of one for the other, but rather about how power can permeate society so wholly as to be exerted upon an individual at the atomic level through the dis/corporatization of the body. Even while "private warfare" or the ability of feudal classes to make war became a state monopoly, war itself did not disappear from society, but instead became disturbingly more diffuse and ubiquitous. The cyborg entities of Oshii's duology are "instruments of war".

However, the ways in which Oshii's cyborg is an "instrument of war" in *Innocence* is particularly disturbing, uncannily demonstrating the diffusion of biopower into every level of this posthuman society. When Batou infiltrates Locus Solus's gynoid-manufacturing plant, deliberately situated in international waters in order to obfuscate jurisdictional authority, he is met with the onsite managers, themselves non-humanoid androids demarcated by archaic Chinese numbering, releasing the unsold gynoids as a literal army. These autonomous sex dolls are not reprogrammed with attack protocols; rather martial programming is already embedded in them, which, in retrospect, helps explain the murders at the start of the film that precipitated Batou and Togusa's involvement in the case. During the forensic investigation at the beginning of *Innocence*, Haraway found that "these gynoids are capable of self-authorizing attacks against humans" because of a nullification of "Moral Code #3," which constrains robots to "[m]aintain existence without injuring humans" (an intertextual reference to Isaac Asiminov's Three Laws of Robotics). Thus, the gynoid's attack off-screen of the policemen and her on-screen attack of Batou are not wild flailing, but very clearly expressive of combat

knowledge. In this way, the gynoid, as an embodiment of biopower, also reveals how we can, as Foucault argues, "understand power by looking at its extremities, at its outer limits at the point where it becomes capillary" (*Society Must Be Defended* 27). The gynoid, as an artifact of human ingenuity and creativity, is modeled, as Haraway complains to Togusa, "on a human image, an idealized one at that." Kusanagi, however, remarks, "If the dolls could speak, no doubt they'd scream, 'I didn't want to become human.'" This replication of humanity in a non-human construct is not just about the vanity and egotism of human engineers, but about how biopower circulates between the nonhuman and the posthuman. Even as the trafficked girl screamed that she "didn't want to become a doll" in response to Batou's scolding, Oshii's two films actually dramatize how dis/corporatization envelopes the human and the human-looking, how the posthuman is uncannily more and more embodying the logics of commodification.

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NOTES

1. This casting choice elicited accusations of white-washing since the protagonist of *Ghost in the Shell* is named Motoko Kusanagi, a name that is explicitly ethnically Japanese, while Scarlett Johansson is patently not of Japanese descent or of any Asian background. However, this paper,

while referencing the live-action version, focuses on Mamoru Oshii's full-length animation films; an article analyzing issues of race in the live-action film starring Scarlett Johansson will be reserved for future publication.

2. Kusanagi and Batou have this conversation while aboard a boat in what looks like the bay of Hong Kong. In "On the Edge of Spaces: *Blade Runner*, *Ghost in the Shell* and Hong Kong's Cityscape," Wong Kin Yuen analyzes Oshii's curious choice of a Hong Kong-esque backdrop for his film. There is a fascinating kind of reverse-Orientalism where the Japanese director looks towards Western cyberpunk films like *Bladerunner*, which use Asian bodies, symbols, and paraphernalia to demarcate a dystopian future. In "Stunning Shots of the Real-Life Hong Kong Locations Featured in *Ghost in the Shell*," Charlie Jane Anders documents the real-life scenes from Hong Kong that are adapted into *Ghost in the Shell* with juxtaposed photographs and film stills. In this reverse—or internalized—Orientalism, the animated stylings drawn from real-life Hong Kong are used also to signal a future, not necessarily dystopic, full of currently-imagined technologies and engineering while the preponderance of Japanese terms, naming, and other cultural cues indicate a conflation or perhaps flattening of all things Asian leading some critics to consider the film to be set in some future Japan.
3. For instance, in terms of the usurpation of biological reproduction (Sharalyn Orbaugh's "Sex and the Single Cyborg: Japanese Popular Culture Experiments in Subjectivity" and Kerry Mallan's "All That Matters: Technoscience, Critical Theory, and Children's Fiction"), the representation of externalized memory (William Gardner's "The Cyber Sublime and the Virtual Mirror: Information and Media in the Works of Oshii Mamoru and Kon Satoshi"), the gendering of the female cyborg (Jane Chi Hyun Park's "Stylistic Crossings: Cyberpunk Impulses in Anime"), and even cityscapes in cyberpunk films (Wong Kin Yuen's "On the Edge of Spaces: *Blade Runner*, *Ghost in the Shell* and Hong Kong's Cityscape"), to name just a few.
4. Hadaly is the name of the android created by a fictionalized Thomas Edison in Auguste Villiers de l'Isle-Adam's 1886 novel *L'Ève future (Tomorrow's Eve)*. *Oshii's Innocence begins with an epigraph from the same novel: "If our gods and our hopes are nothing but scientific phenomena, then it must be said that our love is scientific as well."* The company name is a reference to the 1914 science-fiction novel of the same name by French writer Ray-

mond Roussel.

5. Here, the "three laws of robotics" is a direct allusion to Isaac Asimov's rules, first introduced in his short story "Runaround" (1942), later anthologized in *I, Robot* (1950). These three laws prohibit robots from injuring a human through either action or inaction, compel the obedience of robots to any orders given by a human as long as these orders do not contradict the first law, and lastly oblige robots to protect their own existences insofar as this protection does not come into conflict with the other laws (Asimov).
6. However, this definition which centers sexual slavery as definitive of human trafficking actually obscures the quantitative evidence. In contrast to governmental and political conflations of human trafficking with forced prostitution, "a recent study by the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking reports that clients trafficked to Los Angeles are subject to exploitation in many fields, including domestic work (40 percent), factory work (17 percent), sex work (17 percent), restaurant work (13 percent), and servile marriage (13 percent)" (Kim and Chang 5). While exact numbers cannot really be determined, these estimates do demonstrate that human trafficking skews towards forced labor situations that do not largely involve sex. Kim and Chang argue for a new conceptualization of human trafficking as "grounded in understandings of the processes of globalization, and the coercive nature of most migration within this context" in order to "[view] trafficking as coerced migration or exploitation of migrant workers for all forms of labor, including a broad spectrum of work often performed by migrants, such as manufacturing, agriculture, construction, service work, servile marriage and sex work" (6). This different framework highlights "coercion created by the destruction of subsistence economies and social service states through neoliberal policies imposed on indebted sending countries by wealthy creditor nations" (6).
7. This thread of posthuman slavery or indentured servitude is taken up explicitly in the *Ghost in the Shell: Arise* series, an original video animation and television series that reimagine Shirow's manga. In it, Kusanagi is explicitly bound to the 501 Organization which is the legal owner of her prosthetic body and so her services are at the agency's disposal in exchange for her corporeality. However, for the purposes of this paper, I wish to concentrate on Oshii's vision of a posthuman future in his own reimaginings of Shirow's world.

8. This ending scene is made ghastly and emptied of "innocence" in light of the argument that Togusa had earlier in the film with forensic pathologist Haraway about the nature of doll play in child development and psychology. Some of the implications will be discussed in more detail below.
9. While the dictionary definition for "transhumanism" is "the belief or theory that the human race can evolve beyond its current physical and mental limitations, especially by means of science and technology," there aren't clear delineations between posthumanism and transhumanism (Google.com). It seems that transhumanism might be considered a subset of posthumanism.
10. In "Cyborg Songs for an Existential Crisis," Sarah Penicka-Smith explains that Kawai's musical theme for the film "is a Japanese wedding song for purging evil influences before marriage" in an ancient form of Japanese ritual (234-35). However, the final line of the lyrics—"The distant god may give us the precious blessing"—is not sung until the third occurrence of the musical theme at the end of the film (Pneicka-Smith 235). Its absence in the opening credits thus frames Kusanagi's existential crisis about spirit and form, her anxiety that if her corporeality is synthetic so too might be her sense of sentience.
11. As Kerry Mallan notes in "All That Matters: Technoscience, Critical Theory, and Children's Fiction," "These instances offer hyperbolic accounts of how the body is made and unmade. This making/unmaking corresponds to medical technologies and procedures such as the percutaneous nephroscope, which allows doctors to blast kidney stones to smithereens with a bombardment of sounds waves" (161). The scans themselves seem to reference both existing medical technologies as well as computerized imaging used mostly in graphic and visual arts. As with my contention that the film represents and refracts existing psychological concepts of body, self, and trauma, it also represents and refracts existing visual references from medical, artistic, and computer frameworks.
12. Here, I think Mallan mistakes binary coding that dynamically introduces the title credits with the visual narrative of Kusanagi's cyborg "birth".
13. In *Innocence*, the construction of the gynoid is set to Kawai's "The Ballade of Puppets: Flowers Grieve and Fall." Penicka-Smith cogently explicates how Kawai's musical composition helps Oshii reverse Koestler's assertion that "machines cannot become like men, but men can become like machines" to how "machines do become like women" (237). As she observes, "from its first note, Kawai binds his new theme to the renegade

gynoids, those human machines which are Oshii's response to Koestler," where "the voices start alone, sounding tentative and uncertain," and "[t]he music is more melancholy, reflecting the gynoid's status as a slave rather than an independent woman" (238). She argues that the birth sequence alludes to the doll festival Hinamatsuri, where "families pray for the happiness and prosperity of their daughters and to ensure they grow up healthy and beautiful," ironizing the trafficking of young girls discovered by Batou and Togusa (239).

14. It is unclear whether she even needs to sleep as a cyborg, but the scene also casts doubt upon her prosthetic life and her subjectivity as a cyborg. Is the "making" of her prosthetic self an external flashback, a memory, or a dream? I think that the film's narrative structure tends to point to an external flashback, where the sequence functions as diegetic analepsis, but arguments can also be made for the latter two possibilities. In the Japanese language version, when she initially awakens in her new cyborg shell, Kusanagi speaks with a disturbingly high, young-sounding voice. Her voice later and abruptly changes to her lower, more adult register, signaling aurally that she has adapted to or taken control of this new body. The disjunction between the vocal registers establishes a sense that this is not her body, that it really is just a shell.

15. Early psychological studies, such as Seymour Fisher's "A Further Appraisal of the Body Boundary Concept," used the term "body image" "to designate the attitudinal framework which defines the individual's long-term concept of his body and also influences his perception of it" (62). Body image is necessarily related to body boundaries; but, as Fisher points out, "there is variation in how definite or firm one perceives one's body boundaries to be" (62). The early testing of body image and body boundaries relied on subjects' descriptions of inkblot images, methods which have since been discredited.

A DIFFERENT PITCH: LISTENING TO WATER THROUGH CONTEMPORARY ART IN A TIME OF EXTRACTION

RUTH BEER AND CAITLIN CHAISSON

***Abstract**: This article addresses the intersections of water, extraction, and environmental justice through a consideration of sound in contemporary artworks by Ruth Beer, Rebecca Belmore, and Mia Feuer. Qualities of sound have been tied to environmental studies and assessment for decades, but these artists consider audio-visual and immersive situations that foster the ability to listen amidst ecological complexity.*

***Résumé**: Cet article examinera l'intersection des questions de l'eau, de l'extraction et de la justice environnementale à travers l'étude du son dans les créations artistiques contemporaines de Ruth Beer, Rebecca Belmore et Mia. Feuer. Depuis des décennies, les qualités du son ont été liées aux études et mesures environnementales, mais ces artistes s'intéressent à des situations audio-visuelles et immersives qui fournissent la capacité d'écouter dans un contexte écologique complexe.*

> *"[E]arth, waters, and climate, the mute world, the voiceless things once placed as a decor surrounding the usual spectacles, all those things that never interested anyone, from now on thrust themselves brutally and without warning into our schemes and maneuvers."*
> *- Michel Serres, The Natural Contract (1990)*

> *"[C]limate crisis is also a crisis of culture, and thus of the imagination."*
> *- Amitav Ghosh, The Great Derangement (2016)*

INTRODUCTION

The debates and discourse pertaining to resource extraction and environmental justice are increasingly being framed

through water. If we look to the ways that extraction and global warming are covered in mainstream and social mediascapes, the tragedies of water feel particularly imminent. We hear, for example, of vulnerable watersheds that face threats of contamination, pollution, and devastation from extraction processes, and of countless communities whose access to safe drinking water is compromised by heavy industry (Lui). Over sixty long-term drinking water advisories still remain in public systems on Indigenous reserves, and there exist many more still that are not yet designated as long-term, or are outside the purview of public systems (on the former, see "Ending long-term drinking water advisories"). We also now hear of treacherous and unforgiving waters. Rising sea levels due to carbon-induced climate heating, and increasingly frequent and severe storms due to warming ocean temperatures, which present an encroaching and potentially indomitable force. Water is a powerful example of how environmental destruction exacerbates existing social vulnerabilities, and affects human and other-than-human lives with differential consequences.

Resistances to mega-extraction projects throughout North America are thus increasingly advocating for the preservation of inland and coastal waterways, signaling the highly permeable and porous relationship between water and land. In Canada—and across the globe—there has been a remarkable surge in environmental defenders forming "Water Protectors" or "Water Keepers" groups, primarily led and mobilized by Indigenous peoples. These protectors position themselves on the frontlines of large-scale fossil fuel, mining, and hydroelectric projects that jeopardize important watersheds, taking up affirmative strategies (like protection) in place of merely dissenting strategies (like protest). This recent and crucial shift in terminology aims to "break the negative predetermination of the generic terms 'activist' and 'protestor' that portray defenders as just another group engaged in vacuous struggle and vague threats" (Glazebrook and Opoku 90). This distinction is a vitally important one when it comes to challenging the stigmas of civil disobedience and risks of criminalization, as the alignment of protest with *protection* takes up the unequivocal human right to water as a way to make it more

difficult—and hopefully unconscionable—to dismiss these struggles against extraction projects.

Today, these contentious land-use debates are taking place amidst a major federal attempt in Canada to market an empathetic government that "listens," an activity that has been largely oriented around campaign promises of reconciliation. But given that reconciliation is a "troubled and troubling term often used to impose a sense of closure on experiences of colonization that are very much alive and ongoing" (L'Hirondelle Hill and McCall 1), and governmental duties to engage in honourable and meaningful consultation have repeatedly failed in court challenges, more competent strategies of listening are evidently required. Pamela Palmater, a Mi'kmaq lawyer and Chair of Indigenous Governance at Ryerson University, demands environmental reviews consist of "not just listening to concerns but taking substantive steps to address and mitigate them" (9). Palmater's concise call to action is distressing in its obviousness and unnerving for even needing to be said. But as reports, recriminations, nonbinding policies, recommendations, approvals, predictions, denunciations, outcries, denialism, and catastrophism continue to bubble up in the form of heated and vitriolic debate in the various mediascapes, where do we—as general publics—begin to listen? How can we learn more expansive and comprehensive listening strategies by attuning ourselves to these resources and places? What ways can contemporary art inspire and instruct us in alternative forms of listening?

As both concerned citizens and creative practitioners, our interest in these topics emerged from our involvement in a research-creation project entitled *Trading Routes: Grease Trails, Oil Futures*, which explores the role of extraction in Canadian communities, especially those affected by industry infrastructures. *Trading Routes* emerged at a time when corporate and governmental proposals to further expand the network of crude oil pipelines across the country were growing. These pipelines would efficiently and invisibly move Albertan oil across a vast distance to tidewater amidst a climate emergency. *Trading Routes* was developed with a desire to examine the relationship between water and extraction through an artistic lens. As researchers and artists, we are committed to exploring how *Trading Routes* can broaden the way extraction is considered in the public

realm, by using creative practices and contemporary artworks as vehicles for galvanizing imagination and creating provocation.

In this article, we present an exploratory overview of contemporary engagements with sound, the environment, and extraction. In so doing, we examine Ruth Beer's practice-based artistic research (emerging out of her creative contributions to *Trading Routes*) alongside the powerful artworks of Rebecca Belmore and Mia Feuer. Throughout, we consider sound from the perspective of artistic practice, as distinct from the important work that is already being done in sound studies and musicology, as the artists pursue various audio-visual relationships that produce multi-sensory and immersive engagements. While the artworks we discuss remain firmly positioned within exhibition practices—at a safe remove from the frontlines of disruption—we hope to underscore some of the ways they might be able to suggest allyship with direct action strategies. These artworks are not obvious illustrations nor indictments of the colonial extraction project, but, through their difficulties and challenges they pose to interpretation, the works become important for developing the skills needed to grasp the complexity of extractive industries. The artworks are also invitations to explore imaginative possibilities of engaging with the world and materials around us in a way that will begin the long work of changing social consciousness about water. As we suggest, listening is *not* a passive gesture of oversensitivity, but an affirmative and creative strategy that plays an important role in the transformative power of environmental social justice. If "both in theory and practice, listening is the crucial interface between the individual and the environment," how can contemporary art support divergent forms of listening in a divisive time of extraction (Truax 13)?

Figure 1

ECOLOGICAL SENSITIVITY THROUGH SOUND

Much work has been done to contextualize and theorize the role of sound within environmental concerns. In 1962, Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring*, a widely influential analysis on the devastating biological effects of industrial and domestic pesticide use. The book begins with a fable of an unusually quiet spring dawning on a small American town. The familiar chorus of songbirds has disappeared—as populations have been devastated by chemicals like DDT—and other environmental changes as a result of the loss of the birds begin to ensue. This narrative, which places sound at the heart of a major disturbance, is poignant in its use of a sonic unit-of-measure—the birds' chirping—to apprehend the sometimes furtive or otherwise "invisible" aspects of ecological health. In the 1970s, the analysis of sound as an indicator of well-being emerged evermore forcefully. The World Soundscape Project (WSP), developed by R. Murray Schafer and collaborators at Simon Fraser University, and the Pulsa Group's Harmony Ranch at the Yale School of Art were followed by the proliferation of fields like acoustic ecology, soundscape ecology, ecomusicology, geophonography, and bioacoustics—among other variants—that contend with anthrophonic, biophonic, or geophonic sound systems. As sound artist Hildegard Westerkamp exclaims, these projects attended to the way "the small, quiet sounds in the natural environment are symbolic of nature's fragility, of those parts that are easily overlooked and trampled, whose significance in the ecological cycle is not fully understood"

(91). Today, projects like the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology, among others, continue the education, study, and preservation of the sonic environment.

The relationship between sound and environmental concerns is not a new proposition—but there are marked differences in how that relationship is considered today. At their time of emergence, projects like the WSP were aligned with the prevailing models of sustainability, conservation, restoration, and homeostasis (Demos 35). The focus was often on the social effects of noise pollution and the health impacts that result from the transition from a harmonious soundscape in nature (a hi-fi environment) to the oppressive noise of modern life (a lo-fi environment) (Schafer, *The Book of Noise*). Noise pollution continues to be an important issue for acoustic ecology; but while it might have formerly been the centre of attention, it has more recently yielded to the incommensurable topic of the climate crisis. In particular, this shift is evidenced by the major growth in practitioners who are engaged in the creation of field recordings to generate "baseline" sound maps from which to measure the effects of climate change, predictive models for future aural environments, and the explosion of practices that experiment with the sonification of climate change data—including information related to the statistics on rising temperatures, flooding severity, storm intensity, and refugee migration patterns (Insley *et al.*; Paine; Polli).

Extraction can very concretely impact soundscapes, through, for instance, the incessant hum of industry, or—even more specifically—through the legally required periodic cannon blasts meant to spook aviary away from landing on the toxic surfaces of tailing ponds (Hern and Johal 98). Much of the quantitative scientific work of acoustic ecologists has offered insight into the severity of these sonic events. But extraction is clearly changing acoustic complexity in other significant, albeit more circuitous, ways that require our listening capacities to change and evolve as well.

IMMERSIVE MODES OF SENSORY ENGAGEMENT

Neither Beer, Belmore, nor Feuer identify as sound artists specifically, but instead work through interdisciplinary artistic practices that incorporate disparate media and polyphonic elements. Together their works help enable new perspectives on the use and interpretation of sound. Their practices fuse sound and sculpture by using the latter as a tool for amplification. These sonic objects collect sounds that are beyond the normal realm of our immediate hearing or attention. Rather than extracting or manipulating these sounds, the artists yield to the "physical medium of sound transfer" and the way that sounds can be imprinted and "accounted for through the physical layout of the environment" (Traux 15 and 61). This entangled relationship between aural and visual perception serves to heighten the complexity of interpretation, requiring audiences to draw upon multiple modes of sensory engagement.

The artists' strategies of immersion experiment with and manipulate audio-visual experience. This experimentation is achieved primarily through a relationship-oriented form of immersion, which builds upon Pauline Minevich's estimation that immersion "suggests a social life of sounds that situates them in relationships created around a particular sound, the material of its media, and the physicality of its surrounding" (5). Here, the forward-facing experience of visual understanding is paired with sound that "comes at us from behind or from the back, from any direction, and surrounds us" (Berland 34). Their immersive strategies also require in turn multidimensional, multidirectional modes of analysis that are able to come at the work from many different angles.

In an immersive situation it is difficult for artists to direct their audience's attention. Instead, attention roams and flows. Listening becomes multivalent—perhaps even divided—because sonic attention constantly shifts. This state of distracted reception has been compellingly theorized by the Stó:lō scholar and artist Dylan Robinson. In Western sound studies, the *perfect* listener is the listener who is devout and unwavering in their attention, whereas the distracted listener is demeaned and dismissed as lackadaisical and inattentive. Robinson deconstructs this hierarchy, and posits distracted listening as a

tool for subverting the assumed superiority of direct or autonomous listening, "acting in opposition to normative, teleological, and structural regimes of contemplation" (8). Distracted listening is fundamentally *not* about the listener's direct acquisition and comprehension of sound, but is instead about relational practices that undergo continuous change. As Robinson argues, distracted reception is the result of complication—the inability and inadequacy of listening that is "precise," "efficient," or "objective." To shift the understanding of distracted listening "from its current connotations of inattention, to a polyvalent, de-centred method of reception allows us to re-conceptualize reception from a goal-oriented search for understanding a product (disrupting the flow of information as stable commodity) to an understanding of reception as a continual process" (15). By analogy, we could say that complication is the definitive quality of ecological understanding. Cultivating the skills to be able to listen both through and with complication will be vital in the efforts to untangle the complexity of the social, political, economic, and environmental aspects of extraction.

NAVIGATING CHANNELS: RUTH BEER, *ANTENNA (#1)* (2016)

Ruth Beer's artwork experiments with immersion and distraction through the simultaneous possibilities of radio. In radio, simultaneity is not only temporal, but also geographic. A sound emits in one place, only to bridge vast geographies by its reception elsewhere. Territoriality is entrenched in radio, as "broadcasting is in part about the constitution of space" (Berland 33). The connective power of radio emerged historically out of the "military-industrial lineage" of the medium (Lander 13). As the politics of Canada shift towards various economical and ecological crises, questions regarding the ways in which resource use is communicated and conveyed to publics have led Beer to consider further the presence of radio and the motif of the tower in a number of recent artworks.

Antenna (#1) is a weaving made out of thin-gauge iridescent copper wire that is suspended from a tall steel structure. At the base of the structure, a dense black form appears as a backdrop for the weaving. Playing with ambiguities in weight and scale, the dark shape anchors

the steel structure at the same time as it is buoyed by it. The weaving billows around the framework as though it were the undulating line of an oscillograph, which eventually pools into a fringe on the ground. One of these loose strands of copper is pulled away from the rest, and connected to a small broadband radio. A powerful conductive material, the copper wire transforms the entire weaving into an enormous antenna, which dominates over the receiving box. The artwork connects a multitude of spaces, acting as a bridge that condenses, grasps, and translates vibrations into sounds we can hear.

The radio is programmed to scan live channels, looking for any acceptable transmissions or signals within the area. This programming has made the work highly variant and site-dependent. Beer, who initially conceived the work to be shown in gallery-spaces near the coast, was interested in the way the amateur radio scanner might collect snippets of maritime traffic, weather reports, and search-and-rescue transmissions. But in practice, the scanner also picked up a substantial amount of communications sent and received through taxi dispatches. In one of the saved recordings of the radioed scan sequences, we rapidly ricochet between water and land. Vibrations of diesel motors cut through the heavy static as somewhere nearby, captains navigate boats in and out of traffic, radioing one another as a means to avoid collision. Intelligible conversation subsides and we hear sporadic transmissions that include white noise and muffled voices that buzz, crackle, and purr. The radio scanner makes the leap from disjointed conversations to the constant drone of the weather station, where highs and lows are distinguished by the authoritative radio-voice. The scanner leaps again. We hear the inflections of richly diverse languages, as a predominantly immigrant population of taxi drivers coordinate the pick-ups and drop-offs of passengers. The sounds are disjointed, interruptive, and non-linear in their broadcasts. Rather than dismissing these sounds as a negatively distracting compilation, *Antenna (#1)* offers us an opportunity to perceive the conjunctions between marine and ground transportation. The initial desire to fill the gallery space with the sounds of water inevitably brought with it other complications that materialize on land. Despite the limited reach of the radio to detect signals from only close dis-

tances, the sounds are surprisingly and compellingly representative of the global flows of people and products.

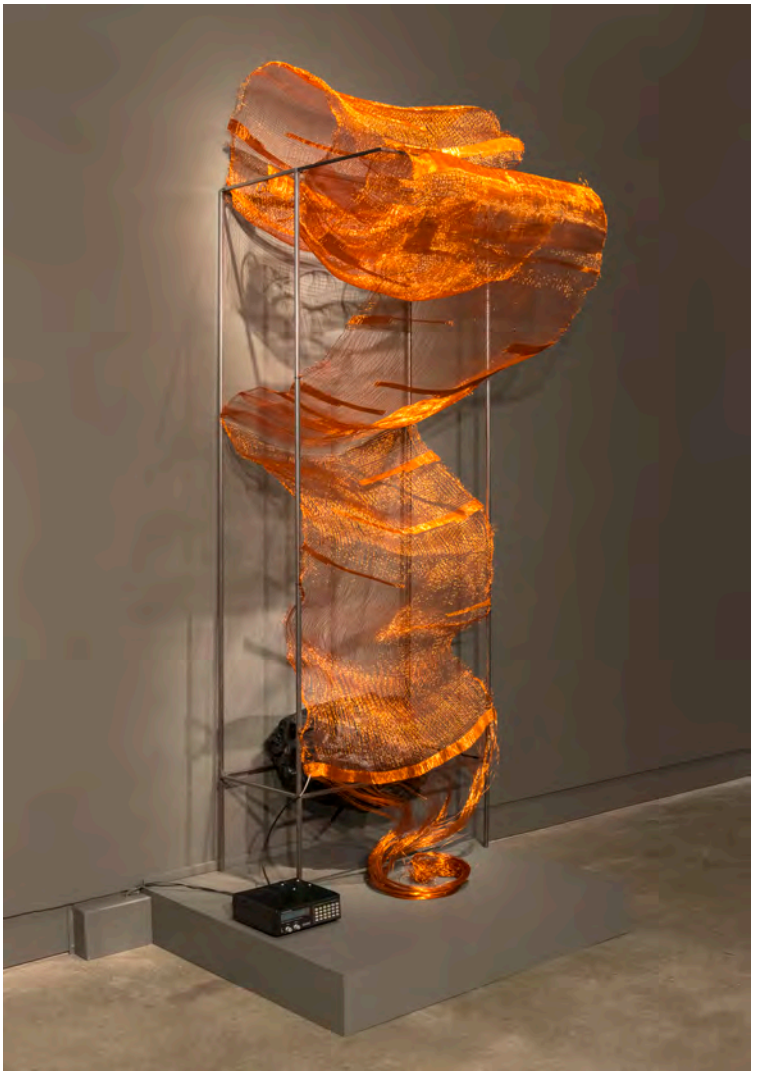

Figure 2

The ordinariness of the projected sounds and the banality of information we hear pulsed back and forth through the radio is made more substantial through Beer's material exploration of the physicality of the transmission of sound: firstly, through copper, and secondly, through oil. Navigational mediums like radio, GPS, and other electronics are simply not possible without copper wiring. Copper has fundamentally changed the capacity to traverse distant spaces through technologies that shape how we communicate and locate ourselves. And yet, the production of copper generates long-term and devastating environmental impacts as it is mined and refined, particularly in relation to water systems. Mining involves blasting through the crust of the earth and scavenging through dense heterogeneous rocks, whereby minerals are synthetically separated through toxic solvents and rinses that produce effluent waste in tailing ponds (Place and Hanlon). This energy-laden process is possible entirely through the technologies developed and enabled by petrochemical powers. As artist A. Laurie Palmer notes, most mineral commodities are "linked in some way to oil," whether it be through military or defence strategies, or through the way that oil profits are often used to invest in the high capital costs of mining projects (7).

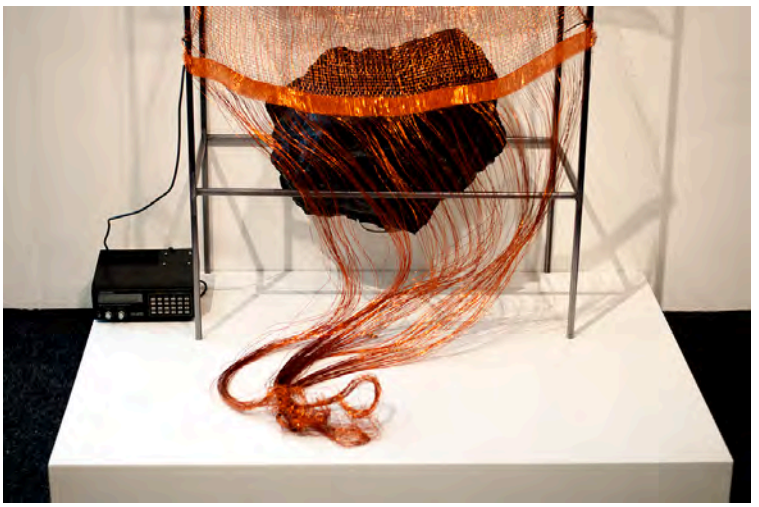

Figure 3

We don't hear the sounds of extraction processes directly in *Antenna (#1)*, but we do hear the consumption of some of those products in real time as we are visually confronted, head-on, with the way our ability to even listen to these sounds is ecologically compromised. The artwork takes up the simultaneity of radio to bring together sounds of the water, the land, and the cultural ambient noise of the gallery, experimenting with weightiness and scale in relation to our understanding of extracted materials through the single unit of the radio receiver—which appears so small, in relation. Importantly, it also allows us to experience the multitude of relationships between extraction and navigation in a more nuanced and multi-directional soundscape.

AMBIENT THRESHOLDS: REBECCA BELMORE *WAVE SOUND* (2017)

In an interview following Rebecca Belmore's premiere of *Fountain* at the 2005 Venice Biennale, the artist noted, "we are approaching a time when water could be an issue more serious than oil. I hope that day never comes" (Belmore and Watson 27). In the years since, Belmore's prediction has distressingly come true, and her art-making has certainly reflected this shift in concerns. Recently commissioned as part of the *LandMarks* curatorial series, *Wave Sound* (2017) is comprised of four sculptures situated in Banff National Park (AB), Pukaskwa National Park (ON), Georgian Bay Islands National Park (ON), and Gros Morne National Park (NL).

Figure 4

Each of the four sculptures has been cast from the terrain immediately surrounding the site where the piece is installed, which has the effect of making the sculptures quite difficult to distinguish from the immediate environment. The aluminum-cast sonic cones are placed with their receiving-ends facing bodies of water. The sculptural form funnels the distant aquatic sounds to the narrowed point where the sculpture meets the listener's ear. The installation of *Wave Sound* in Banff, Alberta, cannot be experienced from an upright position, and the sculpture directs you to crouch down and rest your body close to the land. Applying your ear to the end of the cone, your entire auditory focus shifts. The ebbs and flows of the water are amplified in tremendous detail through *Wave Sound,* which channels sonic events heard from as far as the middle of the lake. The remarkable sharpness and clarity even allows you to overhear conversations aboard the recreational boats servicing guided tours, where international visitors learn about the traditional grounds of the Stoney people, and the historic townsite that was submerged during the damming of the glacial lake for a hydroelectric project ("History of Lake Minnewanka"). As you listen, it becomes apparent how the very geogra-

phy around you has been smoothed and shaped by the water's forced and forcible movements.

Figure 5

In a number of ways, *Wave Sound* can be seen as a re-visitation of one of Belmore's earlier influential artworks, *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan: Speaking to Their Mother* (1991, 1992, 1996, 2014). Belmore produced a two-meter wide wooden megaphone that travelled through remote and urban communities from coast to coast, intended as a direct expression of protest in the wake of the Oka Crisis—and the ongoing trauma of resolving Indigenous land claims. By offering an invitation to Indigenous peoples to speak to their Mother—the land—the work operated in sync with a shift in the political landscape for Indigenous people at that time. *Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan: Speaking to Their Mother* began a reverberation throughout the natural landscape, by both symbolically and physically offering agency to communities to address the land and their relationship to it. From hilltops, valleys, and lakeshores, hundreds of voices rang out into the distance.

Ayum-ee-aawach Oomama-mowan: Speaking to Their Mother operates very clearly in the realm of protest and has been historicized as such, but is it appropriate to interpret *Wave Sound* as a similarly political act? In many ways, the answer is yes. In both of these works, Belmore challenges the assumed thresholds of hearing. The megaphone changes the threshold for which Indigenous voices are heard by the nation-state, and *Wave Sound* changes the threshold by which we are able to hear the water around us. But in the two and a half decades between the creation of these artworks, *Wave Sound* might indicate certain shifts in engagement—particularly in modes of listening—that are relevant to decolonial activism today. In particular, the transition from linguistic to a nonverbal auditory realm opens up possibilities for the recognition that sounds carry their own intelligence, putting the water in a more-than-ambient role (Oliveros). The non-linguistic listening required by *Wave Sound* requires sensorial, intuitive, holistic, and deeply personal modes of engagement. The stillness of the body in relation to the unending movement of the water in the work, and the humility in the relationship between the body and the water significantly changes the hierarchies of communication. *Wave Sound* encourages us to alter our ethical, political, and conceptual relationship with water by nurturing empathetic modes of listening.

INTERFERING FEEDBACK: MIA FEUER, *MESH* (2015)

The relationship between sound and the physical transformation of landscapes or geographies resonates clearly in the work of Mia Feuer. Exhibited simultaneously at Locust Projects in Miami, Florida and Esker Foundation in Calgary, Alberta, *Mesh* (2015) presented the shape-shifting qualities of water in a work that traverses multiple states of governance. In a transcontinental undertaking, the installation created connections between Svalbard (Norway), Florida (United States), Alberta (Canada), and Louisiana (United States).

Figure 6

As an artwork, *Mesh* is a complex interlaced structure where sound, material, and place are integrally linked. Emanating from speakers surrounding the work are the rushing sounds of water and the creaking and groaning of underwater Arctic glaciers. Recorded with hydrophones at the Hornsund Fjord, Svalbard, the aquatic noise registered by scientist and ocean acoustician Grant Deane is used to measure the calving of glaciers below the visible surface of the water. The recorded sounds convey endless activity. The recorded audio is streamed into Feuer's multifaceted, reciprocal, and even unstable representation of the relationship between water and land.

The artist created two different sculptural installations for each exhibition in order to reflect the environments in each respective place. In the coastal city of Miami, the sculptural form takes the shape of blocks of concrete and jugs, suggesting the seawalls or floatation materials that preoccupy municipal planners in this sea-level municipality (Urbina). In Calgary, a moss-covered tree is anchored by a con-

veyor belt, a scene not too dissimilar from the felled trees at clearcut extraction sites throughout the oil-rich province of Alberta. In both exhibitions, a salt carving of the three-dimensional topographic map of coastal Louisiana lies below the suspended forms. As the ambient sounds of the underwater recordings fill the space, the installation is programmed to release a drip of blue indigo dye each time a calving event is heard. The bubbling, humming and roaring of the glacial sounds excites a visual transformation, as each drop of dye dissolves the mapped sculpture below. *Mesh* composes a situation where resonant sounds alter our visual evidence. In a sense, listening reveals the ways in which certain forces re-shape the visual world.

The sounds of glacial events rebound against the bayous of Louisiana. Feuer has starkly condensed the miles of distance between Norwegian fjords and southern United States. The artwork is unapologetically direct: melting in the Arctic destroys the coastal landscape of the American South. In fact, "Coastal Louisiana has experienced one of the highest rates of relative sea level rise in the world" (Maldonado et al. 606). In Terrebonne Parish, where Feuer conducted much of her research, the impacts of these changes are already being felt by the Indigenous nations in the area, including the Pointe-au-Chien tribe, and the Isle de Jean Charles Band of Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw.

Mesh positions listening as a series of feedback loops that have visual and sonic consequences. Feuer's unabashed use of petro-products like vinyl plastics and styrofoam, bathed in an eerie glow of cool light, is dystopic in its excess. These products are part of the carbon economy that leads to the melting of the glaciers in the first place, but the glaciers exact their own costs on the sculpture's visual form. The use of recorded sounds situates the experience in the midst of events already past, furthering the bleak determinism of these processes.

CONCLUSION

As the struggles against extraction projects become louder and noisier in the public realm, contemporary art can contribute by enabling us to listen to the sonority of water in new and vital ways. Sound is not a discrete event in the same way that an ocular experience might be, and its immersive and responsive

qualities towards surrounding environments allow for different forms of perception. The way that sounds unfold through space and time opens possibilities for thinking about the far-reaching repercussions of extraction politics and global warming. Shortsighted policies that fail to see the vast horizon of these implications might very well be improved by embracing the complexity of sound.

The focal points of auditory attention differ significantly in the work of Beer, Belmore, and Feuer. The artists present multifaceted sonic objects that immerse the audience in an environmental experience that manifests up-close in Belmore's *Wave Sound*, from mid-range in Beer's *Antenna (#1),* and from an unthinkable distance in Feuer's *Mesh*. Despite these differences in spatial relationships, all of the artists present their audiences with complex and simultaneous issues, requiring them to listen through different scales, change their thresholds for listening, and ultimately listen through feedback and interference. In all these artworks, the auditory significance of water speaks through materials, space, and form.

As T.J. Demos observes, "there is no single solution or sole approach to our ecological predicament. Indeed, multiple paths are required" (260). Since we cannot expect to find a precise answer that will fix every ill, multi-disciplinary approaches are both desirable and necessary. Exploring these ideas through creative methodologies, we understand how the visual can provoke straightforward contemplation, while sound transcends these confrontational boundaries. Sound can sometimes be more difficult to pinpoint, however, making heightened forms of listening all the more important. The capacity of art to lead to real and measured change in relation to geopolitics and environmental destruction is similarly difficult to pinpoint. While what needs to be done to achieve the scale of change required to divert the world away from environmental calamity is exhaustive, there is a compelling simplicity to the belief that "patterns of behaviour, including listening, can be changed" (Truax 27). Listening differently and dedicatedly to complexity—instead of listening in spite of it—will be imperative.

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IMAGE NOTES

Figure 1: Ruth Beer, *Oil & Water*, 2014. Photographic prints. 101 x 76 cm. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Figure 2: Ruth Beer, *Antenna (#1)*, 2016. Copper weaving, steel tower, polyurethane, short-wave radio. Installed in *Ground Signals* group exhibition curated by Jordan Strom at the Surrey Art Gallery, 2017. Photo courtesy of the Surrey Art Gallery, SITE Photography, and the artist.

Figure 3: Ruth Beer, *Antenna (#1)*, 2016. Detail. Copper weaving, steel tower, polyurethane, short-wave radio. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Figure 4: Rebecca Belmore, *Wave Sound*, 2017. Cast aluminum. Installation at Lake Minnewanka, Banff, AB. Photographed by Kyra Kordoski. Commissioned for Landmarks2017/Repères2017 by Partners in Art. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Figure 5: Rebecca Belmore, *Wave Sound*, 2017. Cast aluminum. Installation at Lake Minnewanka, Banff, AB. Photographed by Kyra Kordoski. Commissioned for Landmarks2017/Repères2017 by Partners in Art. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Figure 6: (Left) Mia Feuer, *Mesh*, 2015. Styrofoam, rockite cement, metal, papier-mâché, polyethylene carboy, indigo blue aniline dye, solenoid, vinyl tubing, PVA glue, salt, MDF, paint, cast driftwood sourced from the Arctic Ocean, Spanish moss and cast bark sourced from the bayous of Pointe au Chien, Lousiana. Esker Foundation, Calgary, Alberta. Photo by John Dean. (Right) Mia Feuer, *Mesh*, 2015. Styrofoam, rockite cement, metal, papier-mâché, polyethylene carboy, indigo blue aniline dye, solenoid, vinyl tubing, PVA glue, salt, MDF, paint. Locust Projects, Miami, Florida. Photo courtesy of the artist.

REMEMBERING PARIS 1968: FASHION THEATRE OF PROTEST

ELENA SIEMENS

The contributors to this creative portfolio comment in images and words on the high-fashion brands' campaigns commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Paris 1968 student protests. Young scholars themselves, many participants charge Dior, Gucci, Sonia Rykiel, YSL, and others with pursuing their covetous commercial interests.

Elena Siemens, "Dior's Window" (Vancouver 2018)

"My collage is primarily a response to the Gucci Dans Les Rues campaign that celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Paris 1968 protests in a way that is glamorized and hypocritical," Sam Beethan states. Similarly, Maria Andrade points out that "it is important to question Gucci's motives." She adds: "However, the campaign takes direct inspiration from a historical event and it references the youthful energy in a way that is not looking past the horrific events, but commemorating them." Gillian Herbert's contribution "brings across the message of commodification and commercialization that appears to have taken place within the Dior campaign."

Elena Siemens, "Street Vendors on Granville" (Vancouver 2018)

Several contributions address the representation of space in the 1968 inspired advertising campaigns. Corissa Tymafichuk's emphasizes "an emotional disconnect between the protestors in the photos of May '68 and the actors used in *Gucci Dans Les Rues*." She comments that the "real riots took place in the streets, with protestors digging up *pavé* to use as weapons and overturning cars to barricade police." Whereas Gucci, Tymafichuk continues, chooses to use "a mix of in-

door and outdoor spaces … in a completely staged interpretation of May ’68.” In Natalya Boiko’s collage, her hand-made cardboard cobblestones “point to the importance of space in the overall atmosphere and meaning of the Youthquake.” In particular, Boiko comments on Sonia Rykiel’s anniversary campaign that “turns the symbol of violent rebellion” into a high-priced handbag, and how this alters the meaning of “the once revolutionary space of the street.”

Elena Siemens, “Street Vendors on Granville” (Vancouver 2018)

Many contributors seek to connect the past and the present in a more meaningful way. Alida Radke’s collage “puts black-and-white photographs of real ’68 protesters alongside colour photographs of models acting as protesters from Gucci’s Dans Les Rues campaign and Dior’s Fall 2018 collection.” Radke writes: “I made half of the background in black and white and half in colour to better put the past in conversation with the present.” In Parul Kanwar’s collage, “ruggedly painted words ‘Egalité! Liberté! Sexualité!’ pay homage” to the 1968 riots, as well as “referencing Gucci’s advertisement in which a girl can be seen writing this slogan on a washroom wall.” Designed “in the

form of a protest sign," Jillian Harbin's contribution combines personal photography and images "of the actual Youthquake movement." Harbin places "the 1968 photos on the edges of the collage, as a nod to how these students pushed the boundaries and limitations initially placed upon them."

Standing somewhat apart, Thomas Wier's contribution foregrounds the present. Wier focuses on the young French designer Marine Serre and her sustainable fashion. He explains: "Serre channels the mindset of the '68 protesters, but in a way that feels very contemporary and aware of the issues that now impact young people in 2018."

Elena Siemens, "Tiffany's Window" (Brussels 2018)

My set of images accompanying this introduction also suggests that sometimes a loose association makes a greater impact than a more literal one. A case in point is Tiffany's flamboyant window display in Brussels. With its cutout of a hooded graffiti artist spray-painting the brand's name over the storefront, Tiffany's communicates more revolutionary energy than the neat pile of red cobblestones in Sonia Rykiel's thoughtful but overstated window display next door. Sim-

ilarly, the street vendors' takeover of Granville Street in Vancouver evokes the spirit of 1968 with a greater force than Dior's hybrid mise-en-scène of high fashion and graffiti on the neighbouring West Georgia Street.

Elena Siemens, "Harvey Nichols Window" (London 2018)

In London, the Harvey Nichols department store displayed heaps of newspapers featuring provocative headlines. Designed to promote a new menu at the store's restaurant, the campaign's tagline "Veg Out!" read like a Situationist slogan (albeit re-commercialized and reabsorbed for consumerist society). An inspiration behind the 1968 protests, the Situationist International and its spiritual leader Guy Debord encouraged people to paint cities with statements such as "Never Work" and "It's Forbidden To Forbid" (Lewisohn 75).

When asked about the famous Odessa step sequence in his film classic *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), Sergei Eisenstein replied that it was the result of a purely "spontaneous encounter" (173). A fierce advocate of the "collision montage," he offered this explanation: "Chance

brings a sharper, more powerful resolution" than any "preliminary outline" (Eisenstein qtd. in Siemens 24).

Elena Siemens, "Harvey Nichols Window" (London 2018)

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2018 marks five decades since the French Protests of May 1968. The events of '68 challenged Conservative values, both economic and social. The youth of France demonstrated, rioted, and adopted dress that subverted the attitudes and appearance of those in power. The influence of the events of '68 can still be seen in contemporary society today. Looking to Paris Fashion Week 2018, designers can be seen chanelling both the mindset and the styles of the protesters. A rebellious yet functional stylishness can be observed in the work of the young designer, Marine Serre. Serre's style references issues within Fashion and the world at large. Her sustainable approach to design also battles issues associated with climate change and fast fashion. Throughout her work, Serre channels the mindset of the '68 protesters, but in a way that feels very contemporary and aware of the issues that now impact young people in 2018.
Thomas Wier

Using the Boulevard Saint Germain (one of the sites of the 1968 riots) as a background, my collage puts black-and-white photographs of real '68 protesters alongside colour photographs of models acting as protesters from Gucci's Dans Les Rues campaign and Dior's Fall 2018 collection. In addition, I made half of the background in black and white and half in colour to better put the past in conversation with the present. I paid special attention to the facial expressions of both the rioters and the models, as the group of six protesters in the middle display emotions of anger and pain appropriate to a riot, whereas the models show little to no emotional investment at all. The actual protesters in the lower right corner appear injured, as many were during the riots, something often left out of nostalgic portrayals, as images of bloody, injured rioters would not help sell a superficial image of '68 to future generations.
Alida Radke

My collage is primarily a response to the Gucci Dans Les Rues campaign that celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Paris 1968 protests in a way that is glamorized and hypocritical. In particular, I saw a dissonance between how Gucci positions itself as an exclusive, high-priced designer clothing brand and the reality of the Paris 1968 events. My collage is composed of three primary sources designed to highlight the stark contrast between Gucci and the protests: partial images of the promotional material for Gucci Dans Les Rues campaign, signs created by the protesters, and images of the actual protests that depict the violence of the events. In so doing, I aim to emphasize exactly why I think Gucci's use of this monumental event is disingenious. What struck me most about the Gucci campaign was how fun the scenes of protest seemed. I have crossed out "Egalité" in the storefront scene, placing the price of the "Re(belle) leather backpack" beside it, to highlight the disconnect between the equality the rioters fought for and the high-class distinctions associated with the Gucci brand.

Sam Beethan

"Soyez Réalistes, Demandez l'Impossible!" (Be realistic, demand the impossible!) is the title I chose for my creative piece, drawing from a slogan used by Parisian youth protesters during the May '68 riots in France. My collage transitions from the Paris riots on Rive Gauche, portrayed in black and white, to the bright fashion transformation of Youthquake in the 60s, finishing with 2018 fashion campaigns that commemorate the 50th anniversary of both revolutions. The performance space affects the public perception of both May '68 and *Gucci Dans Les Rues.* There is an emotional disconnect between the protestors in the photos of May '68 and the actors used in *Gucci Dans Les Rues.* May '68 photos show hurt, bleeding, and exhausted people. The Gucci campaign shows a student protest that looks fun. The difference is due to the performance space of both events. The real riots took place on the streets, with protesters digging up *pavé* to use as weapons and overturning cars to barricade police. The Gucci campaign uses a mix of indoor and outdoor spaces, such as a classroom or an alleyway, in a completely staged interpretation of May '68. The intention is different, as Gucci's campaign is designed to sell designer products.

Corissa Tymafichuk

#GucciDansLesRues commemorates the period marked by youthful disgust and revolt. The youth would not stop until "liberty, equality, and sexuality" were fully embraced. This fashion campaign was shot by Glen Luchford and is filled with glamorous, youthful, anarchic rage intertwined with liberating sexuality. Gucci has been criticized for romanticising the 1968 riots and using the youths' anti-institution slogans to create profit. I believe it is important to question Gucci's motives. However, the campaign takes direct inspiration from a historical event and it references the youthful energy in a way that is not looking past the horrific events, but commemorating them. In my collage, I compare the #GucciDansLesRues campaign with the May 1968 protests by including images from Luchford's short film on the left side and the archival images of the riots on the right side. I include as well the slogans that were put up by the French youth: "BE YOUNG AND SHUT UP" and "THE BEAUTY IN REVOLUTION." In the centre I have added a picture of myself dressed in an all-red attire in a pant suit and sneakers with the words "Essential Revolution" emblazoned across the page. I chose to include this image of myself because the everyday person holds power to create change even when everyone is telling them that they cannot.
Maria Andrade

High fashion brands such as Dior and Gucci have referenced the Youthquake in their 2018 anniversary campaigns. I have recorded this in my collage, which incorporates, among other things, references to Dior and its peace symbol. The collage also portrays several distinct fashion styles, such as the shift dress associated with the revolutionary attitude of the times. In addition, I included an image of the Eiffel Tower collapsing, several archival images of the 1968 riots, and a picture of a girl holding a red banner. The students took over the Bourse, the Paris Stock Exchange, and plastered landmarks with red revolutionary flags.

Dan Waissi

My collage aims to emulate the Dior Fall/Winter 2018 Fashion Week. For their backdrop, Dior incorporated many layered words and magazine covers. I took inspiration from this. I cut out different magazine and newspaper headlines and advertisements to create a similar look. My objective was to bring across the message of commodification and commercialization that appears to have taken place with the Dior campaign. I have added a hashtag to Dior's iconic NON branding as a way to emphasize its modernity and to make this movement "trendy." The way this major brand enveloped a youth movement and turned it into something commercial suggests that the famous subculture theorist Dick Hebdige may have underestimated mainstream culture's ability to hybridize and commercialize subcultures and their style. The absorption and adoption of this youth movement by Dior undermines the struggle and actual experience of the students who were involved in the protest, by taking the personal and political issues which were important to them and then repackaging and marketing them to Dior's high-end clientele. This commercialization of protest distances what was intended as an homage from the actual issues the Youthquake movement represented.
Gillian Herbert

Paved streets of Paris, which once indicated a prosperous society, became a weapon during the 1968 revolts. My collage further incoporates the revolt's slogan "sous les paves, la plage" ("under the cobblestones, the beach"). This Situationist slogan refers to students' desire to escape controlling institutions. The cobblestones in my collage point to the importance of space in the overall atmosphere and meaning of the Youthquake. The fashion campaigns from 2018 also incorporate references to cobblestones, as in Sonia Rykiel's totes. Rykiel turns the symbol of violent rebellion into a harmless handbag that costs over $900, altering the overall meaning of the once revolutionary space of the street.
Natalya Boiko

This collage is made up of several components. I have placed the outline of France at the centre of the collage and colour on the edges, making the entire page resemble the French flag. I also bring attention to the connection between the original 1968 Paris riots and the 2018 anniversary fashion campaigns. The riots resulted from student and worker dissatisfaction with capitalism and capitalist culture. These fashion campaigns, however, are inherently part of the capitalist system, as they advertise products for sale. In my collage, this contradiction is symbolized by the cracked and broken borders of the colours, and the juxtaposition of images from the riots and the 2018 fashion campaigns.
Hope Jubenvill

As Susan Sontag once said, "the problems of this world are only truly solved in two ways: by extinction or duplication". Gucci's Dans Les Rues campaign (2018) focuses on the recreation of the problems that continue to plague the world in the present. My collage represents the union of the two events, past and present, different worlds apart brought together through their political substance. The use of see-through film represents the desire for transparency, and the red and black cross-section symbolises the constraints placed on the youth whose pictures are stationed behind the cage-like structure. Lastly, ruggedly painted words "Egalité! Liberté! Sexualité!" pay homage to one of the most popular slogans used during 1968 riots while also referencing Gucci's advertisement in which a girl can be seen writing this slogan on a public washroom wall. My collage conveys the convergence of Youthquake of 1968 and the present day as represented by Gucci. The youth of today play a critical role in shaping the political dimension, much as Youthquake did in the 60s. Hence, this is an opportunity for Gucci to not only ignite rebellious political strains, but also capitalise on them.

Parul Kanwar

In my collage, the black and white images represent young college protesters in 1968 Paris. Turtleneck sweaters, denim jackets and trench coats were popular fashion items at the time. The colour pictures depict contemporary runway models wearing Dior's 2018 collection inspired by the Youthquake. Dior's turtleneck sweater is inscribed with "NON, NON, NON"—a sentiment French students shared with regard to the injustice prevailing in the 1960s. Despite pursuing commercial interests and being staged in theatrical settings, these fashion shows still succeed in commemorating the important Youthquake anniversary.
Sampati Kohli

I designed my collage in the form of a protest sign, much like one that might have been in 1968 in Paris. The base layer of the collage is made of pictures I took of some of my own "street wear" clothing. I took close-up, fragmentary shots to show the distinct fabrics, colours, and patterns of the items. As a university student myself, these are items I'd wear on an everyday basis. The items themselves aren't anything elaborate or spectacular. These items would never be considered high fashion or of any special design, and therefore don't assert themselves as the important element of the collage. The key pictures are the ones of the actual Youthquake movement. I decided to give each protest picture a border to make them stand out, thus playing on the idea that the message of the protest and the physical act of marching down the street is the important overall theme. As well, I placed the 1968 photos on the edges of the collage, as a nod to how these students pushed the boundaries and limitations initially placed upon them.

Jill Harbin

The Youthquake of 1968 in Paris was referenced in 2018 fashion campaigns to commemorate its 50th anniversary. Campaigns such as Gucci Dans les rues, YSL Rive Gauche, and DIOR 's 2018-2019 ready-to-wear collection referenced this protest and used it as a means of selling ideologically loaded garments. The 1968 Youthquake is regarded as the most successful cultural revolution in France's recent history. I believe the protests were a performance of resistance and an outcry directed at administrative bodies to force them to acknowledge the disparity between the interests of students and workers and the bosses and the government. Student protests against capitalism and consumerism in May of '68 resulted in the shut down of Nanterre campus of the University of Paris. Within days, 20,000 students, teachers, and supporters of the movement occupied the Sorbonne campus. The protests spread to the Left Bank (Rive Gauche) of la Seine and nearby factories, which were also occupied. The occupation of these spaces helped the protesting students and workers reclaim them as their own. In my collage, I attempt to demonstrate that the performance aspect of protest makes the proximity to issues being protested important, especially in the case of movements that seek to occupy and reclaim spaces.
Zeinab Abugrga

Gucci Dans Les Rues ads (Pre-Fall 2018) do not immediately announce their connection to the 1968 student protests in Paris. These crowded images of young models marching in the streets or populating campus-like environments celebrate camaraderie and exuberant fashion. In one of the ads, the models are gathered on a balcony, their attention directed at the street below them. The viewer cannot see what it is. My collage incorporates several cutouts from Gucci's ads, including the balcony one. In addition to Gucci, I was inspired by William Klein's remarkable photographs of Paris, his adopted home. Klein's "Armistice Day, Paris, 1968" foregrounds a young man and a woman, their faces express both devastation and resolve. The protests are supressed; it is a day of mourning. Designed initially for a pop-up exhibit *Hotel Metropole*, (Intermedia Research Studio, University of Alberta, Fall 2018), my collage addresses the theme of today's congested world, a world on the move, its citizens in pursuit of places to discoverer, and places to call their home. A world as a hotel.
Elena Siemens

LIBERATING BICYCLES IN NIKI CARO'S *WHALE RIDER* AND IN HAIFAA AL MANSOUR'S *WADJDA*

DORIS HAMBUCH

***Abstract**: Susan B. Anthony declared in 1896 that the bicycle "has done more to emancipate women than anything else in the world." The comparative study of Whale Rider (2002) and Wadjda (2012) demonstrates that this liberating effect of the basic tool of transportation is being reinforced in the new millennium. The analysis further situates two contemporary women filmmakers, Niki Caro from New Zealand and Haifaa Al Mansour from Saudi Arabia, within the growing global network Patricia White identifies, in Women's Cinema, World Cinema (2015), as crucial for the improvement of female directors' conditions in a global film industry.*

***Résumé**: Susan B. Anthony a déclaré en 1896 que la bicyclette « a fait plus pour émanciper les femmes que toute autre chose dans le monde ». La recherche comparative de Whale Rider (2002) and Wadjda (2012) démontre que cet effet libérateur de l'outil de base des transports se renforce au cours du nouveau millénaire. De plus, l'analyse situe deux cinéastes contemporaines, Niki Caro de Nouvelle-Zélande et Haifaa Al Mansour d'Arabie Saoudite, au sein du réseau mondial en croissance que Patricia White identifie, dans Women's Cinema, World Cinema (2015), comme crucial pour l'amélioration des conditions des réalisatrices dans une industrie cinématographique mondiale.*

Susan B. Anthony declared in 1896 that the bicycle "has done more to emancipate women than anything else in the world" (Raab 24). The present comparative study argues that Niki Caro and Haifaa Al Mansour pay tribute to Anthony's feminist spirit when they create girl protagonists whose bicycles play crucial roles in their debut features, *Whale Rider* (2002) and *Wadjda* (2012) respectively. Patricia White states, in *Women's Cinema, World Cinema: Projecting Contemporary Feminisms* (2015), that even though "still dras-

tically underrepresented, women directors are increasingly coming into view within the current circulation of world cinema" (White 4). White establishes the "history of 'cinefeminism'" (6) as point of departure for her critical framework "where women's works are encountered in relation to each other […] and to their various, expansive constituencies" (19). The current analysis of a film from New Zealand alongside one from Saudi Arabia situates their directors within such a history of cinefeminism. Indeed, both Caro and Al Mansour progressed to very diverse projects outside their respective national contexts after the international success with stories that were close to home. This article argues that the liberating rides they grant their protagonists therefore compare to the subsequent mobility of the directors themselves.

Inaugurating a cinematic focus on the muscle-powered transportation device, Vittorio De Sica's *Bicycle Thieves* (1948) enforced the symbolic significance of bicycles in global cinema. Ecologically friendly and not requiring a special license, this basic tool of transportation has featured as prominent prop in movies such as *Breaking Away* (1979), *The Flying Scotsman* (2006), or *The Kid with a Bike* (2011). It has further served as a metaphor for filmmakers to describe their own creative process (White, 2013). Both *Whale Rider* and *Wadjda* present the bicycle as an effective symbol of a girl's growing assertiveness in conservative, tribal communities. Attributing the respective heroines to the industrial contexts of the two directors further claims the liberating effect of bicycles on a meta-level. Godard's comparison of his work to a bicycle ride may apply to both Caro and Al Mansour as well. To acknowledge the centrality of bicycles in *Whale Rider* and *Wadjda* allows for a feminist angle on the neorealist legacy, and it reveals this angle's relevance for the work of the women who directed the respective films.[1]

The bicycle's cultural representations go beyond the purely cinematic. A considerable amount of research has dealt with the universal significance of bicycles in fiction. *Culture on Two Wheels: The Bicycle in Literature and Film* (2016), edited by Jeremy Withers and Daniel P. Shea, is a comprehensive source that covers literature and film across the world and through the ages, since the invention of the bicycle, allegedly in the early 19th century (Raab 23). Alon Raab lists a

great number of writers who reveal themselves as passionate riders in "Wheels of Fire: Writers on Bicycles." Withers and Shea open their introduction with the claim that "we are living during a bicycle revolution" (Withers/Shea 2) and go on to point out that cycling commonly associates with liberation. Their collection includes a chapter that discusses Al Mansour's *Wadjda* as influenced by Italian neorealism and Iranian cinema. Anne Ciecko's "Bicycle Borrowers after Neorealism: Global Nou-velo Cinema," however, also establishes a context of national cinema in which to situate the neorealist legacy. In the absence of a national Saudi cinema, I argue that a comparative study of *Wadjda* and *Whale Rider* serves better to highlight the bicycle's "extraordinary utility for critiques of social inequality" (Ciecko 242) in a feminist context. While *Wadjda*, as Ciecko points out, transforms De Sica's father-son focus into a mother-daughter story, *Whale Rider* adds one more generation in its focus on a grandfather-granddaughter conflict. In both films, bicycle rides serve to reinforce a girl's potential, against severe resistance. In film industries, in particular the well-established ones, women frequently face severe resistance as well when they attempt to work behind cameras. Such resistance mainly rests within the production and distribution apparatus, but it may also hail from film critics.

Both Al Mansour and Caro have been accused of cultural commodification in their attempts to reach larger audiences. It may not be accidental that in both cases the harshest, and also most polemical, critiques come from male critics. As women filmmakers, Caro and Al Mansour thus share a similar kind of oppression that their heroines battle in their respective films. One attempt to create more transparency and achieve gender parity in film industries is the so-called 50:50-by-2020 festival pledge. Unfortunately, not all powers that be agree with this measure's necessity (Erbland).[2] Providing a comparative analysis of *Whale Rider* by Caro and *Wadjda* by Al Mansour as part of De Sica's legacy encourages critics to grant these directors the kind of liberating rides that they created for their respective heroines. The following analysis begins with a discussion of the older film, *Whale Rider*, which is based on a novel without bicycles. The second section sheds light on a bicycle as central prop in *Wadjda*, whose success led to a children's book called *The Green Bicycle* (2015). "The

Liberating Effect of Bicycles," finally, compares the symbolic significance of bicycles in the stories as well as for the work of their directors.

WHALE RIDER'S SHARED BICYCLE

> The story we liked best was the one telling how Mihi had stood on a sacred ground at Rotorua. "Sit down," a chief had yelled, enraged. "Sit down," because women weren't supposed to stand up and speak on sacred ground." (Ihimaera 81)

Whale Rider premiered at the 2002 Toronto International Film Festival, where it received the AGF Peoples Choice Award. The release of a revised international edition of Witi Ihimaera's novel (1987; 2003), on which the film is based, accompanied the latter's worldwide success. Among the following numerous recognitions are nine New Zealand Film Awards, including Best Film, Best Director, and Best Screenplay. Melissa Kennedy points out that Caro's screenplay resulted in "little change to the principal story-line," but shifted the narrative voice mainly due to the difference in media (Kennedy 116). Māori scholars, in contrast, disapprove of Caro's adaptation, and Alistair Fox, in *Coming-of-Age Cinema in New Zealand: Genre, Gender, and Adaptation* (2017), argues that the film imposes a Western feminist perspective. He further accuses it of "transubstantiating [the original story]'s meaning in the course of converting the source into a conventional coming-of-age genre film" (Fox 149).

Although Fox, in reference to studies by Brendan Hokowhitu (Fox 148) and Tania Kai'ai (Fox 149), is right to point to specific distortions of Māori culture, he exaggerates when describing the contrast between Ihimaera's and Caro's work on the story. Book and film use poetic devices, such as symbolism, intertextual references, and rhythm to interweave the tribal myth of the whale rider (Figure 3) with the story of this ancient hero's real-life female descendent. Once Paikea, the film's narrator, realizes her specific purpose within her post-colonial Indigenous community, she realizes she must oppose her stubborn grandfather Koro, the community's current leader. Lars Eckstein, in his thoughtful placement of the tale on a continuum be-

tween magical and marvellous realism, provides important insight on the Māori writer's own variations of the material rooted in his tribal mythology. Ihimaera's rendering of *The Whale Rider* starts with the 1987 edition published in New Zealand, mainly in English, but includes Māori terminology and entire passages that indicate an untranslatable "alternative cosmology" (Eckstein 101). Eckstein is keen to emphasize that the date of this original publication, "about belief as much as about fantasy," coincides with the introduction of Māori as second official language in New Zealand (105). Ihimaera supports this development and pays tribute to the recognition of his tribal language with *Te Kaieke Tohara*, a 1995 Māori version of *The Whale Rider* (101).

Ihimaera's subsequent work on an international edition of the novel coincides with his participation in the film as associate producer (Kennedy 116). Both activities are concessions to a broader audience and thus mediations between cultures. Chris Prentice is right to remind readers, in "Riding the Whale? Postcolonialism and Globalization in *Whale Rider*," that the twenty-first century renderings of the story are also mediations between generations (Prentice 256). Māori terminology in the international edition appears only with translations, sometimes even accompanied by a glossary. In the film, the tribal language occurs only when the meaning is evident from the scene, or with subtitles. Eckstein situates these newer versions further away from the marvellous on his spectrum, due to a loss of the untranslatable alternative cosmology. They do not, however, replace Ihimaera's earlier text. Ideally, as in Eckstein's classroom, they may invite comparative studies that are bound to acknowledge Indigenous criticism. As with the edited version of the novel, the international reception of the film testifies to the success of the tale's twenty-first century receptions. These newer versions have met a global audience, for better or worse. They have introduced a tale from a specific community in New Zealand to viewers worldwide who may not have been familiar with Māori culture at all. Some of these viewers may have misinterpreted elements of the setting, or perceived of it as an exotic *other*.

Sarah Projansky discusses American reactions to Caro's film in "Gender, Race, Feminism, and the International Hero: The Unremarkable

U. S. Popular Press Reception of *Bend It Like Beckham* and *Whale Rider*." Projansky traces the film's transition from art house to multiplex cinemas across the United States (Projansky 190), and provides a thorough discussion of numerous reviewer reports. Her use of the word "unremarkable" in the title of her essay signals "predictable," and refers to a certain complacency encouraged by stories from distant locations. At the same time, Projansky identifies important discrepancies between individual reviews, in particular regarding the relevance of feminist content (Projansky 199). The diverse reactions Projansky identifies in this context illustrate that feminism, even in the so-called "West," is not the monolithic sort of movement Fox makes it seem in his assessment of Caro's adaptation. The following analysis of specific scenes identifies further flaws in Fox's argument.

Ihimaera's book includes no bicycles at all. Instead, his narrator Rawiri, the heroine's uncle, uses a motorcycle. In Caro's film, Paikea herself provides the narrative perspective, and during the first half, she shares her grandfather Koro's bike when he picks her up from school (Figure 1). The bicycle, in this case, serves to highlight the reciprocal affinity of the two family members, and it also draws attention to the wealth of the community's natural environment. The first cycling scene occurs immediately after the opening hospital sequence that summarizes the tragic circumstances of Paikea's birth. A jump cut transitions to the narrative present about seven years later. Following this cut, close-up shots of pedalling feet, the faces of the cycling pair, and the grandfather's whale tooth necklace (Figure 2) alternate with long shots of the impressive landscape. These scenes mark a certain ambiguity in Koro's character regarding his relationship with Paikea. When her mother and twin brother die during Paikea's birth, Koro rejects his first grandchild forcefully. He is in need of a male descendent to take on his leadership role. As Paikea grows up in his house, in the absence of her father, their affinity becomes mutual, as long as she is unaware of her fate as the next leader. This fate becomes obvious for the first time when Paikea asks Koro about the community's creation myth while he is repairing his boat's outboard motor.

Fig. 1: During the first half of the film, the grandfather picks Paikea up from school on his bicycle.

Fig. 2: This close-up shows Paikea holding on to Koro's whale-tooth necklace.

Neither the motor nor the boat, as Fox suggests (Fox 155), symbolizes the tribe in this scene. Rather, it is the broken rope, as Koro makes clear when answering Pai's questions about the ancient whale rider's significance for Whangara (Figure 3). When the individual strings of the rope are tight together, the grandfather explains, the community is strong. While Koro disappears to find a new rope—a potential statement on modernization's battle against tradition—Paikea fixes the old, broken rope, which allows her to start the motor. Koro's angry reaction expresses his hostility towards his granddaughter's trespassing into his own field of responsibility. This hostility has its origin in the old leader's rejection of change, a rejection that ironically contrasts with his search for a new rope when Paikea proves that the old one is mendable. Koro does not overcome his aversion to impending change until his granddaughter's life is at stake, after she rides a whale and succeeds in rescuing a beached pod that way. When Koro finally admits to being a "fledgling new to flight," this metaphor relates to said change, rather than to a disrespect of hierarchy, as Fox would have it (158). When Koro speaks thus in the hospital room, Paikea is still in a coma, and nobody can hear him. In a way, he comforts himself, showing that he can accept the unavoidable transition and welcome his successor even if she happens to be female.

Fig. 3: This wooden sculpture depicts the mythological ancestor Paikea, the Whale Rider.

Fig. 4: The grandfather wears the whale-tooth necklace during his practice with the boys.

During the scenes in which Paikea shares Koro's bicycle, she often holds on to his whale tooth necklace (Figures 2 and 4). This gesture expresses her affinity as much as it foreshadows their proximity in lineage. Although the grandfather refuses to teach the girl traditional skills, such as how to use a taiaha in Māori martial art, his legacy as leader seems to transfer to his granddaughter via the whale tooth, at least metaphorically. When Paikea's visiting father invites her to join him abroad, Paikea delays the departure by requesting an extra round on Koro's bicycle. This scene marks the last time Koro grants her the privilege of sharing his bicycle. When Pai, finding her bond with the whales during the airport ride, decides not to leave with her father after all, Koro no longer picks her up from school. A bicycle next appears in the film when Paikea rides on her own. Behind Koro's back, she has pursued her physical education, which shows when she passes the school bus by herself, pedalling at record speed (Figure 6). It also shows when she dives for the whale tooth necklace Koro threw

into the sea during a final test for the boys, among whom he hopes to find the next leader. Pai recovers this necklace in Koro's absence (Figure 5). Her independence at riding the bicycle foreshadows her own final test, the riding of a whale. While not a major change to Ihimaera's storyline, the use of the bicycle symbol in the film grants Caro the nod to De Sica, as well as to Susan B. Anthony. While the importance of the bicycle as symbol is implicit in *Whale Rider*, the following section discusses an example of a film in which the basic transportation tool takes centre stage.

Fig. 5: In order to find his successor among the boys he has trained, Koro asks them to dive for his whale-tooth necklace. Paikea is the one to retrieve it in Koro's absence.

Fig. 6: On her own, Paikea rides the bicycle fast enough to pass the school bus.

BICYCLE OBSESSION IN *WADJDA*

> Still the bicycle floated in place on the other side of the fence, not moving, not rising or falling, just hovering. It seemed to be poised at the point where wooden boards met sky, waiting, ready for a ride. For what felt like forever, Wadjda continued to stare. Without looking down, she dropped her arm and slid her black stone into her pocket. And still her eyes followed the bicycle. It was like a vision, a dream. The most beautiful dream she'd ever had. (Al Mansour 59-60)

Haifaa Al Mansour's *Wadjda* premiered in 2012, a decade after *Whale Rider*, at the Venice Film Festival. It revolves around the bicycle with which the protagonist Wadjda becomes obsessed early on in the story. Al Mansour has revealed her indebtedness to De Sica (Garcia 37).[3] Like *Whale Rider*, *Wadjda* has been attacked on the grounds of its international success. Although Al Mansour did grow up in the culture portrayed in her film (unlike Caro), she collaborated with an in-

ternational crew and worked in particular with German producers (like Caro). Tariq Al Haydar claims that "the political statement the film makes is specious" (Al Haydar). His polemic condemns the fact that Wadjda's bicycle has the national colour of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In a *Cineaste* interview, Al Mansour explains the specific role green plays in her country by stating that for Saudis, "heaven is green, not blue" (Garcia). Yet, other colors play important roles throughout the movie, such as those of different local football clubs. Wadjda uses string in those colors to produce bracelets to sell in her attempt to raise money for the bicycle purchase. In the same *Cineaste* interview Maria Garcia discusses blue nail polish as a symbol of individuality. The same applies to Wadjda's purple shoelace, with purple, at the latest since Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, often seen in association with women's rights movements. The socio-economic conditions in De Sica's post-World-War-II Italian film stand in stark contrast with those in Al Mansour's contemporary Saudi Arabia. Although Wadjda's family is not wealthy, they suffer neither from unemployment nor poverty. In this context, Caro's Whangara parallels De Sica's Rome, though the former is a very small community compared to the latter large city. Like Rome, Riyadh is a large city, but most of Al Mansour's film takes place in Wadjda's immediate neighbourhood, which compares well in size with the small community in Caro's film. Both films do, however, have much to do with parental affinities and youthful decisions, which provides the main connection to *Bicycle Thieves*.

Whereas the symbolic meaning of the bicycle Koro shares with Paikea is implicit in *Whale Rider*, Wadjda's desire to own one specific bicycle accounts for most of the plot development in Al Mansour's film. Roy Armes's discussion of *Wadjda* has the character of a post scriptum at the end of *New Voices in Arab Cinema* (2015), but he does not fail to emphasize the "magical sight" (Armes 303) that instigates Wadjda's obsession when she first encounters this bicycle. As it is transported on top of a car, it seems to be flying along the wall that conceals the moving vehicle (Figure 7). Wadjda's immediate chase establishes the encounter as love at first sight (Figure 8). She follows the car all the way to the small shop (Figure 9) whose vendor gives in to her begging to hold on to this bicycle until she saves enough money

to buy it (Figure 10). This scene introduces the one special, incidentally green, bicycle whose possession Wadjda pursues with the same determination that guides Paikea's struggle to assert herself against her grandfather. The initial wish to own a bicycle, however, originates in Wadjda's friendship with her neighbour Abdullah (Figures 11 and 12).

Fig. 7: On her way home from school, Wadjda spots the green bicycle attached to the roof of a moving vehicle.

Fig. 8: The low angle emphasizes Wadjda's fascination with this particular bicycle.

After a pre-credits prologue inside her school establishes that Wadjda stands out among her peers, two subsequent scenes introduce her home and the conflict she faces there between her parents. In the first scene, she helps her mother to get ready for work and defends her against the driver, who complains about the regular delay. As Wadjda leaves the house to walk to school in the second scene, her father arrives wearing a car mechanic outfit. There are no further details about the father's occupation throughout the film, as he is not present very often. The home, however, suggests that both parents have modest incomes. Happy to see her father, Wadjda indicates that he had not visited their house for an entire week. Later, viewers find out that Wadjda's father is looking for a second wife, since her mother can no longer bear children. As she parts with her father, Wadjda encounters her friend Abdullah, who rides his bike to school with a group of other boys. Abdullah's teasing results in Wadjda's idea that she should challenge him in a race, and this idea prompts her desire to possess a bicycle.

Fig. 9: A toy shop in Wadjda's neighborhood offers the bicycle she discovered on her way from school.

Fig. 10: Wadjda succeeds in striking a deal with the vendor.

Wadjda's bicycle fixation meets hostility from two adult women, her mother and her school principal. Although Abdullah at first also observes that girls don't ride bicycles, he then lends Wadjda his own bicycle to practice on the roof of her building (Figure 11). Seeing how her skills improve and that she grows fond of the activity, he gives her a helmet (Figure 12). This thoughtful gift implies the boy's belief in a future for his friend's ambition. It also asserts the traditional role of the male as protector, since Abdullah himself rides without helmet. When Wadjda, in the end, wins the Quran recitation competition, but loses the money meant to buy her the desired bicycle, Abdullah offers to let her have his instead. Wadjda rejects the offer, saying that they both need bicycles for the projected race. This idea returns to this article's introductory reference to Godard, without the competitive angle. Godard uses the metaphor of two separate bicycles to emphasise the nature of his collaboration with Anne-Marie Miéville, insinuating that they work together independently. Wadjda wants her own bicycle to participate in an activity with her friend

that also grants each their independence. Until the end of the film, Abdullah and, in a way, the vendor, are the only characters supportive of Wadjda's plan.

Fig. 11: Abdullah lends Wadjda his bicycle to practice on the roof.

Fig. 12: Abdullah's gift of the helmet expresses his belief in her goal to own a bicycle, but also confirms the stereotype of the male protector.

Ms. Hessa, the rigid and potentially hypocritical school principal, favours Wadjda upon her progress with competition preparations.

She withholds, however, the prize money once Wadjda explains her anticipated use for it. "Bikes are not for girls," Ms. Hessa echoes the mother's judgment. Wadjda brings up her plan to buy a bicycle several times with her mother, mainly as she helps her in the kitchen. Once, during preparations for the Morning Prayer, the mother refers to a ruse women encountered in Europe and North America during the time Susan B. Anthony made the declaration quoted in the opening sentence of the present study. This ruse predicted a bicycle's threat to women's reproductive organs (Withers/Shea 43).

Once the father follows through with his plan to marry a second wife, Wadjda's mother changes her mind and uses the money intended for a fancy dress to woo her husband on Wadjda's dream. The closing scene shows Wadjda's race with Abdullah. The final shot, as Ciecko suggests, shows "the girl looking out toward an off-screen horizon, suggesting potential openness" (Ciecko 241; Figure 13). An extreme long shot leading up to this future outlook emphasizes the distance Wadjda is able to achieve because of the newly gained mobility (Figure 14). The openness of this scene contrasts with women's confinement in their private spheres, for example inside the home or the school. Wadjda's mother refuses to work, like her friend, at a nearby hospital because the job would place her in what she considers an off-limit public sphere. The school principal asks her students to move indoors when they are in danger to be seen by workers on a neighbouring roof. Al Mansour herself had to work from within a van during the filming on location (Ciecko 240). The on-location settings, along with nonprofessional leads, underline both films' debt to *Bicycle Thieves*.

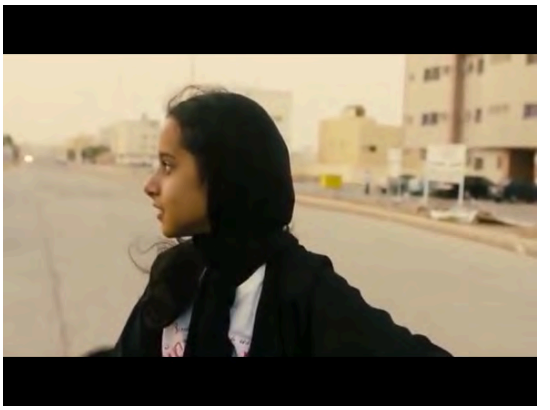

Fig. 13: The film ends with Wadjda looking off-screen to welcome discoveries her new mobility affords.

Fig. 14: This extreme long shot underlines Wadjda's final achievement to own a bicycle and to challenge her friend to the anticipated race.

On-location filming depends on filming permits in the Gulf countries. It thus stipulates an acceptance of given production codes. The decision to film on location, then, emphasizes Al Mansour's aim to touch viewers "on a very basic level" (Garcia). The film never pretended to function as "revolutionary art," which Al Haydar mistak-

enly presupposes. Studied carefully, however, *Wadjda* does, as Dale Hudson and Patricia Zimmermann put it, "negotiate the complexities of indirect dissent" (Hudson/Zimmermann 157). It also contributes to the slowly growing category of accessible movies made by women. In "The Confidence Game," Ruby Rich writes that "the mysterious absence of women in the directorial ranks continues to this day" (Rich 160). Directors such as Caro and Al Mansour may inspire more women filmmakers to change this situation, much like their protagonists assert their positions in the respective films.

THE LIBERATING EFFECT OF BICYCLES

> Das Leben ist wie ein Fahrrad. Man muss sich vorwärts bewegen, um das Gleichgewicht nicht zu verlieren. (Einstein)[4]

De Sica's main character in *Bicycle Thieves* depends on a bicycle to maintain his job. His wife makes an enormous sacrifice that allows him to purchase the essential tool of transportation in the post-World-War-II Italian recession. Her sacrifice during the prevailing and dire economic conditions of the moment redoubles the pain of the tragic theft of the bicycle during his first day on the job. *Bicycle Thieves* thus presents an extreme example of an on-screen bicycle whose possession literally liberates a family from their poverty, even if that liberation lasts for less than a day. In contrast, Caro's *Whale Rider* pays no attention to the possession of a bicycle. Grandfather Koro's bicycle is not even a central prop, yet its use makes a crucial statement about Paikea's acceptance of her own potential. While the shared bicycle rides signal the bond between Koro and his granddaughter (Figure 1) and draw the viewer's attention to the landscape the pair traverses, Paikea's independent ride finally reveals her ambition. Not only does she ride on her own the last time the bicycle appears in *Whale Rider*, Paikea peddles fast enough in this scene to pass the school bus (Figure 6).

Unlike *Whale Rider*, Al Mansour's *Wadjda* hearkens back at the question of possession pursued in *Bicycle Thieves*, but instead of the pattern of gain and loss created by De Sica, *Wadjda* builds up to the long-desired purchase that seals the semi-happy end of the story.

While the bicycle provokes the son to witness the father's humiliation in *Bicycle Thieves*, it strengthens the ties between daughter and mother in *Wadjda*. Both *Whale Rider* and *Wadjda* share the neorealist characteristics of on-location filming and reliance on nonprofessional actors. Additionally, *Whale Rider* includes elements of magic realism as a result of its source in Ihimaera's novel. Both Caro and Al Mansour employ the bicycle as a symbol for liberation. It symbolizes Paikea's as well as Wadjda's struggle to assert themselves in their tribal communities, Māori and Saudi respectively. It may further symbolize the assertion of two women filmmakers in a global industry. The two films discussed here mark beginnings of Caro's as well as Al Mansour's careers. Both films are, to use Ciecko's words, "culturally specific and globally appealing" (Ciecko 241) cinematic artefacts. They introduced their directors into a canon of world cinema, even if subsequent films did not consistently measure up to this early achievement.

The work of both Caro and Al Mansour could provide material for future books such as White's *Women's Cinema, World Cinema*. White underlines the importance of a global network for women filmmakers (White 4). Examining Kathryn Bigelow's success alongside directorial work by women in independent industries across the globe, White outlines a hopeful development during the current century. "Women filmmakers from all over," she states, "are navigating institutional politics and making films that have a chance to travel and be seen" (4-5). Such exposure is crucial for films such as *Whale Rider* and *Wadjda* to participate in the transcultural support network in question. Positive role models may help emerging women filmmakers out of the "confidence game" trap referred to by Rich. Much like the mother's move to solidarity in the closure of *Wadjda* allows for her daughter's success, a large number of female predecessors have contributed to conditions that are more favourable for younger women filmmakers today. White lists important examples, such as Tunisian Moufida Tlatli and Algerian Yamina Benguigui, who took on roles in public politics in addition to their creative endeavours (5).

Al Mansour, likewise, joined Saudi Arabia's new board of the General Authority for Culture, and she returned to a Saudi setting in her new film *The Perfect Candidate*. Since *Wadjda*, Al Mansour directed the

historical fiction film *Mary Shelley*, "with confidence if little recognizable presence" (White, "Gender Matters"), and the Netflix adaptation of Trisha R. Thomas' *Nappily Ever After* (2018). With her premiere of *The Perfect Candidate*, the story of a young female Saudi physician, she was one of only two competing women filmmakers in the 2019 Venice Festival, a sign that the so-called celluloid ceiling is still a serious obstacle, and that the 50:50 by 2020 festival pledge is not equally successful everywhere. This pledge is not limited to the position of film director, but concerns many other activities pertaining to the production and distribution of movies.

The absence of female directors in the Venice competition does not relate to a lack of production, as Kate Erbland emphasizes in "Venice Film Festival's Women Director Problem: Gender Parity Shouldn't Be That Hard." The Toronto Festival, which takes place shortly after the event in Venice, provides the strongest contrast. A few years ago, White already commended the Canadian platform ("Gender Matters"). During the year White published the respective essay, Al Mansour participated at TIFF with *Mary Shelley*. Earlier that year, Caro's adaptation of Diane Ackerman's *Zookeeper's Wife* won a Heartland film award. For both Caro and Al Mansour, the projects following the two films studied here never achieved a comparable success. They have, nevertheless, provided each of the two women filmmakers with unique opportunities to discover material, experiment with diverse filming conditions, explore new collaborations, and continue to be part of what has come to be called a "cinefeminist" movement.

The release of *Whale Rider* and *Wadjda* occurred in two very different cultural contexts, Māori and Saudi respectively. The present comparative study has shown that viewing the two films alongside each other makes clear the symbolic use of bicycles as vehicles for liberation. The aim here has been to contribute to the kind of transcultural network that Patricia White identifies as vital to the improvement of conditions for women filmmakers worldwide. Jeremy Withers and Daniel P. Shea point out that a bicycle's "association with freedom, mobility, and the liberating promise of modernity was secured during its rise to mass popularity following the appearance of the safety bicycle" (Withers/Shea 2). This basic tool of transportation is, however, not equally accessible to everyone across the globe, as cy-

cling women, for example in Pakistan (Imtiaz), testify. A comparative study of the two 21st-century features by women filmmakers gives *Whale Rider* and *Wadjda* a feminist perspective on the neorealist tradition established by De Sica's *Bicycle Thieves*, even if the socio-economic circumstances in the specific settings are very different.

Mother and daughter are close yet divided over individual goals in Haifaa Al Mansour's film. In the end, the mother gives Wadjda the desired bicycle despite her initial opposition to the plan. Niki Caro's portrait of the conflict between grandfather and granddaughter adds a generation layer to the theme of parental choices. Both movies master on-location filming, Caro's in Whangara, Al Mansour's in Riyadh, though the latter's focus on a suburban neighbourhood resembles the former's spatial confinement. Both films work with non-professionals to tell stories of strong girl characters who assert themselves in their respective tribal communities, the pressures of which are more pronounced in the Māori setting. The fact that bicycles symbolize this process of a girl's coming of age in each of the two films leads to a reading of this liberating symbol on a meta-level in a global filmmaking community. The more and the more diverse role models there are in various industries across the world, the easier it will become for women to opt for a career as filmmaker.

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IMAGE CREDITS

Figures 1-6: screenshots from *Whale Rider*

Figures 7-14: screenshots from *Wadjda*

NOTES

1. Both Caro and Al Mansour were scheduled to participate in the recent *Power of Inclusion Summit* in New Zealand, according to the blog *Women and Hollywood* (https://womenandhollywood.com/niki-caro-haifaa-al-mansour-and-more-to-attend-new-zealands-power-of-inclu-

sion-summit/), though only Caro seems to have been present in the end.

2. Womenandhollywood.com provides shocking statistics of women's participation in the Hollywood industry. The controversy over Natalie Portman's cape at the 2020 Academy Awards ceremony gives additional insight into current positions regarding this matter.

3. See for instance, Anne Ciecko's study of the film's reliance on Italian neorealism in "Bicycle Borrowers after Neorealism: Global Nou-velo Cinema."

4. See Elmar Schenkel's *Vom Rausch der Reise* (On the ecstasy of travel; 41): "Life is like a bicycle. One needs to move forward to not lose one's balance."

BEING FROM A BAD NEIGHBOURHOOD: CONFRONTING BAD DECISION DISCOURSES IN THE IMPOVERISHED INNER CITY

LAURA BISAILLON, MEHDIA HASSAN, MARYAM HASSAN

***Abstract**: This article confronts mainstream discourses about poverty and inner city poor neighbourhoods. It argues that the ways that poverty and poor inner city neighbourhoods are made publicly known in writing and through visual representations present problems such as overpowering structural causes of health and illness, reifying false dichotomy of us and them, and normalizing people living in poverty or working poor people as de facto vulnerable. This can happen when the social relations that govern poverty and sustain human suffering eschew the social relations that produce these experiences. Taking these relations as the objects of analysis, this article focuses sociologically on the Dundas/Sherbourne neighbourhood in Toronto, Canada, as the terrain of inquiry. The aim here is to contribute to analyses of the political, social, and economic determinants of health as well as to critiques of bad-neighbourhood and bad decision discourses. To do this, it*

***Résumé** : Cet article conteste les discours populaires sur la pauvreté et les quartiers défavorisés. Il estime que la manière dont la pauvreté et les quartiers désavantagés sont rendus publics par écrit et dans les représentations visuelles est problématique car ces perspectives font disparaitre les déterminants structuraux de la santé et de la maladie, renforcent l'altérité et normalisent les personnes défavorisées comme étant vulnérables. C'est notamment le cas lorsque les relations sociales qui régissent la pauvreté et entretiennent la souffrance humaine sont laissées de côté. En prenant ces relations comme l'objet d'analyse, cet article se concentre, d'un point de vue sociologique, sur le quartier Dundas/Sherbourne à Toronto au Canada comme terrain d'enquête. L'objectif est d'apporter notre contribution aux analyses des déterminants politiques, sociaux et économiques de la santé et aussi aux critiques des axes de réflexion du style mauvaise décision et mauvais quartier. Pour ce faire, l'article relie la pratique visuelle à l'analyse sociale critique :*

bridges visual practice with critical social analysis: drawing together the authors' individual practices as visual artists, marshalling their social positions as residents of the adjacent St. James Town neighbourhood, and sharing their experiences of the Dundas/Sherbourne area. They employ insights from sensory ethnography and street photography to offer an alternative source of knowledge about the poor inner city that contrasts and contests mainstream ways of knowing these same spaces.

en unissant les pratiques individuelles de ses auteures en tant qu'artistes visuelles, en mettant à profit les positions sociales de ces dernières en tant que résidentes du quartier voisin de St James Town et en partageant les expériences de la vie du quartier Dundas/Sherbourne de ses auteures. L'analyse s'est constituée à l'aide de l'ethnographie des senses et de photographies de rue, et offre une source de connaissance alternative sur les quartiers défavorisés qui contraste et qui conteste les manières traditionnelles de connaitre ces mêmes espaces.

> *Nobody should get eulogistic over a slum.*
> *Hugh Garner (1968)*
>
> *Our federal housing program…was destroyed in 1993. Imagine if that happened to Medicare. Since the demise of our housing program, there have been only piecemeal, sparsely funded, and minimalist programs.*
> *Cathy Crowe (2007)*

As geographer Nicholas Blomley (2004) has shown, the poor inner city of large contemporary cities is a profoundly political space. This point is made clear in how we think, talk, and write about poor inner cities, past and present. Novelist Gabrielle Roy (1945) and playwright Michel Tremblay (1978) wrote extensively about north-south and east-west spatial divides, respectively, in poor inner city neighbourhoods of Montreal. As chroniclers of French-Canadian working-class society in the first half of the twentieth century, their bodies of work document neighbourhood segregation along economic (and religious and linguistic) lines from the perspectives of those living on the so-called wrong side of the tracks. While the protagonists in Roy's and Tremblay's tales might frequent wealthy boroughs, serving as maids, drivers or deliverymen, they do so self-consciously and with discomfort; they respond to being aware of the social gaze upon them, which feels uncomfortable; they react

to being frustrated by how their society is organized, such that they are positioned to be impoverished from one generation to the next.

About these real, albeit opaque, divides or boundaries, author Curt Moreck wrote, "Every city has an official and an unofficial side, and it is superfluous to add that the latter is more interesting and more informative of the essence of a city" (in Whyte and Frisby 2012 540). Writing about Berlin in the 1930s, Moreck was juxtaposing a thriving, underground, same-sex scene with what he problematized as a constricting, mainstream, and hetero-normative German society. By intermingling geographic and social tensions, then, we initiate a productive inquiry into how minority and majority dwellers know the same city differently.

Social researchers emerging from poor inner city neighbourhoods have taken scholarly steps to nuance, correct, and contest popular discourses about the places they know well. Novelist Kathy Dobson (2011, 2018) was born and grew up in Pointe St-Charles, Montreal, during the 1960s and 1970s. In her debut novel *With a Closed Fist* she shows what it looked and felt like to be raised in a family that struggled to meet its basic material needs in what was, at the time, one of the city's poorest neighbourhoods. In the sequel, *Punching and Kicking*, the workings of poverty and their consequences roll out during her adolescence. Using the situations of her life and those of her fellow community members as analytic fodder, she demonstrates convincingly that poor people are not poor by choice. Her argument that poor people's chances of emerging and recovering from poverty and its assaults are only possible through social, economic, and political investments organized in their subjective best interests has long been demonstrated by the social determinants of health literature (Raphael 2016).

In *The Stickup Kids*, sociologist Randol Contreras (2013) describes life for drug thieves, many of them his friends, who robbed higher-level drug dealers throughout the late 1990s in the South Bronx, New York City, where his single immigrant mother raised him. In rich and detailed ethnographic form, he reveals the interconnections between drug trading, human suffering, and social relations responsible for producing and sustaining people's violent and self-destructive prac-

tices in the first place. In showing how the dots connect between the drug industry 'up there' and the chaos on the streets and inside the dwellings he knows well 'down here', he destabilizes ideas about the poor inner city being anything *but* produced by market activities well beyond its borders. Researching and storytelling from places within the social margins, as these examples do, make it possible to first document and then furnish empirically supported critique, which can, in turn, serve as an alternative to status quo thinking about what organizes and supports poverty, suffering, and violence in the poor inner city.

There are various provocative experiments with visual fieldwork practice and social analysis where disjuncture or contradiction provides the launching point for social investigation. In her 2015 experimental short film entitled *El Immigrant*, art historian Lina El Shamy explores the loss of one's mother tongue after settling in a new country. By focusing on experiences of loss, her auto-ethnographic analysis carefully and bravely shows how emigrating can produce long-lasting remorse. She identifies various tensions that stem from her family's immigration to Canada, discussing how these emerged as responses to the organization of social and institutional life in their new society. As she writes, "identity is not just an abstract, internalized feeling; it is a lived, material reality: the languages our tongues (are allowed to) speak, the professions we (are allowed to) practice, and the alienation resulting from the physical and linguistic distances created by generations" (in Bisaillon et al. 2019 1031). Her intervention corrects popular misconceptions that immigration only ushers in opportunities for people. These perspectives are too often nestled within claims that newcomers should be grateful to adopted states for hosting them in the first place.

Within anthropology, Dara Culhane (2017) encourages paying attention to our ways of sensing the world around us. Using what she calls "sensory ethnography" (46), and building outward from people's embodied experience, she produces new knowledge to challenge mainstream discourse about what it is like to be colonized, and what it is like to resist colonialism. Starting from social dissonance, and tracking sensory responses to it, carries the promise of showing how power and politics—as social relations rather than as conceptual cate-

gories divorced from embodied experience—pervade and shape daily life. This impetus takes anthropologist Setha Low's (1996) invitation to social researchers: engage with the city across seasons and times of day, treating it as a dynamic and living text that we subject to multiple interpretations.

Through this article, we build on the preceding issues and strategies to enrich an examination of the social relations and geographies of poverty in Dundas/Sherbourne, a neighbourhood in the poor inner city of Toronto, Canada's largest city. Our approach involves using visual and social inquiry as valuable and equal parts of a same whole, and there is an assemblage of thirty images. The analysis proffered makes productive use of ethnography as both a mode of social inquiry and engagement and as narrative for communicating results. This article is organized into three principal parts, and the reader will hear each of us taking turns discussing the poor inner city from our standpoints and personal interactions with this space. We conclude by voicing a paradox that is as obvious as it is troubling in contemporary Toronto.

BRIDGING VISUAL PRACTICE WITH SOCIAL ANALYSIS: SYMPTOMS OF ILLS RATHER THAN THEIR CAUSES

In analyzing how what happens there is coordinated by and hooked into larger fields of interest and politics, we argue that the ways that poverty and poor inner city neighbourhoods are made publicly known, in writing and through visual representations, present problems such as overpowering structural causes of health and illness, reifying a false dichotomy between us and them, and normalizing people living in poverty or working poor people as de facto vulnerable. This article draws on anthropological research findings from the 1990s to today in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, more commonly known by its shorthand, and hereafter referred to, as DTES. In what follows, we reveal that this latter neighbourhood is more similar than dissimilar to the Dundas/Sherbourne area. We have taken care to bring sensitivity to how we reflect on, and what we are able to say about, the impoverished inner city and its inhabitants. In this way, we raise conceptual questions in parallel with practical

questions. This inquiry stems from the materially observable conditions we encountered first-hand using sensory ethnography to engage with Toronto's poor inner city.

What does our terrain of focus resemble spatially and socially? The Dundas/Sherbourne area is not its own administrative jurisdiction within the City of Toronto, but rather comprises a small grid of a few compact city blocks. It gets its name from the intersection of Dundas Street East, running east-west, and Sherbourne Street, running north-south. This intersection is a hub for daytime and nighttime activities of both legal and criminalized kinds (figure 1). The streets that approximately delineate this neighbourhood are Gerrard in the north, Seaton in the east, and Queen and George in the south and west, respectively. While the Toronto Police Service's 51 Division has come to closely police this area, which has higher than City averages of criminality and criminalizing, these are recent practices rather than longstanding patterns. Western European settlement in this "Old Toronto" area dates back to the 1850s, and the wealthy and the poor have co-existed here continuously since that time (figure 2). Within its boundaries is Moss Park: a three-tower public housing project complex built in the 1960s—sprawling in both height and footprint—, which provides stable and affordable housing to residents who are visible minority, second-generation immigrants, for the most part (City of Toronto 2018a). For the area's most impoverished, there is housing in the form of rooming houses and shelters. Collectively, this housing stock is in very poor condition and at threshold- or over-capacity in terms of vacancy. Interspersed throughout this area are low-rise housing cooperatives, occupied and vacant nineteenth-century detached homes, and attached early-twentieth-century and more contemporary new-looking vintage brownstones. Together, these places and spaces compose Canada's most densely populated neighbourhoods. From Dundas/Sherbourne, and into and beyond St. James Town, is Sherbourne Street, which ends in Rosedale. The latter area has long been the City of Toronto's most affluent neighbourhood; forty percent of residents are descendants of Western Europe, with lineage traceable specifically to the United Kingdom (City of Toronto 2018b). Unlike the areas to its immediate south, this area has remained stable in the midst of dramatic

patterns of income inequality, impoverishment, and urban transformation through gentrification, which have marked the City deeply since the 1970s (Hulchanski 2010).

VISUALIZING SHERBOURNE AND DUNDAS

Fig. 1: Intersecting at Sherbourne/Dundas

Fig. 2: Situating Sherbourne/Dundas and St. James Town

As a social scientist and university professor, I (Laura) strive to offer my undergraduate students studying health and life sciences the occasion to explore Toronto's poor, inner city first-hand. Generally, my students aspire to work in government or in the health or caring professions. Some past students have gone on to study public health, nursing, teaching, social justice, and law. As we know, caring work is never just about caring. I decided to bring students to the Dundas/Sherbourne area. The aim of this pedagogical intervention was to have them learn to develop capacities for deciphering and discussing the relationships between people's individual troubles and the problems with how society is organized in such a way that people experience the troubles they do, and from there, to encourage them to understand that social problems need to be addressed, and their symptoms resolved, through societal responses. A priority was to create conditions that set students up to be able to knowledgeably challenge status quo thinking about the impoverished inner city and its people. I saw this as carrying valuable short-term benefit: getting them started with the sort of thinking that would be necessary in their imagined professional futures, in which they need to practice collective concern for impoverished people in the inner city and elsewhere. The sorts of employment these students aspire to are interventionist by aim, design, and effect. The spring-into-action and must-fix-it/fix-people impulse, as the organizing logic of training across the health sciences, has been problematized and critiqued by physicians themselves for how it gives rise to professional practices that suppress other forms of response, including listening and attending to others as valuable forms of action (Mukhopadhyay 2016). A pedagogical experiment steering students firmly to develop first-hand experience and conceptual resources by training them to see the political and social organizers of poor inner city poverty and suffering was valuable.

I was faced with a dilemma that I took seriously, given the gravity of the ill health, suffering, and disrepair that we see in the Dundas/Sherbourne neighbourhood. How to cultivate thoughtful, scholarly practices that usher in possibilities for making deeper-level sense of things we see at the surface? How to do the more complex analytic move of pathologizing the social rather than the individual? In the words of the protagonist in Hugh Garner's Depression-era novel *Cab-*

bagetown (1968), set in a neighbourhood adjacent to Dundas/Sherbourne today called Regent Park: "nobody should get eulogistic over a slum" (1968 vii-viii). Indeed, we should likewise not extol the concomitant unemployment, uncertainty, demoralization, dispossession, suffering, and poverty-induced illnesses that people can experience in these contexts.

This article should thus also be understood as an extension of a scholarly partnership between a professor and experienced social researcher with her mentees, who are at once fledgling researchers and sisters. In an earlier publication, the three of us troubled the waters of a disjuncture we detected in how St. James Town is made publicly known in writing and through visual representations, on the one hand, juxtaposed with our experiential knowledge of this place as people who live there, on the other (Bisaillon, Hassan and Hassan 2017). Specifically, focusing on the social production of bad neighbourhood discourses, we produced an evidentiary base to support our claim that our home community is, in many ways, a desirable place to live (El Mugammar 2017). These twin projects share a concern about the sorts of visibility, hyper-visibility, and invisibility that the poor inner city and its people garner in popular discourse. Lines of inquiry such as these humanize the knowledge production process. They also compel us to do a reflexive double take—to think more critically about the way that our thinking is socially organized such that we come to know about the often chronically trying circumstances in which people in St. James Town, Dundas/Sherbourne, and neighbourhoods like them actually live.

Finally, in contemplating how power and politics shape what happens in the poor inner city, our research trio considered the discursive organization of our own thinking practices as researchers and residents. Theoretically, we exercised our sociological imaginations (Mills 1959, 2000) and through feminist eyes, conceived of our "everyday world as problematic" such that we set out to investigate the social production and organization of inequities as we experience and observe them (Smith 1987: 105). We also took seriously the call for sociologists to engage in frontal fashion with social suffering and secondary forms of violence (Auyero 2010, Proudfoot 2019); documenting "those less well-marked forms of domination—both on the

side of those who exercise power and those who experience it" (Harvey 2012 528) with social suffering and secondary violence. These theorized ways of studying the social invite complexity and reflexivity, promote learning and discovery, and, in our project, meant that we actively aimed to resist the temptation to steer toward simplistic interpretations about the poor inner city. After all, people there (here) are our neighbours, friends, and families. The three of us are aware that social imbalances and policy choices can produce and reproduce inequities that hit poor inner-city people particularly hard. Translating this theoretical statement into practice, we (Maryam and Mehdia) are aware of the relationship between disinvestment in social housing by federal and Ontario governments beginning in the late 1980s and our decaying and poorly maintained high rise, run by the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (figure 3). Urban planner David Hulchanski's (2010) foundational report *Three Cities within Toronto* documented the deep income polarization and its effects between 1970 and 2005 in the Greater Toronto Area. Troublingly, these patterns have continued, and their effects deepened. In other words, the convergence of policy and practice means that the social problems in St. James Town and Dundas/Sherbourne must be understood as symptoms of ills rather than their causes.

Our goal is to contribute through this article to ongoing debates and social analyses of the political, social, and economic determinants of health as well as to critiques of bad-neighbourhood and bad-decision lines of thinking. This is because we understand these discourses as harmful because they individualize social problems while distracting us from the possibility of being able to see the root causes of human dislocation. We have set out to bridge visual practice and social inquiry, and as such, we have combined our own work in photography and mixed media, which we created for the purpose of this article, with publically available texts (such as photographs and maps). We hope to evoke the ways in which political, social, and economic determinants of health press down bluntly on the poor inner city, and the Dundas/Sherbourne area specifically. We have tethered our individual practices as visual artists, experienced this neighbourhood firsthand, and marshalled our everyday knowledge as residents of an adjacent neighbourhood.

Narratively, this article is written in a dialogical format. Each of our voices is audible and present: at times together, at times separately. Methodologically, our fieldwork took place over a one-year period. We experienced the Dundas/Sherbourne area in spring, summer, fall, and winter. This was beneficial for a project such as this one: "hanging out and about" and slowing down to 'be' rather than 'do' offers opportunities to see, hear, smell, touch, and taste the features and events of a place (Woodward 2008 5). We used our senses in all of these ways. This lengthy gestation period was purposeful. First, personal meetings were opportunities to mature ideas iteratively and reflexively. We committed to developing lines of narrative and visual analyses to situate the neighbourhood culturally, geographically, and historically, both internally and beyond itself. Second, we walked the area, together and separately. In observing and listening to people we met, we were drawn, during repeat visits, to using 35 mm Canon digital cameras to practice street photography; a genre through which attention is turned towards minutiae and perhaps otherwise overlooked features of social life (Hunt 2014). We ask that our readers interpret the visuals in specific ways. First, by considering deliberate absences. For example, we drew from the public record to use frontal photographs that we knew were taken to humanize poor inner city people and their life circumstances; a choice informed by the documented harms of frontals of the mug shot sort on racialized (non-white) persons in Canada (Hastings et al 2020; Mykhalovskiy et al 2020). Second, and by extension, by considering that photographs are active producers, organizers, and coordinators of the social. In this way, readers should attend to how we have assembled the images and in parallel, how they themselves are "activating" the people, places, and politics displayed (McCoy 1995 181). Through these explicit ontological and epistemological moves, we have aimed to nuance and critique bad-neighbourhood and bad-decision discourses about the Dundas/Sherbourne area.

HISTORICIZING THE POOR INNER CITY: EMBEDDED IN OVERLAPPING GLOBAL ECONOMIES

We chose bad-decision discourses as the analytic entry point into this social inquiry because these words commonly circulate in the poor inner city. People we met in the Dundas/Sherbourne neighbourhood used this language when talking about themselves. Still others we did not meet but saw on television used this same turn of phrase (figure 4) (CityNews Toronto 2014). As we would come to learn, inner city poor people in this neighbourhood, and others like it, can be heard to talk this way because, as their logic goes, they are indeed individually culpable for being poor, for living in subsidized housing, for using drugs, for managing or recovering from addictions, and so on.

The ways the inner city poor can talk about themselves, within a framework of culpability, is not surprising given the documented effects of neoliberalism. This type of social organization articulates human worth to be under market priorities; commercial gain is its central preoccupation. Since neoliberalism has evolved to be the dominant cultural-economic practice globally, such priorities have in turn shaped how we relate to others and ourselves. This phenomenon becomes especially problematic for people who need collective-level supports, since this paradigm produces intolerance towards people who are not, or possibly are not able to be, autonomous (Elliott 2014, 2019; Kingfisher 2001; Spooner 2018). This bind underscores an important irony: though neoliberal thinkers would deny it, at some point in our lives we will all, without question, need public support of some kind or another. Over the last fifty years, neoliberal organizing shifted "responsibility from the state to individuals, families, and communities, [and in] the inner city space, individuals who are unable to care for themselves…end up abandoned by all" (Elliott 2010: 191). What these effects have looked like, and what they have meant and felt like, for Ontarians who are poor, who are publically assisted, and who live with HIV infection, have been well documented (Bresalier et al 2002; Neysmith, Bezanson and O'Connell 2005; Vaillancourt 2010). Critically, the muscularity and ubiquity of this frame of reference, the practices to which it has given rise for the last five

decades, and their effects drastically limit our abilities to be able to grasp, and step outside of it, and we are including scholars, activists and everyday citizens, everyone we know and will come to know.

MAKING "BAD DECISIONS"

Fig. 3: Doug (Ford) in City Hall

Fig. 4: John (Doe) in George Street

Since 2005, anthropologist Denielle Elliott (2010) has examined how public policy related to health and illness is enacted in Vancouver's DTES. Her ethnographic work critiques the relationships between social marginality and governance in the poor inner city. She describes this neighbourhood in British Columbia's most populous city as a five-block by four-block place of "unimaginable poverty, hunger, suffering, and dispossession" (182). The lived experience of impoverishment and neglect that Elliott describes in Vancouver's DTES could also apply to Toronto's Dundas/Sherbourne area, even though that would be collapsing each location's unique historical particularity in terms of development, class struggle, and the ongoing settler-colonial occupation of Indigenous lands. The Dundas/Sherbourne neighbourhood is located on the traditional territory of the Anishnabeg, Chippewa, Haudenosaunee, Mississaugas of the Credit, and Wendat peoples. Some of these nations were signatories to the Toronto Purchase Treaty 13 in 1805, which saw their lands ceded to the British regime. In Vancouver as in Toronto in these areas, we come face-to-face with deeply marginalized people whose social suffering is legible on their bodies. More specifically, Elliott writes that

> ...the displaced, unskilled working-class men, new refugees fleeing violence and poverty from other homelands, the deinstitutionalized mentally ill, First Nations representing communities from across Canada... [these areas are] characterized by unsanitary and unsafe housing, homelessness, and the spread of infectious diseases like tuberculosis and hepatitis...combined with the effects of modern illicit pharmaceuticals like crack cocaine and 'crystal meth' and an intensity of injection drug use, AIDS is a devastating visible marker on the lives of inner city residents... [these spaces have been] transformed...by the ways in which capitalism has rooted itself in the community—where everything is for sale (2010, 182).

In this passage, we learn that among the deeply marginalized people in Vancouver's inner city are Indigenous people, who also happen to be overrepresented there. Though the lands in question are in the territories of the Tsleil-Waututh and Squamish peoples, in the DTES there are Indigenous people from many places. The presence of First

Nations and also Inuit and Métis people in these areas in Vancouver and Toronto tethers them to rural and reserve communities well beyond their borders. In turn, this connects the neighbourhoods with colonial governing strategies that led to social and physical appropriations, displacements, and dislocations across Canada. That there are very serious and persistent intergenerational effects of these historical, political, and economic arrangements, which directly shape Indigenous people's lives today, has been well established (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015).

As well as, or maybe because of, being gathering places for Indigenous and other dispossessed peoples in the city, these neighbourhoods are hotbeds of political activity. During the last quarter of the twentieth century and the first two decades of the twenty-first century, both Toronto's and Vancouver's poor inner cities have been shaped by the politics of left-leaning communities. Organizing around labour, housing, and antipoverty issues, such work is informed by local histories of working-class and feminist political mobilizing. In both places, social and health services' agencies operate in great concentration and with vigorous intensity. Offering "housing, food, health care, advocacy, and support, among other services", these groups are a combination of state-run, state-sponsored, grassroots, and Christian (historically, for the most part, but as of late, not entirely) humanitarian agencies (Elliott 2010 184) (figures 5 and 6). Recently, a poisoned drug supply has produced a lot of suffering and many deaths in Dundas/Sherbourne, which has the second-highest number of calls to 911 for overdose and sites offering overdose prevention, supervised injection and consumption in the City of Toronto (Street Health 2019). "The scale of grief and loss is terrible" (Kolla in Singer 2019).

EXPERIENCING OTHERS' RELIGIOSITY

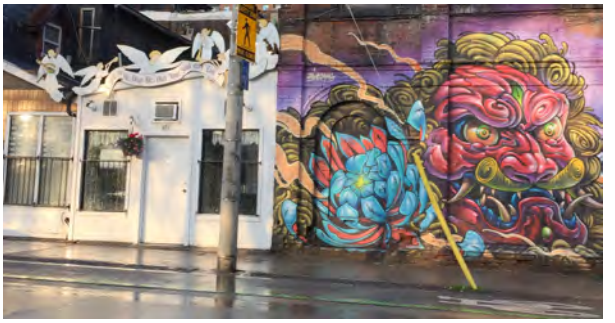

Fig. 5: Christian Charity

Fig. 6: Sikh Charity

The presence of these social and health agencies and their collaborations with each other hitch what happens in the Dundas/Sherbourne area to municipal, provincial, national, and global politics, practices, and priorities. By day as by night, we find a wide cast of characters intermingling: sex workers, people who use recently legalized and illegal drugs, real estate agents, police officers in plain and uniformed clothing, social workers, medical practitioners, academic and clinical researchers, members of city hall, land developers, frontline care workers, peer support workers, and others. All of these actors have some sort of social and economic stake in the Dundas/Sherbourne community. In sum, an orientation towards Canada's poor inner cities through the lens of these issues and intersections compels us to see how these spaces are very much "embedded in multiple and powerful overlapping global economies—prostitution, welfare provision, illicit drugs, and research" (Elliott 2010 182).

Furthermore, the Dundas/Sherbourne neighbourhood and others like it in Toronto's poor inner city, including St. James Town, have become contiguous, all-season construction sites. We residents seem to have almost normalized cranes and diggers, drills and dumpsters, debris and mud, noise and dust, and traffic pylons and for sale signs that populate our inner-city landscape (figure 7). On the other hand, we have little choice *but* to compete with these effects and vie for space along sidewalks, adapting to the heavy infrastructure works that have steadily increased in number and also intensified in activity over the last five years (figure 8). When we walk through the streets of Dundas/Sherbourne, we see a residential housing stock and an urban form in complete and utter transformation, resulting from the pressures associated with gentrification. Condominiums are replacing shelters and rooming houses. Costlier cafeterias are supplanting cheaper eateries (figure 9). These pressures are the latest iterations of longer historical patterns in this area, and the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty notes that

> Gentrification, which began in the 1960s, has intensified over the last fifteen years. Working class people and the unemployed, who have been welcomed in Downtown East Toronto since the mid-1850s, are now being displaced by large developers speculating and buying property in the neighbour-

hood...the corner of Dundas and Sherbourne remains one of the most important parts of our neighbourhood...the poor have a long history of fighting for housing at the Dundas and Sherbourne area. In the 1970s, the City of Toronto was facing a crisis as more and more rooming houses were disappearing...more than forty rooming houses were [...] bought by the city in the late 1970s, after poor people fought back against speculators buying up rooming houses during St. James Town redevelopment (OCAP 2018)

TRANSFORMING NON-STOP

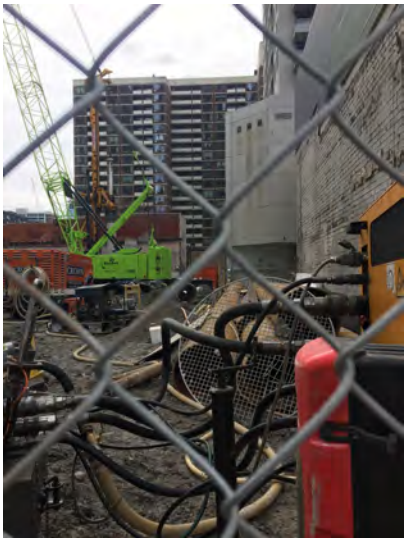

Fig. 7: Our Backyards

Fig. 8: Our Homes

Fig. 9: Our Shelters

The situation described above is arguably most troubling (because most tangible) for persons who can least afford to have subsidized housing units disappear through demolition or conversion into luxury condominiums. Seaton House, on George Street in the Dundas/Sherbourne area, for example, is a drug treatment facility and men's shelter that is home to about six hundred (figure 10). Colloquially, this institution is more commonly known by its nickname: Satan House. Seaton House is home to men, many of whom have lived there for upwards of ten years, it is their community (figure 11). As the neighbourhood 'revitalizes', Seaton House is expected to close. Walking along this street is uncomfortable, disturbing, and frustrating in the extreme. Here we see people manipulating crack pipes; collapsing century-old homes, torched and hollowed out; undercover police in unmarked patrol cars; hardly an idle pedestrian; men and women crouched on the pavement, organizing sacks of drugs among

themselves; and people in torn clothes, with eyes the size of dinner plates, rambling around talking to themselves. Here, we find a collision of policy, governance, financial speculation, and everyday life. It would seem that people have accepted that the neighbourhood is this way. The colloquial name says it all.

In the late 1990s, I (Laura) visited Vancouver's Japantown (*Paauerugai*), just north of the city's DTES. This visit was where I first saw people smoking crack. I remember seeing a woman crawling around the sidewalk, apparently searching out small bits of something or other that I could not imagine were to be found wedged into the recesses of concrete she was fixated on. Years later, when I moved into Toronto's poor inner city, I again saw people using crack on George Street. Here, women and men, poised on all fours, were creeping along the asphalt in search of resin, just like the woman in Vancouver's Japantown. There is something drastically wrong with our way of organizing and redistributing resources, not to mention our valuing human life, when we see people flopped out on the sidewalk, within view of a newly sold million-dollar home, whose For Sale sign, like a beacon, announces to the passerby that the structure was "sold over asking": a telling signal about the realtor's or buyer's indebtedness, which in turn demonstrates how the person is wedded to Canadian banking and insurance interests.

Like the streets to its north, east, south, and west, George Street is the focus of intense private sector land speculation. Since disinvestment from social housing at the federal and Ontario provincial levels began in the 1980s, coupled with the total absence of rent control mechanisms limiting the private real estate market in Toronto, land-use decisions, practices and trends will continue to press down most harshly on the inner-city poor. Latest reports indicate that men who dwell in Seaton House might be re-housed into a series of smaller shelters throughout Toronto (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation 2019). The three of us wonder where they will be dispersed, where they will live, and what will happen to them.

OBSERVING GEORGE STREET

Fig. 10: Sheltered until when?

Fig. 11: Valuable to whom?

EXPERIENCING THE POOR INNER CITY: "THE LAW IS A KEY SOCIAL RELATION"

We all imagine what poor inner city neighbourhoods *are* and are *about* when we make decisions about how to interact with them. How do we circulate through them: foot or car; frequent or avoid; speak to people or not? All of these experiences inform what we know about the poor inner city; they also shape how we know it. In the case of Dundas/Sherbourne, which is neither an easy nor a beautiful place, I (Laura) wanted to design a pedagogical experiment that could help students develop lines of questioning to explore the social organization of the inner city through which they could humanize ways of thinking about the people and situations there. I wanted to subvert the extremes of fairy tale or horror story narratives about this neighbourhood by having students consider who lives in the poor inner city, and what their lives there are like. What time of day or night do people work, if they are able to work, and indeed, if they are employable at all? A larger question I was drawing them towards was this: how might what happens in our lives be connected with what happens in others' lives? In this pedagogy, I was attempting to acclimatize students to the "arbitrary accidents of history" that are features of human existence when we grapple with answering important existential questions such as these (Mukhopadhyay 2017). We can lay a strong foundation for this type of encounter by introducing messiness and contingency into our classrooms, and indeed, by leading students beyond the university walls and into spaces that will challenge them to contemplate answers to hard and necessary questions.

For inspiration, and to gather ideas about how to go about acclimatizing students to uncertainty while also asking them to develop the reflexes to ask questions from the standpoint of people experiencing vulnerability, I did two rounds of groundwork.

I first began by attending an inner-city public screening and panel discussion of Hugh Gibson's (2016) feature-length documentary film *The Stairs* in the spring of 2017. This film chronicles the ways drug policy, the law, policing, and the criminal justice system intersect to shape the lives of street- and drug-involved people in the Dundas/

Sherbourne neighbourhood. Over a five-year period, the film focuses on three residents and support workers: Greg, who uses drugs; Marty, who formerly used drugs; and Roxanne, who was involved in sex work (figures 12, 13 and 14). Deeply compelling, the film succeeds in showing the struggles and skills necessary to live with and amidst deep human suffering, both of one's self and of others we care about. Importantly, the film shows just how closely enmeshed impoverished people's lives are with the law, the police, and the criminal justice systems. This point was poignantly confirmed in findings from more recent fieldwork published as *Perils of "Protection"*, a report documenting sex workers' experiences with law enforcement in the Dundas/Sherbourne area and in other communities across Ontario (Chu, Clamen and Santini 2019). Sociologist William Carroll's theoretical claim that "social life as we know it is marked by inequities that are deeply structured, yet contingent, features of human organization" (2006 234) is empirically demonstrated in Gibson's film and the *Perils of "Protection"* report.

WATCHING “THE STAIRS”

Fig. 12: Greg and Companion

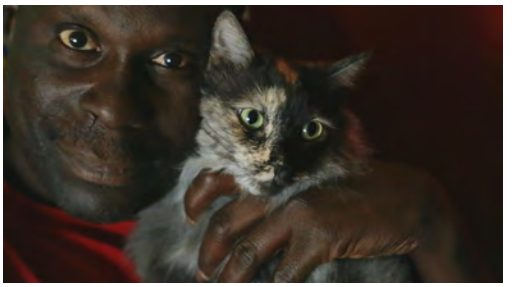

Fig. 13: Marty and Friend

Fig. 14: Roxanne (left) and Friends

What Greg, Marty, and Roxanne show us is that becoming impoverished, being poor, recovering from addictions, finding a bed in a shelter, staying out of harm's way, travelling from one bureaucracy to the next, taking care of oneself, and also figuring out how to care for others—all of these actions require a person to learn these skills and to practice them to stay alive. Elliott reminds us that daily, "the urban poor grapple with their own failing health and the illness and/or death of friends and family members due to AIDS, hepatitis C, pneumonia, bacterial infections, and other chronic illnesses" (2010, 183). These social relations converge to support sociologist Adele Clarke and colleagues' (2003) assertion that the intensity of health programming in the poor inner city has often been demonstrated to overtake as well as 'bio-medicalize' people's lives.

As we can see, the Dundas/Sherbourne neighbourhood is a place of paradox. While its building stock and surrounding urban landscape are visibly neglected, the area is an object of focus for some of the most intense law enforcement and police scrutiny in Toronto. As there is a dense network of health and social services, and there is also deep and ongoing dispossession. As with Vancouver's DTES, here we see that structural decisions and practices governing the poor inner city simultaneously marginalize and centralize poor people who live, work, or move through the area. One line of thought is that such spatial clustering is helpful for people needing care. The trouble with this perspective, however, is that the people accessing care there do not necessarily share this view. Rather, this is the point of view of persons who do not live or regularly frequent the streets and alleyways of Dundas/Sherbourne yet are nonetheless decision-makers for the area (figure 15). An assumption, supported by the *a priori* belief that poor people actually use said services, is that services offered are working for people, despite all evidence to the contrary, or else the services would cease to be needed and would not need to be so 'densely' offered. This line of thinking misses a crucial point.

The idea of a slow march to the elimination of homelessness and hunger neglects to realize that poor inner city people are not static. As Greg, Marty, and Roxanne graphically show and teach us, impoverished people in the inner city are, in practice, extremely mobile. This is the case *precisely because* staying alive when one is poor is

a full-time commitment. Based on anthropological and geographical fieldwork with people with HIV infection accessing food banks (Miewwald, McCann, Temenos and McIntosh 2019; Picotte 2014; Toronto Food Policy Council n.d.), and also Bisaillon's (2010) first-hand experience at food banks serving people with HIV infection in Montreal and Toronto, we know that poor people circulate far and wide throughout Canadian cities to obtain food, goods, and various social and legal entitlements. In fact, impoverished people spend most of their time and energy on trying to find food, shelter, take care of themselves, and stay out of harm's way (figure 16). Moving about the City of Toronto, with its 96 food banks, twenty-two of which are in the administrative ward in which Dundas/Sherbourne is located, is a necessary strategy and matter of survival for impoverished people. Taken together, it has been demonstrated that these forms of activity, and the knowledge that one must hone to accomplish them, are forms of work and types of emotional labour (Bresalier et al 2002; De Vault 1991; Ehrenreich 2017; Waring 2004). These mobilities have costs for people in terms of their time, available energy, and the chronic anxiety that needing to do them in the first place produces for them.

BEING POOR IS HARD WORK

Fig. 15: Harper was Wrong

Fig. 16: Marx was Right

In a second stage of groundwork aimed to imagine what a future possible visit with students to the Dundas/Sherbourne neighbourhood could consist of, and bearing in mind the social context outlined above, I (Laura) did some reconnaissance walkabouts through its streets, back alleys, and other public recesses. As I made my way around the area on foot, I saw and accidently tread on used condoms, needles, and other discarded injection equipment. And as I bent in to take a closer look, I had second thoughts about bringing students to the area. Would the built and social environments simply be too bald or bold for them? I also wondered whether I was best positioned to guide students. The idea was for us to go experience and, through discussion with each other, work to develop understandings about the social production and organization of poverty. The promise was that we would come away with politically incisive and socially situated lines of thinking to analyse the political, social, and economic determinants of health and thus be well informed to be able to critique bad-decision and bad-neighbourhood lines of thinking. A fine line needed to be very carefully attended to, however, since I wanted to avoid using or fetishizing the neighbourhood as a pedagogical

resource for students' edification. This was a serious concern that organized the fieldwork process from start to finish.

As I contemplated these issues and the tensions they evoke, I came across a newspaper article that discussed the work of Joyce Rankin, a registered nurse at Street Health. This organization has been operating health and social services in Dundas/Sherbourne for over thirty years as an advocate for people who are the most marginalized. In June 2018, it opened an Overdose Prevention Site with extended drop-in hours "as a response to the increased level of overdoses in our neighbourhood, in our driveway, and among our clients" (figure 17) (Street Health 2019).

A short time before, I learned, Rankin had been bestowed the Nightingale Award for her activist nursing and frontline service over many years (Forani 2015). As I read about the agency's work, I imagined an opportunity to bring students there to have them learn about the "harm reduction model [and to] see the impacts of the social determinants of health in action" (Street Health 2019). When I called her to explain the learning goals and politics organizing my interest, Joyce agreed to receive us.

In the end, five students were available to attend the planned visit to Street Health (figure 18). They were racialized women in their early twenties. Four lived in Toronto's outer eastern and western suburbs, and one lived in the inner city (Mehdia). I learned that some of these women had grown up in affluent households. Without exception, however, all of their parents were born outside of Canada, making them what has come to be called in migration studies, first-generation Canadians. The women told me that after graduation they envisioned careers in social work, nursing, arts education, or the law. Precisely because of the type of professional roles they talked about wanting to fulfill, I wanted them to encounter the people, politics, and problematics facing Toronto's poor inner city. Given the state of global flows of people and resources in 2017, it seemed that the historical moment was a relevant one to have students think about the implications of these trends in their home city. As I would come to find out, our visit to the Dundas/Sherbourne neighbourhood was the

first experience they were to have with this specific area of the poor inner city.

VISITING STREET HEALTH

Fig. 17: Syringe, Saline and Sanitizer

Fig. 18: Nurse, Professor and Students

ACCORDING TO WHOM ARE WE VULNERABLE? MEHDIA'S EXPERIENCE IN THE POOR INNER CITY

As a student in Dr. Bisaillon's class in 2017, I (Mehdia) signed up to take part in her proposed group visit to Street Health. I was curious to learn about the organization's direct service work. Before visiting Dundas/Sherbourne with classmates, my first-hand experience of this district was minimal. For the most part, I had usually crossed the intersection of these two streets sitting in the back of my family's car. I had never explored the area on foot, despite the fact that I was raised there and still live a short walk away.

I have lived in St. James Town my whole life. What is more, the intersection of "Dundas/Sherbourne" carries half of the named location where my home is: Sherbourne Street. And yet, when I visited Street Health, it dawned on me how precious little I knew from first-hand experience about this specific part of the poor inner city. As we were preparing this article, Dr. Bisaillon challenged me by asking, "How is this is the case, Mehdia?" meaning, *how could I have lived so close but have few tangible connections with the place and so little knowledge about it?* Reflecting on my answer, I realized that I have more or less deliberately avoided going there because, during my lifetime, at least, this area has had a rough and tough reputation, and it is widely documented to be a difficult area.

It might seem odd to those unfamiliar with Toronto's inner city political and legal geography that I had not been to this area. However, it makes perfect sense that I did not go there considering the reputation of this neighbourhood, not to mention how it looks when we actually go there. What do we see? There are shoddily subdivided, derelict structures—ruined rooming houses; password protected, padlocked perimeter fences; massage parlors edged by churches; construction cranes keeping company with bulldozers. Signs of material deprivation and the effects of addictions and illness are palpable. Yet, glossy posters and placards inform residents and passers-by that glass-towered condominiums are on their way up (figures 19 and 20).

SEEING EVERYTHING FOR SALE

Fig. 19: Condos and Cutbacks

Fig. 20: Cranes and Crack

As I thought about how to prepare for a visit Street Health, I decided that I would draw inspiration from sociologist C. Wright Mills' (2000) idea of sociological imagination. Mills' approach involves cultivating a willingness to see the world from the perspective of others

and also organizing one's investigation to explore how personal/experiential happenings connect to those of a public/societal kind. Practically speaking, researchers map interactions between features of biography, culture, history, and societal structure. Mills understood this ontological and epistemological orientation as the promise of social science because of how it enables analyses when put into practice. As it happens, having learned this approach from Dr. Bisaillon has been something of an occupational hazard: now, I must see the conditions and problems around me, and those that I read and hear about, in the theoretical frame of the sociological imagination. Whether as a former graduate student in Thunder Bay or as a resident of St. James Town, I am now habitually "committing sociology" as *modus operandi* and way to frame, describe, and interpret the world (Bisaillon, Hassan and Hassan 2017 109).

On arriving at Street Health, our small group met with Nurse Joyce Rankin, who introduced the organization's history, providing details about its mission and the way Street Health works with people who seek care and services there. Street Health clients live in poverty, work in the sex trade, manage addictions, and live with chronic illness. The basic principle organizing their services is to ease the negative effects inner city poor people experience due to structural inequities and intersecting forms of oppression. For example, not having an address is a huge impediment for un-housed or itinerant people; the Street Health office provides a civic address for its clients. A fixed address plays a crucial function by making all of us institutionally legible in databases at all levels of government. An address is a necessity, signalling a place at which to receive mail. Without an address, one cannot receive a provincial health card. Without a health card, one cannot easily access care at a hospital or clinic. Adaptability and empathy govern Street Health's work. They aim to 'meet people where they are' in both metaphorical and material senses of the expression, since where we live and socialize are also the places we gather information, make decisions, and form bonds with others.

We also spoke to clients who were at Street Health while we were there. For example, Marty works as a peer support worker (this Marty is the same "Marty" who is featured in Hugh Gibson's documentary, *The Stairs* [2016]). He is also a Dundas/Sherbourne insider who

is recovering from drug use and working hard, as he told us, to resist the pull of drugs. Marty was born into a large family, but his connections with his kin have waned. He has experienced homelessness on and off during his adult life. He now lives with his cat in a one-bedroom apartment with a balcony and an address in the Dundas/Sherbourne neighbourhood.

Marty's trajectory gives him personal insight to understand and empathize with Street Health clients, with whom he shares many lived experiences. Marty talked to us about safe-injection kits, drug use, addictions, and the sex trade with remarkable frankness. He spoke of his professional role and responsibilities as a peer-support worker, and he expressed frustration about systemic issues that make his job chronically difficult. For example, he described the ways that addiction bespeaks trauma and shapes neurological wiring. He also elaborated on the ways that, in one way or another, the police and justice systems are daily figures in his clients' lives. But he finds meaning in working with the Street Health team, and he cares about the people he connects with while trying to figure out how to support them in ways that make sense within the context of their lives (figure 21). Watching how he carried himself, listening to the silences between his words, I could clearly see his knowledge and wisdom were hard earned. The concept of the personal being embedded in the political and vice versa now makes empirical sense to me, as it never had before.

As it turned out, Marty had a great deal to teach us. A key Street Health service is to provide safe injection kits, and these are available at the agency's reception desk. Normalized. The kits are assemblages of various materials for people who use injection drugs to do so cleanly and safely, such that they do not contract blood-borne infections such as hepatitis C or HIV infection. Harm reduction science has demonstrated that injection kits save lives and that it is also good economic practice (Zlotorzynska et al 2013). Infection and disease are curtailed through sanitary conditions and where people are socially supported. Marty walked us through how he assembles and packages safe-injection kits. He also demonstrated how people use the materials to prevent infection. Injection kits are normalized and displayed in a 'help yourself' manner at Street Health's reception

desk. The self-service is practical, and I should think it goes a long way to ease social stigma associated with drug use. The visibility of the kits can also be springboards for discussion and peer learning. Since it is obvious that all classes of people use illegal and recently legalized drugs, making safe-injection kits and other harm reduction materials accessible in facilities in all neighbourhoods in Toronto is a purposeful action to alleviate stigma, promote safe health practices, and expose people to sources of health care and addiction counselling and referrals.

Joyce, Marty, and other frontline workers at Street Health must work hard to sustain the services they provide to clients. They lobby all levels of government for financial support to train students on professional placements and work with nearby hospital-based researchers. They must apply for cycle after cycle of project funding, and they also cultivate relations with private donors for monetary backing. They take time to work with groups of students such as us. Collectively, this group of people is working to keep fingers pressed on the places where people feel harm. They participate in trying to effect structural change and to dismantle that which produces sickness and suffering in the first place. They want people to think critically about the causes of poverty, and then do something about those causes. At Street Health, I saw people of my generation who were visibly unwell. I am certain that these unknown-to-me peers did not choose to be living on the street or in the unsafe conditions of Dundas/Sherbourne. A fact long established in the social determinants of health literature is that health and illness are shaped more strongly by our social conditions than by our biological baggage (Bryant 2016). As I conducted this fieldwork, these issues and perspectives began to crystallize into an observed reality.

Joyce and Marty's work is emotionally and physically taxing in an ongoing sort of way, which raises a long-standing question: who cares for the caregivers? (Contenta 2019) The caring work they dispense to people they know and care about is draining not least of all because of the fact that their work should not be necessary at all. Death by overdose and other traumatic ends are all around them. They want to keep people alive and for the people around them to suffer no longer. They might also feel tension with what they do, with how they

earn a living, since their work is predicated on the poverty and suffering of the clients with whom they interact every day. Being poor, housing insecure, and criminalized for engaging in sex work: these are the predicaments confronting people who come to Street Health. As racialized, gendered, and economically impoverished people who might also use drugs, their experiences with social institutions are chronically fraught with tensions. People in the poor inner city are positioned to experience various sorts of *vulnerabilities* as an ongoing feature of their existence.

LIVING IN A 'BAD NEIGHBOURHOOD'

Fig. 21: Connections

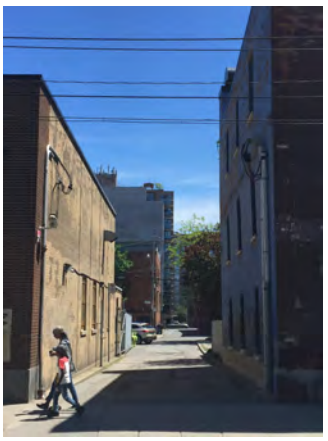

Fig. 22: Crossroads

And here, I write the word *vulnerability* with hesitation while at the same problematizing it and its application. Who gets to assign *vulnerability* to others? After all, this term arrives from a bureaucratic category that public health personnel, academic researchers, and clinicians use to make visible, and also intervene on behalf of, large swaths of people: Marty and other residents of Dundas/Sherbourne, my family, others I care about, and also me (figure 22). What characterizes vulnerability, who carries the term, and is it enabling or disabling? Why and how does, or will, it affect all aspects of people's existence? I am calling attention to the politics, fields of interest, and human practices that bring this concept to life and sustain it. Ultimately, I am subverting by inverting hierarchies of knowledge, urging a revised starting place for inquiry. What do people who are deemed vulnerable think of this concept? People who are written and talked about within this frame of reference rarely or never, in my experience to date, refer to themselves as vulnerable. My parents are racialized immigrants living with me in poorly maintained public housing in Toronto's poor inner city, but we do not use this language to describe ourselves, and neither do we easily accept that this category be applied or used to define us. Perhaps I will have the good fortune to meet Marty again, introduce him to my sister, Maryam, and hear what he thinks about my discursive resistance to mainstream brush stroking, typecasting people like him, me, and us as vulnerable.

Since visiting Street Health, I have taken to asking people in my midst in Toronto what they know about the area. When I probe, though my interlocutors have usually not been there, they concur that Dundas/Sherbourne is, in their view, most certainly a "bad neighbourhood." This returns me to the contradiction that I illuminate and open with above: that some can live so close to this part of the city and know nothing about it while others spend their whole lives there working to help people fulfill their needs.

SEEING IS BELIEVING...IN THE DISCURSIVE ORGANIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE: MARYAM'S EXPERIENCE IN THE POOR INNER CITY

Until July 2019, I (Maryam) had a full-time job as a legal administrative assistant working at a mid-sized law firm in

North York, which lies to the north of the City of Toronto. I remember various encounters and conversations I had with co-workers during my time there, especially interactions that left me questioning what it means to live in a "bad neighbourhood", and indeed what living in such a place might say about me, as a person, and also about my family. When I tell acquaintances or co-workers that I live in St. James Town, a common reaction is shock. They tell me that they would not have guessed that this is where I live. Some people have warned me to be careful when out in the neighbourhood late at night (figure 23). Still others have tried to teach me self-defense strategies. My common response is to laugh, albeit rather nervously. I explain that I do not feel fearful, since it is my home community. People have told me that they wonder how I can live in an area where there are so many "crazy" people walking, talking, and screaming on the streets. Interestingly, when I ask them if they have been to St. James Town, few have. I am told that they know the neighbourhood through mainstream media reports.

I remember having lunch with a co-worker, and during our conversation, he asked me where I lived. I replied, "downtown Toronto." He said, teasingly, "Oh! I knew you were going to say that! In one of those expensive high-end condos, right?" I was taken aback, wondering why he would assume that. As I told him that I grew up and still live in one of the nineteen high-rise apartment towers in St. James Town, I watched his jaw drop. He later took me aside and apologized. He clarified that he hoped that he had not offended me, since that was not his intention. He told me that the issue for him was that he could not imagine that someone like me would have been raised in "that kind of area." When I asked him what he meant, he specified that he was referring to a poor inner city neighbourhood. He continued by saying that because of the way I dress, speak, and carry myself, "No one would assume that you come from a 'bad neighbourhood.'"

This exchange encouraged me to reflect deeply on how society sees and also labels people who, in popular discourse, are understood to hail from "bad neighbourhoods." What is a person from a "bad" or "good" neighbourhood supposed to look like? Act like? Sound like? *Be* like? Mainstream media can portray people from poor inner city neighbourhoods stereotypically; that is, if we are featured at all out-

side of sensationalist stories and hyperbolic headlines rooted in deviance. Perhaps we are thought to be lazy, not particularly educated, wayward, or just not good sorts of people to know.

As the colleague with whom I was having lunch looked at the rings and watch I was wearing, he said that he would have thought that I came from what he called an aristocratic or elite background. 'The way I carried myself, with "elegance and grace"," he said. "I never would have imagined someone from St. James Town being as educated and well mannered as you." Over the years, and now, when people learn that I have spent all of my life in St. James Town, they want to have these sorts of conversations with me. I do not like having these kinds of conversations with people, since they feel pathologizing of my family and neighbourhood in addition to being tedious because predictable and repetitive for me. Maybe one day I will sit down and write a novel inspired by our family life as residents of St. James Town. Borrowing narrative cues and clues from novelist Kathy Dobson's *With a Closed Fist* (2011) or *Punching and Kicking* (2018), I could imagine titling my debut novel something along the lines of *With a Ring on my Finger, and Watch on my Wrist: Growing up in Toronto's Poor Inner City*.

We (Mehdia and Maryam) have begun to track a curious pattern in how guests who visit us at home react to our apartment. People have expressed surprise, commenting that our three-bedroom flat is welcoming, aesthetically pleasing, and culturally curated with tastes, textures, and traces of Afghanistan (figure 24). The appearance of our domestic space, indeed, contrasts with the public areas inside and outside our high-rise apartment building. Everywhere you look in and around the vicinity of our building, there are signs of deteriorating structural conditions: the interior hallways, elevators, and surrounding streets are visibly rutted and deeply worn.

Peoples' reactions to our home and building have given us pause. We try to see things through their eyes and to walk in their shoes to contemplate our community with fresh eyes. We are not indifferent to outsiders' perceptions of St. James Town. What does it mean when people express relief that, between the walls of our apartment, we live well, while using the public sphere, our neighbourhood, as its un-

desirable foil? We wonder whether our parents have, at some level, paid extra close attention to rearing us and providing a certain type of home environment in response to what they know to be publically held ideas that St. James Town is a "bad neighbourhood."

Some visitors have asked my parents why they have decided to remain in St. James Town for more than two decades. We are not aware that our parents, settling here as new immigrants, had much choice in the matter. We live in subsidized public housing, and we are in close walking distance to schools, hospitals, and the subway line. While some of our guests have commented that, in their view, we do not seem to "fit" into St. James Town, this judgment pinches at us. We are uncomfortable with the implicit judgment of our neighbours, teachers, and friends. And, while some guests have given their suggestions about "better" neighbourhoods or smaller cities to which we might consider moving, we are not aware whether our parents are either interested in or financially able to move to a place that others might deem safer or more suitable. We have made our home here, we have been well educated here, we have contributed here, and we are satisfied living in the poor inner city.

LEARNING IN ST. JAMES TOWN

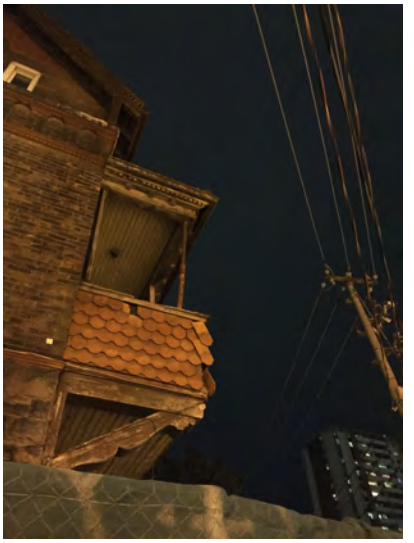

Fig. 23: Of Sherbourne/Howard

Fig. 24: Of Afghan Diaspora ("I am Complex", Maryam Hassan, 2018, Acrylic on canvas. 32x36")

MOVING INTO THE 'HOOD: LAURA'S EXPERIENCE IN THE POOR INNER CITY

In fall 2015, I (Laura) was treated to a history lesson about the Dundas/Sherbourne neighbourhood. My teachers on this occasion were two middle aged, white men seated on the curb in an alleyway behind the People with AIDS Foundation on Gerrard Street, where I was destined.

As I approached the men, I said hello. I smiled because they looked like they were enjoying themselves. It was ten o'clock in the morning, and Bruce and Noah (I will call them) were drinking beer and talking. We began to chat. Bruce told me that he was born in this very community. He spent his childhood weaving up, down, and through this part of Toronto's inner-city concrete jungle. Bruce openly discussed moments of his life stretching back to the 1970s, explaining that he had moved away many years ago to take up various hard-labour jobs in Alberta's petroleum patch. When he sustained an injury on the job, he was unable to return to work, and he never again found stable work. He was not eligible for workers' compensation or employment insurance payments, and so he looked for work, doing "odd jobs, here and there," to get by. Though he has no family remaining in Toronto, he thinks that he might stay in the city. His colleague, Noah, revealed that he was born in Newfoundland, and has lived on-and-off in Toronto since the 1980s. Not finding work in Atlantic Canada, like Bruce, Noah left home, migrated west and settled there, "working in oil." When he sustained an injury that evolved into a disability, he, too, was unable to find paid work, and was ineligible for government income support programs.

"We made bad decisions," said Bruce in a matter-of-fact way, speaking on their collective behalf. Noah nodded his head in agreement. They went on to say that they have lived for some time in nearby Seaton House. Though these were not their parting words to me, this is the sentence that, at the heels of having heard details of their lives, sat very heavily with me. The statement "we made bad decisions" has a significant organizing presence in this article and informed the choice of subtitle.

My family and I moved into a housing cooperative in St. James Town in the spring of 2015. For a time, I was acutely ill. Through the painful experience of being sick, followed by a trying and long-term process of getting well, I came to know about the Sherbourne Health Centre and the services it offers to inner city poor people (figures 25 and 26). It serves a great number of impoverished people. In fact, it offers services to all residents of the inner city; I accessed services vital to my recovery, despite our being far removed from living in poverty. Walking was a big part of the activities I did to get better. I have set foot in a great number of the public streets and shadowy recesses in the Dundas/Sherbourne neighbourhood. In its streets and in its waiting rooms, doctor's offices, reception areas, elevators, parks, bus stops, grocery and liquor stores, community centres, movie theatres, rooming houses, thrift shops, and alley ways, I have listened to, and learned from, people of all ages, colours, sizes and shapes, born in Canada and elsewhere.

CARING AT SHERBOURNE HEALTH CENTRE

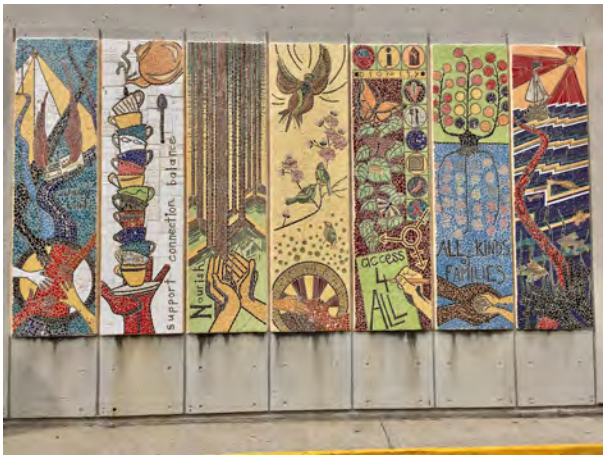

Fig. 25: Public art for caring

Fig. 26: Wheels for caring

During my regular walks in the Dundas/Sherbourne neighbourhood from 2015 to today, I have come to understand it as a place of con-

tradictions. This is because it is simultaneously a place of misery *and* caring. Signs of social suffering and illness are visible on people's bodies, in the form of facial scars, missing limbs, broken teeth, and sunken cheeks. The bodily effects of suffering, structural violence, and austerity on the most impoverished are gut wrenching and considerable: homelessness, sickness, disorganization, and itinerancy. Absent and disappeared bodies also have a presence in this area. I have seen them remembered by makeshift memorial installations made of candles or by inscriptions and sketches placed on the patch of greasy pavement on the sidewalk across from Seaton House (figure 27). In nearby Allan Gardens, an open-air mural installation was mounted in June 2019 and a dozen large panels were suspended, hanging overhead for public display. Indigenous women artists working in various media and world regions had their work selected for this six-month exhibition. As I learned from attending the inauguration, where I spoke with organizers and also artists (for example, the woman shown walking under the overhead banner of her creation, figure 28), the installation was part commemoration for murdered and disappeared Indigenous women, part celebration of their continued presence and resistance.

MEMORIALIZING OUR DEAD

Fig. 27: Morning Glory, Mourning Friends

Fig. 28: Mural Artist, Missing Women

Through the fieldwork and writing process of this article, we wondered how to adequately dismantle and displace the idea that Dundas/Sherbourne is a bad neighbourhood populated by people who make bad decisions. First, this community has not always been a health and social-services ghetto for the urban poor. It has not always looked or felt the way it does now. In the nineteenth century, wealthy western Europeans settled in and built up Dundas, George, Gerrard, Jarvis, and Sherbourne streets. The grand villas located up and down these roads—of those that have not come under the wrecking ball, many of which are used as rooming houses and group homes—testify to the immense wealth that these settlers amassed by growing local, national and global manufacturing dynasties. Allan Gardens, as a public botanical garden set inside a public square of the same name, was designed as a place of leisure for these nearby residents (figure 29). Today, this square is an important neighbourhood landmark. Its grounds are beautifully landscaped in spring, summer and autumn. Along its south-facing street is a concentration of health and social agencies set up to serve people who gather in the park when it is

warm enough during the last decade: racialized new immigrants and Indigenous persons for the most part. While the vegetation inside the greenhouses is in fine shape, the humans who congregate or formerly congregated outside its entrance are anything but, as we can see (figure 30). The public benches and water fountain were removed in June 2019, prompting one Indigenous woman with whom I spoke to say, "They took away their homes."

Second, amidst the myriad sorts of social suffering noted and discussed in this article, the three of us have observed and experienced deep caring in the Dundas/Sherbourne neighbourhood. Since moving to Toronto in 2013, it is in its streets, and those immediately surrounding it, that I have listened to some of the most candid and frank stories about the human condition I have ever heard. My exchange with Bruce and Noah related above is an example of this. Their statement about having made bad decisions is a refrain commonly sung by poor inner-city people. People I have met there (here) can and often do talk about themselves punitively, condemning their bad decisions that they understand led them into difficulty. So goes their logic. And yet, this can only ever be part of the story, since, as we have illustrated, what they say and do are set within broader social relations. The observation "We don't hold back when we talk to ourselves about ourselves" (West 2017) is consistent with how I have heard people judge themselves in Dundas/Sherbourne. I yearn for people to centre the politics that organize how we live and also how we fall sick, since this carries the promise of helping everyone to be kinder with others and themselves as they (we) recollect pasts and talk about presents.

BEING (AND NOT) IN ALLAN GARDENS

Fig. 29: Colonials Gather

Fig. 30: Post Colonials Gather and Not

TORONTO'S GRAVE PARADOX: FLAGRANT WEALTH FLANKS GUT-WRENCHING POVERTY

When we (Mehdia and Maryam), cross Allan Gardens on foot from its northeast to southwest corners, as we do when we leave home, heading in the direction of downtown Toronto, we have looked around, wondering: how might aspects of our lives be similar to those of the people gathered in this square? It is only by accident of birth that we are born into the families we are. We have little control over much of what happens in our life. What is more, it is unlikely that there is any family anywhere in the world untouched by addictions and the chronic problems they induce. Reflecting on Allan Gardens as a landmark, until recently a hub for poor inner city people to 'just be' in the Dundas/Sherbourne area, perhaps someday, if the benches and drinking fountain are restored, and the people who once gathered there return, we will stop: striking up a conversation with someone sitting on one of the benches, as Dr. Bisaillon did in our walkabouts. We would approach a woman, who would likely be racialized. We would be interested to listen to what she might be willing to share about her experience in this square, and in Toronto's poor inner city, and maybe others like it across Canada. Her first-hand knowledge of these spaces would go a long way in nuancing and perhaps correcting popular framings about the poor inner city and its places and politics. What works well, and what does not, and in whose interest, is best revealed by those of us in minority and marginalized positions that stand outside the mainstream in the so-called social margins.

A grave paradox in the City of Toronto, and one that is ripe for all to observe and experience, is the flagrant wealth that flanks gut-wrenching poverty and palpable suffering in all of its inner city neighbourhoods. Dominant portrayals of Canada's largest urban centre commonly showcase its countless condominiums for high cost, fashionable food menus at fancy restaurants, and parades of products at pop-up stores. The housing, eateries, and offerings in the commercial spaces in the Dundas/Sherbourne area do not square with these depictions, and this is not what Toronto's inner city should be like. In this narrative-driven article, we bridged visual practice with so-

cial analysis by combining sensory ethnography and street photography to contextualize the people, places, and politics in the Dundas/Sherbourne neighbourhood. In doing so, we confronted popular discourses of poverty and the poor inner city to deliver a critique of bad neighbourhood and bad-decision lines of thinking. Ultimately, the three of us hope that if Greg, Marty, and Roxanne, as protagonists of Hugh Gibson's documentary film *The Stairs*, were to read this article, they would agree that we have avoided fetishizing people and their lives' circumstances in favour of holding up for analysis and debate the social production, organization, and coordination of that which goes right and wrong in the Dundas/Sherbourne neighbourhood that they know so well.

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