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IMAGINATIONS

REVUE D'ETUDES INTERCULTURELLES DE L'IMAGE ▪ JOURNAL OF CROSS-CULTURAL IMAGE STUDIES

OPEN ISSUE

Editors: Brent Bellamy, Margot Mellet

Issue 15-1, 2024

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INSTITUT D'ÉTUDES CANADIENNES
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Sommaire/Contents

Editorial Introduction by Four Hands • 5
Brent Bellamy, Margot Mellet

Witnessing the Waste Land: A Phenomenological Account of Landscape and its Discontents • 9
Mark Allwood

Ways of Seeing Nujoom Alghanem's Nearby Sky (سماء قريبة) and Sharp Tools (آلات حادة) as Docupoetry • 43
Doris Hambuch

The Rise of Keto Man: The Myth of Self-Sufficiency • 67
Genevieve Wilson

From Apotheosis to Reverse Conversion: A Posthuman Reading of Euripides' and Pasolini's Medea • 89
Andrea Barcaro

From Panorama to Parking Garage: An Architectural and Archival History of the Toronto Cyclorama • 119
Isabelle Gapp, Jessica Mace

The Design in the Visualization of Uncertainty, Abstract Modelling and Virtual Photography • 145
Dominik Lengyel, Catherine Toulouse

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION BY FOUR HANDS

BRENT BELLAMY
MARGOT MELLET

Words are nothing but fragments sliced from a body that existed before them. (Paul Claudel)

Based on links and echoes, this open issue provides a perspective on current issues (cultural and geopolitical) and the imaginary figures attached to them. Balancing between the investigation of tangible phenomena and the examination of vivid images made of symbols and senses, the different papers in this issue address the possible connections between our human, spatial and physical presence and the waves of culture that flow through us and move us from within.

This issue has no guest editor. It is what we describe as an open issue, which is a bit of a misnomer because all our issues are open access. This one is open thematically. This issue also has two managing editors, and the whole team wishes to welcome Margot Mellet!

I, Margot, joined the journal in the Winter 2024, in the middle of this current issue, discovering a wealth of analysis and catching up with a carriage already well on the rails thanks to the work and dedication of Brent Ryan Bellamy.

I, Brent, am thrilled to be co-managing editor with Margot who has editorial experience working with *Sens public* and brings much knowledge and energy to *Imaginations*. The carriage is righted and racing once more!

This open issue crystallizes the perfect portal into the Imagination's ethos as a crossroads between the democratization of knowledge and the exploration of shared culture perspectives through the studies of images and their sensitive, meaningful and political impact. Portrait of a publishing horizon, this issue is also an opportunity to announce a new tradition for the journal, as it evolves with new practices and writings.

Every year or every two years, the *Imaginations* editorial chain will develop an open publication, in the Issues category or in the Elicitations category, to welcome proposals that are out-of-frame, out-of-the-ordinary but exceptional. As mentioned above, this "openess" is therefore an invitation to new standards of academic publishing or even to cultural studies in general.

Coming soon! An issue following on from the Symposium "A Research-creation Episteme? Practice-based Research and Institutional Critique" on September 27, 2023: the issue is directed by Agata Mergler (York University) and Joshua Synenko (Trent University). It explores and catalogues the new epistemologies of research-creation.

Finally, We are taking part in a cross-platform publication with *The Goose* and *Engaged Scholar Journal* to produce an issue on the topic of Sustainable Publishing. This issue considers sustainability in several ways. First, environmentally, we are interested in the carbon footprint of an online journal's web hosting or the sourcing of recycled paper for printed issues; second, socially, we aim to sustain a range and diversity of voices, topics and academic languages (in both a traditional and metaphoric sense) that makes space for the local, the parochial, and the peripheral; third, in terms of labour, we strive to develop reasonable and equitable working conditions; fourth, fiscally, we seek to maintain healthy revenue streams; and fifth, politically, we champion sustaining publishing practices that are scholar-led rather than driven by oligopolistic for-profit publishers. This rich and nuanced sense of sustainable publishing is the launching pad for the issue, which will be simultaneously published and hosted across the three journals. You can access the CFP at this imaginations link or this link from the Goose.

That's what you can expect from us moving forward into 2025. We are always looking out for Guest Editors to pitch issues our way. Please email brent.ryan.bellamy@gmail.com, margot.mellet@umontreal.ca, imaginat@ualberta.ca, and/or mreisenleitner@gmail.com.

WITNESSING THE WASTE LAND: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL ACCOUNT OF LANDSCAPE AND ITS DISCONTENTS

MARK ALLWOOD

"Witnessing the Waste Land: A Phenomenological Account of Landscape and its Discontents" is a text and image experiment centred around the urban wilderness of Tommy Thompson Park in Toronto, Ontario. The text can be read in numerous ways by oscillating between philosophical thought, poetry, photography, stream of consciousness, and the analysis and inclusion of documents. In some ways this approach is an imitation and a reaction to the postmodern urban schizophrenia one encounters at a park that operates as a waste disposal facility, a habitat for flora and fauna, a research centre, a bike trail, a habitat creation project, a birder's paradise, and a waste land.

"Witnessing the Waste Land: A Phenomenological Account of Landscape and its Discontents" est une expérience textuelle et visuelle centrée sur la nature urbaine sauvage du parc Tommy Thompson de Toronto en Ontario. Le texte peut être lu de manières différentes entre la pensée philosophique, la poésie, la photographie, le flux de conscience, l'analyse et l'inclusion de documents, Dans une certaine mesure cette approche est une imitation et une réaction à la schizophrénie post-moderne que l'on éprouve dans un parc utilisé à la fois comme décharge municipale, habitat pour la faune et la flore, centre de recherche, projet de création d'habitat, paradis pour ornythologues amateurs et désert urbain.

FIRST VISIT TO TOMMY THOMPSON PARK: OCTOBER 3RD, 2017.

I am driving eastbound on Lake Shore Boulevard East past a Canadian Tire, in what is known as the Port Lands of Eastern Toronto; I immediately perceive a drastic shift in the cityscape. Make a right on the lights, on Leslie Street, Gin said. The atmosphere is already dustier here, and the path leading to the park is mostly populated by heavy-duty trucks carrying loads of industrial materials. The establishments I gaze upon metamorphose from Starbucks and Staples to CBM Aggregates, a linguistic shift of seismic proportions indeed. Even though The Beaches community, with its million-dollar homes, is a few kilometres away, the vibe here is more about industrial infrastructure, the streetcar yards at Lake Shore and Leslie, and the hustle and bustle of materials and aggregates of the city of Toronto. The theme here is cement, soil, gravel, salt, limestone, brick, satellites, and waste disposal. This is why I've come to this place. I am interested in the industrial unconscious of a city that prides itself on gentrification. The air smells differently in this small stretch of road that leads to the Leslie Street Spit, as it is colloquially known by Torontonians. A subtly acrid hint of ash and burnt rubber blends in with the common smells of any other lacustrine community. Here you are not greeted with the usual blend of exhaust fumes and cannabis smoke. Tommy Thompson Park is the place I am here to explore, to shake hands with.[1]

The entrance to the park neighbours the Leslie Street Allotment Gardens on the east and Baffinland Iron Mines Corporation now known as Strada Aggregates on the north, and Portlands Energy on the west. On Unwin Avenue, parallel to Leslie, one can see the Toronto Yard, a sizable operation whose space is mantled by monochromatic clusters of indiscernible aggregates: a ubiquitous site in this side of town. A group of satellites are housed near the parking lot of this establishment; an eighteen-wheeler zips by, creating a cloud of dirt that fogs my view; and on this hot summer day, the site has attracted hundreds of cyclists, joggers, and all kinds of nature enthusiasts who are out for a stroll in this strange landscape. As I begin to make my way into the park, through the heavily congested trail, one or two cyclists ring

Figure 1: Dilapidated gate and factory next to Tommy Thompson Park

their bells to notify me I must permit their smooth passage. Toronto bikers continue to be an instance of culture shock for me. They have always struck me in the same way that car drivers do by asserting themselves in the battlefield that is San Salvador traffic.

One must walk by these places before entering the park, and I was struck by the presence of satellite dishes in an establishment that deals with aggregates. The satellite dishes are framed by security fences and warning signs alerting pedestrians about the dangers of radiofrequency exposure.[2] I considered the warning but took a few shots anyways.

A street on the entrance to Tommy Thompson Park alerts visitors that the vehicular transit of Leslie Street ends at this point. Cars are not permitted inside the main road unless you are headed to dispose of some industrial waste or going to The Aquatic Park Sailing Club. If you are member of this club, their website suggests that you can access by both water and through the main entrance at Leslie Street. By water, members can access via sail or motorboats, or simply by swimming or paddling to the club's dock.[3]

Figure 2: Satellites outside of Tommy Thompson Park

The entrance to Tommy Thompson Park is adorned by six signs pertaining to basic regulations and park hours. We are informed that park hours vary from day to evening, being closed from 5:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday to Friday. The park is open during these times on weekends and statutory holidays only, but open Monday through Sunday from 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. I can observe that the park attracts numerous cyclists, as they swoop past me. Among the many signs here, a sign designates 20km/h as the maximum speed. I assume this is meant for those with augmented modes of traveling, like cyclists and skaters. Furthermore, a graphic illustration of a bird suggests that the park attracts a myriad avian species. In a similar way that Paul Virilio's theory (Virilio 89) of the integral accident suggests the invention of the ship was also the invention of the shipwreck, we see how the sign and the announcement of avian diversity seem to have brough a great number of professional bird watchers and aficionados to the park whose presence and enthusiasm, albeit innocent in nature, poses a threat to the ongoing habitat creation project and demands a myriad of prohibitive warnings from park authorities about the limits of human presence.

Figure 3: Entrance to Tommy Thompson Park

> "When you invent the ship, you also invent the shipwreck; when you invent the plane you also invent the plane crash; and when you invent electricity, you invent electrocution...Every technology carries its own negativity, which is invented at the same time as technical progress" (Virilio 89).

According to the park's official website, the community owes its biodiversity to its location within Lake Ontario, functioning as a pit stop in the migratory sojourn of the many species one can observe here. So far, I am describing to you a park like any other, but to any informed citizen the idea that a park built on top of industrial waste and substratum that is bursting with wildlife seems counterintuitive at best. It is often assumed that park or wilderness reserve is surplus left over from urban expansion and development. When you are at a park you can envision what once was or could have been if condos and paved streets were not around. This is not only a naïve and misinformed perspective, but it ignores the violent history of colonialism that eradicated indigenous communities and wildlife from the land that belonged to them. I would argue that the strangeness of

a manufactured landscape at the Leslie Spit confronts visitors in a more honest way, not attempting to masquerade as pure nature and further perpetuate the myth of Canada's wilderness but rather making visible the fact that all wilderness is manufactured or at the very least attained through colonial violence. The park's website addresses this unique situation in the following manner:

> "From its origin as rubble and sand, Tommy Thompson Park has developed into a complex mosaic of habitats, which support a diverse community of flora and fauna species. [...] Due to the nature of construction and substrates, TTP is quite impervious to water infiltration. The consequence is standing surface water that creates seasonally wet areas that are highly attractive to a variety of wildlife. These seasonally wet areas are heavily used by migratory shorebirds and as nesting sites for regional and locally rare bird species such as Virginia Rail, Sora, and American Woodcock. Seasonal pools are also important breeding areas for amphibian" ("Birds of Tommy Thompson Park").

The park is human made from rubble and sand. The website celebrates its inception by highlighting its emerging habitats and what they call diverse communities of flora and fauna. Nowhere in this rather romantic description do we get a description of the history of the rubble. One immediately asks what is meant by rubble? Does rubble not imply destruction, dereliction, and displacement? Sure, the complex mosaic of plants and animals is positive, but what exactly was the human toll that made this place possible? I can't avoid skepticism when reading this kind of description, and it seems so tone deaf to be celebrating habitation during a relentless housing crisis in a city that is becoming increasingly unlivable for most of its human inhabitants.

> Spiraling currents move between
> Bifurcating between the sheets
> Edges silently scraping
> The wind spoke, the patience melted.

Figure 4: Birds at Tommy Thompson Park

Figure 5: Hawk at Tommy Thompson Park

Figure 6: Rusty Beach at Tommy Thompson Park

Figure 7: Rebar at Tommy Thompson Park

Figure 8: Rebar at Tommy Thompson Park

Figure 9: Praxis Rock at Tommy Thompson Park

"PRAXIS" FROM THE GREEK PRATTEIN, PRASSEIN. TO ACT. TO DO

What can we do about the paradox of capitalism's tendency to extract, exploit, and eventually destroy that which it needs to create value? Without resources, human beings, and the earth, can capitalism go on? Does capitalism need us, need the earth? Perhaps it can and already does exist as a malevolent automaton that operates independently from us as its beneficiaries. Production for production's sake until nothing is left. These are questions I ask myself as an academic when I step outside of my viewfinder. My subsequent research led me to uncover the history of displacement and gentrification that brought these industrial materials here. The "rubble" which Toronto posits as an almost random occurrence is not random at all but dates to development practices that prioritized urban development over low-income housing in the 1980s. A darker social history predates the romantic discourse of accidental wilderness that surround the Spit.

In their paper "Buried localities: archaeological exploration of a Toronto dump and wilderness refuge," Heidy Schopf and Jennifer Foster help us demystify the notions of a serendipitous landscape that Toronto falsely claims to have stumbled upon. Their text provides a comprehensive archeology and historical overview of the different stages that led to the erection of the Spit as we know it today. Shockingly, they uncover a material history of personal household artifacts that signal a much darker history than what is included in official channels about the park. Schopf and Foster write:

> "Most surprisingly, this research finds that the 1960s' deposits contain high levels of personal artifacts, suggesting that whole households were demolished and dumped at the Spit. This discovery challenges the claim that the Leslie Street Spit is solely composed of "clean fill" and rather suggests that early dumping activities included food waste, personal items, and household debris in addition to construction rubble. The key findings of this research illustrate that the Leslie Street Spit is not just a landscape defined by its wilderness, but is also

> a landscape defined by the development, destruction, and renewal of the built form of the city" (Schopf and Foster 2).

It becomes apparent as we examine the history of this park that, like any urban environment, the Spit is not devoid of a troubled history of power and imperialism. The so called "accident" that led to the mosaic of ecosystems is a product of uneven power dynamics and the state's oppressive force. More simply put, the park is a product of what we call progress these days. Archaeological digs like the ones conducted by Schopf and Foster prove that the ground is not only composed of industrial rubble and sand but made up of tiles, tea pots, children's toys, and other personal items that we can assume were left over during a difficult process of domestic displacement. The ground of the Spit is not exclusively formed by the idyllic transformation of industry into nature but in a large part by Toronto's long and problematic history of gentrification and urban renewal dating back to 1964. Findings from this time included "teacups, bits of glass, medicine bottles, plates, diapers, electrical wire, rusted metal, eyeglasses, toothpaste tubes, and even food waste" (Schopf and Foster 7).

Figure 10: Brick Fragment at Tommy Thompson Park

The academic in me must acknowledge this history and look beyond the veil of the aesthetic allure of the park. As a scholar I have a responsibility to critique accepted narratives and problematize the hegemonic discourse surrounding this place. But … I am also a photographer, and to be a good photographer you must ignore the preconceptions you may have about a place. As a photographer I embrace naivety and I witness this place in all its feral aesthetic glory. The Spit is a perfect example of the scars that are left behind by the parasitic practices of extraction, expansion, and progress. But here, in this wretched artifice, where the ground is made of rubble and industrial fill has replaced soil, life finds a way. Here, where industrial refuse finds its forever home, nature finds refuge from the storm.

> "Much of the appeal of the Spit lies in popular appreciation for what is perceived as an untamed, sublime, and feral aesthetic, where nature is able to heal the scars of industrialisation" (Schopf and Foster 2)

This is how I feel as a photographer who is interested in contradictions and aesthetic aberrations. A critical reading of the park leads you down its complex social history, but an aberrant aesthetic reading leads you down the path of what Simon Critchley calls the monstrous, that which is absolutely-too-much. In the realm of aesthetics, the monstrous is unlike the sublime insofar as it escapes comprehension and traditional models of beauty. As Critchley writes: "For Kant, the sublime is 'the almost-too-much,' and is distinguished from the monstrous understood as 'the absolutely-too-much.' That which is monstrous defeats our capacity for conceptual comprehension" (Critchley). As an impartial observer—initially unaware of the park's dark material history—I approached the sights here with wonder. I was enchanted by the monstrous sprawling anthropogenic rebar structures intertwined with a blossoming natural ecosystem. These two contradicting elements shouldn't make sense and coexist as well as they do here, but they do…

Approximately two kilometres into the park's main trail, visitors encounter the first few clearings looking out into Lake Ontario. To get to the "beach," one must traverse what is no longer a trail made of

Figure 11: Rebar Sculpture at Tommy Thompson Park

dirt but rather a trail layered almost entirely out of what looks like residential debris, a mixture of bricks, concrete, and tiles. In these eerie trails, leading toward the different beaches in the park, one encounters an exorbitant number of industrial rubble and materials. From house towels to bricks and floor tiles, the path is not an easy one to traverse and even though we are moving, a degree of agility and caution was required.

What poses a real danger to visitors of this Canadian park is the sheer number of industrial metals, omnipresent in every trail, grassland, and shoreline. The pathway is staggered with sharp metal objects, household items, and bricks, among other forms of ambiguous rubble. Along the passage I spot an abandoned towel on top of a bed of bricks. The disembodied towel reminds me of human remains—with its almost forensic shape—and sets an eerie tone to the rest of my travels. Perhaps this feeling is unfounded, but there is a certain psychological and semiotic shock that occurs when you see a personal item in such a decaying state. A kind of abjection in which I project my own mortality. Knowing after my first visit that the Spit

Figure 12: Rebar Sculpture at Tommy Thompson Park

Figure 13: Plants and Metal at Tommy Thompson Park

Figure 14: Abandoned Towel at Tommy Thompson Park

houses the ghosts of a city that looked entirely different from what it does today, household items like this towel confront me with a melancholia that haunts my vision with memories of El Salvador's impoverished cities. As a newcomer to Canada my camera is accustomed to seeing clean landscapes devoid of waste and human presence, but at the Spit I see a different side of the Canadian landscape. Perhaps a more honest one? Perhaps one where waste is not buried in the unconscious? Visible on the surface of nature and, in a radically aesthetic way, making up the surface of this simulacrum of nature.

Figure 15: Oh, Canada at Tommy Thompson Park

Aca Nada
Aca Nada
Here, nothing
Here, mine not yours.
Rousseau, the performative utterance of private property.
Mercantilism, abolition, genocide.
What's left?
Shattered dreams made of plastic?
Canadiana as a ruin, instantiating the fragile simulacra of Canada,
Aca Nada

(Mark Allwood Portillo, 2024)

I am now at one of the first accessible beaches at the Leslie Spit. The water of Lake Ontario is roaring and blue as always, but the sand has been replaced by metal, debris, and other types of discarded matter. Even reaching the water poses a difficult challenge, but I take a couple of photographs, trying not to scrape my leg on a piece of corru-

Figure 16: Waves at Tommy Thompson Park

gated metal rebar. I simultaneously feel horror and a sublime magnetism that hypnotically attracts me to this post-apocalyptic scene. Maybe it is the stasis of the metal and concrete in relief to the recurrent motion of the water that produces a spectacle unlike anything I have ever witnessed. Perhaps it has to do with the monstrous, as described by Critchley, that being enacted in this place with the forced dichotomy of nature and waste?

Nature, with its boundless motion, juxtaposed with the ruins of the city, the remnants and sublime excess of capitalist industrial progress. What I witness is the excess of production and ruins of urban expansion discarded by the wayside on the shores of the waters of an imposing Lake Ontario.

The lacustrine breeze in synchrony with the rays of an autumnal afternoon sun clash with the meandering and Surrealist forms of metal figures that have completed their sojourn to the park's shore. Perhaps at some point these metallic formations served as an important component of a building's foundation, but to me, in their current iteration, they resemble Modernist motifs akin to Picasso and Pollock. The unusual and unexpected juxtaposition of materials embody forms and motifs despite their apparent fragmented nature. Just like how Picasso summoned the human form from an assemblage of disparate geometric shapes, we find at the spit figures and forms that have been assembled by anonymous artists or simply accidentally by chance. Many of the forms I encounter here have been a result of chance operations that remind me of Pollock's methods. The image

Figure 17: Rubble at Tommy Thompson Park

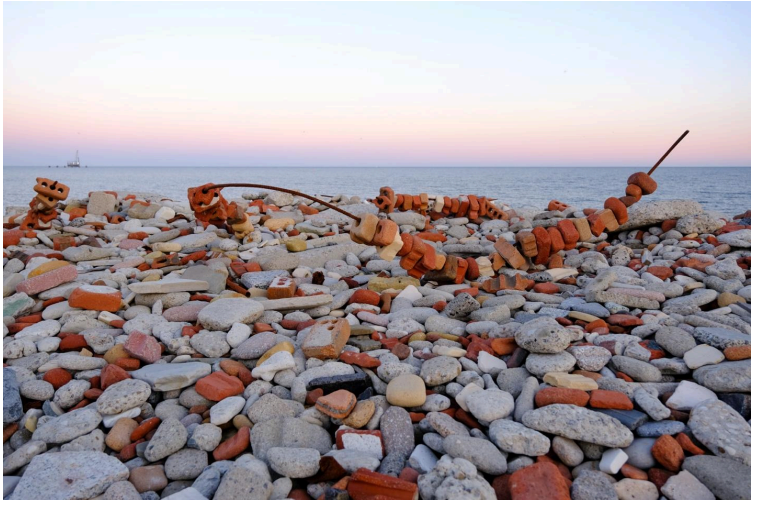

Figure 18: Sunset at Tommy Thompson Park

Figure 19: Jazz Players at Tommy Thompson Park

below reminds me of Picasso's numerous paintings of men with guitars. I have called this one the Metal Jazz Ensemble spearheaded by a metallic trumpet player on the left side of the frame.

There is a Brutalist element to the aesthetic experience of this park; from the hardness of the ground to the harshness of the metallic remnants that adorn the shorelines of this artificial peninsula. The exposed beams, the sand made from bricks and tiles, and the shards of metal poking out of the tall grass breathe a Modernist quality into this place. Like Brutalist architecture, there is something beautiful about the deconstructed materials that constitute the physical feature of the park. When reaching the first clearing pictured below, one is quickly reminded that this is not a natural peninsula, but a man-made artifice constructed entirely out of industrial waste that has been abandoned and reclaimed by people and nature. This is the most breathtaking aspect of the Spit—the ways in which nature reclaims that which was taken from it, and the way nature finds haven and expression in the harshest and most unlikely conditions. The human efforts of preservation are remarkable but the resilience of na-

Figure 20: Peninsula at Tommy Thompson Park

ture—stemming from its origin in dredging and later its designation as a landfill—prove that nature always finds a way.

Keeping on the theme of Modernism, I encounter another remarkable example of what we can call Modernist mimesis. This accidental work of art reminds one of a famous sculpture that adorns the entrance to the National Gallery of Canada. I first saw Louise Bourgeois' sculpture *Maman* 4 years ago in the Canadian capital on a steamy summer afternoon. *Maman* depicts a spider in its surreal modernist glory; it can be found in only a select number of sites around the world as a permanent sculpture. Luckily for Canadians, one of those permanent locations happens to be adjacent to the main entrance to *The National Gallery of Canada* in Ottawa. The gallery spent a third of its budget in acquiring the bronze figure back in 2005, reportedly spending a staggering 3.2 million dollars ("Huge Spider Erected Outside National Gallery"). Whether or not the investment paid off, it is truly breathtaking to witness a part of Surrealism's history and to have, here in Canada, a work of one the most renowned Surrealist artists. The metallic assemblage pictured below reminded

Figure 21: My Maman sculpture at Tommy Thompson Park

me of Bourgeois' work, and in many ways, mostly due to its context and location, the rusty rubble structure at the Spit affected me in a far more visceral way. I immediately began thinking about the history of this metal, its trajectory to this specific place, and its journey into achieving its current undulating psychedelic form.

Accidental sculptures like this one have a fascinating aesthetic force. Instead of indulging in the sheer beauty of an artwork as you would with *Maman*, I am sent down a completely different line of inquiry. There is an initial moment of aesthetic indulgence, but after that initial effect dissipates, I ask myself a series of ontological questions. How many stories do these waste assemblages tell? Where does it all come from? What was its original purpose? And now that it is here what purpose does it serve? Does it imitate the forms of nature on its own accord, or was this entire spectacle curated by an artist with Modernist sensibilities? Would the illusion that the aggregates have been placed here consciously by an artist make it any better? Many of these questions are obviously unanswerable, but scholars like Foster and Schopf and more recently Walter H. Kehm in

Accidental Wilderness: The Origins and Ecology of Toronto's Tommy Thompson Park help us understand the reason of being of the Spit. A book like Kehm's with Robert Burley's enchanting photographs reminds us that the park was initially "a construction site with bulldozers moving landfill from hundreds of trucks arriving daily, carrying concrete blocks, bricks, metal bars, rubble from new subway lines and house demolitions, and waste from old brickworks and glass foundries" (Atkinson 126).

Similarly, the work of Schopf and Foster reminds us that the "collection of material at this location on the Spit suggests that full houses with belongings still inside were demolished, compacted, and then dumped in Lake Ontario. Finding household debris, personal items, and food waste does not support the claim that the Spit is only composed of clean fill" (Schopf and Foster 7). Schopf and Foster's work is essential for us to deconstruct many of the myths of cleanliness and sustainability that are advertised by the city to justify the existence of the waste disposal operation at the park which is at odds with the habitat creation and preservation projects happening simultaneously. This was the most jarring aspect of the park during my first visit. How could preservation and waste coexist seemingly so peacefully? How can new habitats be created while heavy metal is being dumped next door?

We can answer this question by returning to the theme of accidental art that we discussed earlier in this paper. There we consider the origin of some of the metal "art" that make this place a public art exhibition of sorts. Thanks to Schopf and Foster we now understand where the materials originate from, but I am also interested in the transformation of the materials once they arrive here. Some are made up by anonymous artists and some have been dumped in accidentally aesthetic positions. Even though we can't truly differentiate between what is manufactured and what is a product of chance, some of the metal-heavy sections of this park have gone through a profound transformation by virtue of their material past. My guess is that instead of being a singular artist, it is primarily the collective effort of visitors to the park contributing their artistic efforts when they visit. I speculate that throughout the years the whole process

has become a kind of collaborative public art exhibit and ritual for the visitors and the spectators. As a photographer I identify with the latter group. It must be mentioned that when we visit and set our gazes on these monstrous constructs, we are faced with an ethical choice of sorts. We can either be appalled by the pollution these materials signify, or we can embrace their raw industrial beauty juxtaposed with the natural ecology of the park.

After all, parks are precisely the kind of public spaces in which the people are able to rekindle a primal enchantment with the flow of nature and find temporary refuge from the concrete stasis of urban spaces. Walter H. Kehm provides a beautiful, albeit a bit romantic, observation of the role of the Spit for the people:

> In essence, my findings from over 35 years of observation reveal the importance of this urban wild as a place for re- enchantment. There are new miracles revealed every day and every season at the park. Perhaps that is why this park continues to attract ever-growing numbers of people. The park's landscape offers a high level of natural richness through its diversity of plantings, water and sky vistas, landforms, and wildlife. It is where one can have an introduction to the miracles of nature while walking through narrow, meandering paths framed by large trees or through meadows with wildflowers and butterflies or along the lake edges listening to the sound of the waves. Rachel Carson was prescient, since there is "a sense of wonder" in the park (Atkinson 154).

The Toronto Harbour Commission (now the TPA) was created in 1911 to oversee the "reclamation" of the marsh. Filling of Ashbridges Bay commenced in 1912, and by 1960 the marsh was completely gone. According to their website:

> The Tommy Thompson Park Bird Research Station (TTPBRS) was established in 2003 to aid in the understanding and protection of birds and their habitats through monitoring, education, and research. Tommy Thompson Park (TTP) is recognized as a globally significant Important Bird Area (IBA) by Birdlife International and it's the Canadian partners for its significance

> to populations of nesting water birds and migratory species. The combination of an 'urban wilderness' with internationally significant bird life and close proximity to a large city makes TTP an ideal venue for a permanent center for bird studies and education ("Tommy Thompson Park Bird Research Station").

While the city acknowledges its value as a reclaimed ecological site for a diversity of migratory birds and other species, it also actively operates as a site for the disposal of industrial matter. The guidelines can be found on the Internet, but I am including them here below as yet another element that contributes to the Leslie Spit's visual and discursive imaginary. The guidelines below demonstrate the kind of visual and discursive contradiction that I observe at this park. The remarkable efforts of conservation, as I have stated above, are obscured by the active waste disposal efforts taking place here. This resource is incredibly helpful for understanding what exactly we see at the park, and for the reader, you can understand what my photographs are showing. Reinforced concrete with rebar, pipes, pillars, beams, and light poles make up a lot of the surface of the park, but as per this guideline they are no longer accepted. What the city calls materials type "B" such as broken concrete, brick, ceramic tiles, and

clean porcelain materials are accepted as long as they comply with certain size and condition restrictions.

> TORONTO PORT AUTHORITY Notice to Contractors and Truckers Leslie Street Lakefill Site Effective September 2, 2011, Type "C" materials, consisting of reinforced concrete with rebar, such as concrete pipes, pillars, beams, light poles, and so on, are NO LONGER ACCEPTED.
>
> Effective May 20, 2003, Type "A" materials, consisted of clean, dry earth, clay silt, shale, sand and backfill sand, are NO LONGER ACCEPTED. ASPHALT MATERIAL AND SHEET ASPHALT ARE NOT ACCEPTED. NO GARBAGE, RUBBISH, WOOD or any other material will be accepted that might contravene the following anti-pollution regulations:
>
> 1. Toronto Port Authority Practices and Procedures Article 26.
>
> 2. The Ontario Environmental Protection Act 1990, amended June 1992.
>
> 3. Ontario Regulation 735/73 Schedule 9.
>
> 4. Improved Lakefill Quality Control Program amended January 1993.
>
> Truckers found concealing unacceptable materials will be liable for the cost of removing the same and will be prohibited from using the area.
>
> ACCEPTED MATERIALS Type "B" Unreinforced concrete, broken concrete, brick, ceramic tiles and Clean porcelain materials. There is a size limitation of 8" x 8" x 16" on all accepted material (size of cinder block). Toronto Port Authority approved rubble Type "B" to contain less than 5% by weight of Type "A" material. CHARGES: $33 per truckload, tax exempt (Payment by Cash, Bank Draft, Money Order, Certified Cheque, Debit card, VISA Card or Master Card) SPEED LIMIT Maximum speed as posted applies within the site area. Drivers exceed-

> ing those limits, or driving without proper care, may be prohibited from use of the area. NO LIABILITY: Toronto Port Authority assume no liability for the safety of persons or vehicles using the site. Drivers and vehicles enter the area entirely at their own risk of injury and damage, howsoever caused. Drivers retain sole responsibility for safety, irrespective of any dumping directions they may receive from Toronto Port Authority personnel. Visiting vehicles must keep clear of the Toronto Port Authority equipment engaged at the site. CONDITION Entry to the area constitutes acceptance of the foregoing conditions. Opening Hours at Leslie Site (#1 Leslie Street ,Toronto), : Monday to Friday, 7:30am.- 4:15 pm ACCESS CARD Available at Toronto Port Authority, Works Department at 62 Villiers Street, Tel: (416) 462-1261, (open Mondays – Fridays, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m) REFUNDS All refund requests are to be made at the Works Department Office. Proof of Purchase (i.e. Original Receipt from Toronto Port Authority) must be presented to obtain a refund. Only one (1) refund per Proof of Purchase (i.e. Official Receipt) will be made. Updated June 6, 2012 ("Notice to Contractors and Truckers Leslie Street Lakefill Site")

"…I discover vision, not as a 'thinking about seeing,' to use Descartes expression, but as a gaze at grips with a visible world, and that is why for me there can be an other's gaze" (Merleau-Ponty 315). By having a writing pad and operating a camera, I attempt to position myself in the middle of nature and technology, of the external world and the apparatus with which I see the world. The eye, the camera, the laptop all help me construct and formulate my thoughts. Forces assemble around me by virtue of pointing the camera to the world. A circuit of communication. What does it mean to be in the midst of an event? To use this device critically and democratically you must be in the middle, not outside or inside. I don't bring the concepts of nature and beauty into the capture, but I attempt to remain neutral and make myself a medium between the mechanical eye and the world. I attempt to let the world of the Leslie Spit speak in its own voice. How does this practice differ from photojournalism and writing? Is this praxis? I use the camera as a tool for "being" in a situation and

Figure 22: Surveillance at Tommy Thompson Park

my own experience is the datum, inventing through it a method, a role, a witnessing. The world comes crashing into me like waves of sensory data, slowly approaching and retreating ad infinitum.

People love it here even though it's full of sharp metal and the ground is uneven and unforgiving. As I learned from the plurality of signs that populate the trails, the government of Canada also likes the idea of this place. Exercise is good. We continue to enhance our cardiovascular health so we can survive the stasis of work. This place is a habitat creation project. Introducing and promoting the habitation of a select number of species and creating a safe haven for wildlife. The Leslie Street Spit, Tommy Thompson Park, bird sanctuary, or dump site? Going for jog, disposing of industrial waste, or birding? Tommy Thompson Park is also an art gallery, a recreational space, a habitat for animal species, and the home of the forgotten materiality of the city of Toronto.

The Leslie Street Spit is a *xenotopia*. Human-made from rubble it now welcomes a blossoming diversity of elements, human beings, animals, metals, concrete, brick, and so much more. Foucault paves the

Figure 24: Tires at Tommy Thompson Park

way for us to think of other spaces, of spaces imbued in and made of otherness, in which the boundary between the sacred and the profane is collapsed. At the park, the profane—in the form of industrial and human waste, urban displacement, and cemeteries—coalesces with the sacred—in the form of trees, dirt, grass, wildlife, and so on. All these contradictory elements come together in what is promoted as wilderness, but hides a complicated past of destruction, urban progress, and gentrification. This place could be in fact thought of as a mass burial ground for the profane leftovers of a city that is becoming inaccessible to most. The spit was man-made by destroying nature and erecting an alien wilderness; a "natural" space created with the debris of urban growth and the reclamation of a marshland deemed useless in favour of industrial projects. Because of this very reason, it approaches us in an ambivalent, confused way. The Spit as a space and commons is not entirely sacred or profane but straddles the thin line in the middle of this dichotomy.

According to the Toronto Parks website:

> "In 1959, filling to construct the Leslie Street Spit or Outer Harbour East Headland (Tommy Thompson Park) was initiated by the THC (now the Toronto Port Authority) in the area of Leslie Street and Unwin Avenue for 'port related facilities.' In 1973 the land base of TTP was dramatically increased with dredge from the shipping channel in the Outer Harbour. From 1974 to 1983 approximately 6,500,000 cubic meters of sand/silt were dredged from the Outer Harbour and placed at the spit. This resulted in the formation of the lagoons and sand peninsulas which account for a significant proportion of the land base of TTP. In 1979, a major expansion of land area occurred with the construction of an endikement on the lakeward side of the Headland. The endikement provided protected cells for dredged material from the Inner Harbour and the Keating Channel" ("Tommy Thompson Park").

What is interesting about The Leslie Spit, in the context of its official documents, is the fact that what is being presented as an "urban wilderness" is in fact a human-made landscape that replaced a once blossoming ecosystem. Literally manufactured from rubble and waste, this peninsula extension now encumbers upon Lake Ontario, replacing the once vital ecosystem of the Ashbridges Bay Marsh. The Spit is evidence of humanity's role in the Anthropocene and our participation in the dramatic change and decimation of the earth and its resources, a process which is at an all-time high ("Anthropocene"). Simply stated, the current rate of population growth and urban development cannot and will not be sustained by the earth in the foreseeable future. Yet the Toronto park proves that ecological catastrophes can acquire a positive value out of the tumultuous tension between cities and nature. City dwellers travel this peninsula all year round, and judging from the people I have talked to, no one seems to know the buried histories of the territory[4] in which the park is situated on, or its usage as a full-time landfill. The location presents itself as a park but simultaneously serves as an active landfill for specific kinds of industrial waste during the week. Excess of infrastructural material from the city is dumped here, and in the process, as reports

and witnesses testify, all kinds of unusual matter and objects make their way to this place.

People have uncovered materials ranging from displaced graveyards to the domestic and infrastructural remnants of urban displacement and gentrification. A witness provided me recently with a photograph of a doll's head taken many years ago. One can speculate that this object, which now encounters itself desolated in this strange wasteland, once found its place within a familial environment in the hands of a child who treasured it inside their home. Jennifer Foster and Heidy Schopf's seminal 2013 paper "Buried localities: archeological exploration of Toronto dump and wilderness refuge" provides me with a critical and archaeological framework necessary for engaging with and interpreting the semiotic content of a place that reads like a park and acts like a dump. Foster and Schopf illuminate the complicated history of the park and uncover the buried truths about the materials that make their journey to this land.

The park greets you warmly with its extensive trails and biking paths, surreal landscapes made of rubble, and its blossoming new ecologies. In Jennifer Foster and Heidy Schopf's words: "Much of the appeal of the Spit lies in popular appreciation for what is perceived as an untamed, sublime, and feral aesthetic, where nature can heal the scars of industrialization." As Foster (2007) explains, "It juxtaposes a degraded and discarded city with fertile and vigorous ecology, a place where nature has colonized the post-industrial urban spoils" (Schopf and Foster 2). The aesthetic attraction of the site lies in the dualistic redemption of nature over (industrial) man-made decay, and it demonstrates to the public the potential of hope in the context of the real, collective fear of losing nature altogether. With the conclusions made by Foster and Schopf in mind, I believe that this side of the Spit is at once an undeniable truth and the veil of a problematic social history buried underneath the surface. The city presents this space as the harmony of nature and "clean fill" techniques of disposal while being heralded as a triumph of nature over the destructive effects of capitalism and a testament to the idea of nurture over nature. Its official website advertises the park as a place where you can enjoy

Figure 25: Metal and Ice at Tommy Thompson Park

Figure 26: F*** the Police at Tommy Thompson Park

nature and simultaneously feel good about the efforts of the city to re-wild what once was only a product of dredging, a no man's land.

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NOTES

1. This is a reference to Andy Goldsworthy's land art. His process involves allowing a place to introduce itself to him before he begins to work with it. I am here to begin a multiyear work with the Leslie Spit, and I am allowing it to present itself to me, my camera, and my pen.↩

2. Per their website: "Baffinland Iron Mines Corporation (Baffinland) is a Canadian mining company, mining iron ore at the Mary River operation in the Qikiqtani region of North Baffin, Nunavut, Canada." The corporation oversees mining, crushing, and shipping high grade iron. http://www.baffinland.com/mary-river-mine/our-operation/?lang=en↩

3. If you have a proclivity for maritime travel, the official coordinates of the park are 43°39'7.68" N 79°19'22.60" W.↩

4. I speak here of the recent history of this park, but it is important to acknowledge that this place we call a park today is first and foremost situated on the land of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation.↩

WAYS OF SEEING NUJOOM ALGHANEM'S NEARBY SKY (سماء قريبة) AND SHARP TOOLS (آلات حادة) AS DOCUPOETRY

DORIS HAMBUCH

This article proposes to establish a sub-category called "docupoetry" to classify the documentary films by Emirati poet and filmmaker Nujoom Alghanem. Detailed analysis of two selected films, *Sharp Tools* (2017) and *Nearby Sky* (2014), illustrates the unique composition, cinematography, and use of poetic devices, such as rhythm, symbolism, and personification of settings, which render the proposed classification beneficial for viewers. Based on Michael Renov's concept of the poetic documentary as well as on the poetic mode theorized by Bill Nichols, this study finds the definition of a separate sub-category warranted to understand documentaries such as those by Alghanem.

Cette recherche propose d'établir une sous-catégorie appelée « docupoetry » pour classer les films documentaires de la poétesse et cinéaste émirienne Nujoom Alghanem. Une analyse détaillée de deux films sélectionnés, *Sharp Tools* (2017) et *Nearby Sky* (2014), illustre la composition, la cinématographie et l'utilisation uniques de dispositifs poétiques, tels que le rythme, le symbolisme et la personnification des décors, à la lumière desquels la classification proposée s'avère bénéfique pour les spectateurs. Basée sur le concept du documentaire poétique de Michael Renov ainsi que sur le mode poétique théorisé par Bill Nichols, cette étude trouve la définition d'une sous-catégorie distincte justifiée pour comprendre les documentaires tels que ceux d'Alghanem.

"All art is storytelling," Hassan Sharif states in *Sharp Tools* (2017), the film studied in the second section of this essay. Sharif was a friend and collaborator not only to the film's director, but to other Emirati artists who work in many differ-

ent art forms. Nujoom Alghanem is best known for her poetry and documentary film, and the argument here is that her command of the former is responsible for the unique style of her films. Highlighting specific poetic devices in *Sharp Tools* and *Nearby Sky* (2014), close analysis shows that Alghanem's films are best understood as poetic documentaries, or docupoetry. Devices in question concern technical aspects of her cinematography, the structuring of content, or rhythm, as well as tone. A specific sense of humour characterizes Alghanem's ways in which she encourages her subjects to present themselves. These subjects, or characters, a description preferred by the filmmaker (Yunis 448), so far include a Sufi Sheikh in *Al Mureed*, an actress in *Amal*, a healer in *Hamama*, fishermen in *Sounds of the Sea*, a painter in *Red Blue Yellow*, and a camel farmer in *Nearby Sky*. Diverse in age, class, gender, and national background, these personalities all have in common that they live or lived in the United Arab Emirates, as does the filmmaker.

The unique style of Alghanem's documentaries thus relates to their origin in a fairly young cinema movement as well. Founded only little more than five decades ago, the United Arab Emirates did not start to support local filmmaking until the new millennium (Yunis 8-10; Mirgani 46). Alghanem's pioneering role during this development originates in her recognition as a celebrated poet as well as journalist (Papagianni 322-323). In an interview with *ArabLit Quarterly*, the poet describes her eagerness to apply filmmaking skills after her return from studying in the United States and Australia, and she elaborates on the exploration of photography from the poetic point of departure. "If there is an influence," she states, "it would definitely be the film that got inspired by the poetic way of observing and experiencing the world" ("Nujoom Alghanem"). "I think the poet doesn't need to be a filmmaker in order to write," Alghanem continues in this interview, "however, filmmakers need to learn how to be poets in approaching their ideas." This thought is at the centre of this essay's argument that the appreciation of Alghanem's films benefits from a focus on their poetic elements. It is conducive to this purpose to consider them as examples of a category best described as docupoetry.

The artist, who represented the United Arab Emirates at the 2019 Venice Biennale, made her directorial debut with two short fiction films in 1997 (Armes 47), before moving on to her first documentary, *Between Two Banks* (1999). This film revolves around the life of a former pearl diver who still rowed his taxi boat across the Dubai creek when all his colleagues had switched to outboard engines. Almost a decade later, Alghanem released her second documentary, *Al Mureed* (2008), her first feature-length film, about the Emirati Sufi Sheikh who died in 2006 aged 104. *Al Mureed* won several local awards and prompted a series of seven more feature documentaries. All of these films are tributes to extraordinary individuals, and a closer look at two recent examples, *Nearby Sky* (2014) and *Sharp Tools* (2017), illustrates the director's distinctly poetic style, informed by the hybrid culture of the Gulf region, that warrants the categorization as docupoetry.

About three decades ago, in *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary* (1991), Bill Nichols identified the expository, observational, interactive, and reflexive modes of documentary film. In a chapter titled "The Poetics of Documentary" in his edited collection *Theorizing Documentary* (1993), Michael Renov offered a variation of these modes he refers to as functions. Footnotes suggest that the two scholars developed their models simultaneously and collaboratively (Renov 198). Although it is Renov who focuses on the significance of "Occidental poetics" (12), it is Nichols who expands his model in *Introduction to Documentary* (3rd ed. 2017 [2001]) to include a performative, as well as a poetic mode. For Nichols, the poetic mode corresponds mainly to experimental, avant-garde filmmaking. Renov, in contrast, pursues the concept of "poetics" via Aristotle and Tzvetan Todorov, and emphasizes its "unstable position at the juncture of science and aesthetics, structure and value, truth and beauty" (13). Without references to any of these theories, but relying instead on P. Adams Sitney and Linda Williams, Noa Steimatsky investigates the poetics of Cecilia Mangini's documentary *Essere donne* (*Being Women*, 1965) with a focus on the Italian filmmaker's contact to W. H. Auden (Steimatsky 121). Unlike Mangini, Alghanem is herself a celebrated poet, and the following analysis of her *Nearby Sky*

and *Sharp Tools* serves to expand on Renov's attempt to challenge the respective binaries and to propose a new subgenre called "docupoetry." Like the well-established docudrama or docufiction, this new category will offer unique insights into Alghanem's extraordinary type of screen poetry. It draws attention to the ways in which all her films appropriate a specific environment that provides the source for their material. A crucial element is this environment's rhythm, and how it changes with individual protagonists.

Only one of Alghanem's films, *Sounds of the Sea*, centres on music, but each of her documentaries features a carefully composed score, supported by editing choices. To view the films as docupoetry forces audiences to foreground these rhythmical elements among other poetic devices. Based on an interview with Alghanem for Viola Shafik's *Documentary Filmmaking in the Middle East and North Africa* (2022), Alia Yunis points out that the poetic context "comes across in her films' reliance on landscapes that reveal unspoken details and the visualized silences of her characters" (Yunis 449). The following close analysis of two selected films dwells on such techniques that render them perfect examples of docupoetry. Before turning to the two case studies, however, it is beneficial to recall the concept of documentary poetry, a subcategory of poetry that has received considerably more attention than that of poetic documentary film.

DOCUMENTARY POETRY

Substantial research exists on poetry, which lends itself to applications of documentary theory, but scholars have not highlighted the reverse practice, a poetry-informed approach to the study of documentary film. Renov cautions that his own "initial efforts toward a poetics of the documentary can be little more than first steps" (13) and it appears that these first steps have not yet led to a trail. Although Renov situates "poetics" between "truth and beauty," he does not elaborate on his understanding of "poetry." Well aware of the nearly endless variations within the genre, this essay proposes that the films studied also demand a move beyond "Occidental" poetics. It therefore assumes a very basic understanding of

poetry as "creative expression that relies on respective poetic tool kits of a certain time and place" for the following discussion. Based on this understanding, docupoetry can be defined as the "creative treatment of actuality," whereby the creativity derives more from impulse and less from calculation, guided by a prioritization of and gift for aesthetics over but not exclusive of education.

In "Poetry in Light of Documentary," Jill Magi singles out Nichols's observational mode and applies it to poetry that "uses found or appropriated text" (Magi 251). The resulting analyses allow Magi to define characteristics of documentary poetry, and to pursue three specific goals in the process. Her essay aims to encourage poets (and critics, should they not be poets as well) to benefit from documentary theory, to consider the role of ethics, and to offer insights involving the poetry book, especially the print collection, for the study of documentary films. The present argument builds on the idea of this last goal. A closer look at Magi's as well as at a related essay on Muriel Rukeyser's documentary poetry thus offers valuable insight leading up to the two case studies of *Nearby Sky* and *Sharp Tools*.

Magi traces the "brief nominal history" of documentary poetry back to the 1990s, the same time when scholars like Nichols and Renov drew attention to the study of documentary film. With references to a variety of journal publications, Magi criticizes that attempts to define documentary poetry "ignore complex positions in contemporary art about intention, objectivity, representation, and what the function of art should be." As the basic definition in the first paragraph of this section shows, an understanding of docupoetry as subgenre depends on precisely these same positions, and the present argument reverses Magi's title to "Documentary in Light of Poetry." Aiming to move beyond respective questions of definition, Magi highlights ways in which documentary modes derived from the study of film are conducive to considerations of certain types of poetry. She further suggests that documentary theory may learn from studies of the poetry book, and she emphasizes the importance of ethics for both practices. Analyses of poems such as Kenneth Goldsmith's *Soliloquy* and Charles Reznikoff's *Holocaust* serve Magi to illuminate uneasy

links between poetry and representation (262). They further lead to the following conclusion:

> So while documentary film may help articulate the ethical challenges that a certain text faces, and while such articulations may serve to present poets with new ways to think about their projects, the information about making art flows in the other direction: documentary discourse can learn from the 'documentary poem' (Magi 273).

Magi's interest in the specific connections between the art forms in question rests on the book's unique involvement with "time, directionality, privacy, touch, and a particular visuality." The interest in the relevance of poetry for interpretations of documentary film originates, instead, in the recognition of poetic devices as they transfer onto the screen. Much of Magi's discussion follows her distinction between the acts of reading versus viewing. "A reader," Magi emphasizes, "while reading, can back up, reread, annotate and research at will" (274). A film scholar, I argue, does the same with films, and recent diversification of streaming possibilities have broadened the required availability. Once we dismiss the given distinction, reread and back up within a film, we can conclude that the discourse of certain documentaries can benefit from the practice of poetry analysis regardless of the poetry's type of distribution. Reception of all of Alghanem's documentaries gains from attention to stylistic devices common in poetry. Sensitivity to the poetics of the films therefore enhances their understanding.

Alghanem's particular manifestation of cross-genre work may owe to the significance of poetry in the Arab world, possibly the non-Western world in general. In "The Dream Builder," Philippa Kennedy quotes a statement by the artist that underlines this importance: "Poetry in the Arab world," Alghanem says, "is something that is under our skin" (Kennedy). The same conversation elaborates further on the artist's practice of diverse forms of creative expression beyond poetry and film. A different conversation identifies an interest in the intersections between various art forms as shared among the members of a studio established in the early 1980s in Sharjah. Hassan Sharif, to whom *Sharp Tools* is a tribute, remembers in the latter di-

alogue how he established this "factory" and how it grew to include Alghanem, as well as her husband Khalid Albudoor, among others (Alghanem, "Doing Performance"). "During that time," Sharif recalls, "visual art took on another dimension for us that could encompass literature, cinema and movement." One may recall, at this point, his statement from this essay's opening, that "all art is storytelling." An intriguing documentation of Sharif's performance art interacting with poetry is the small volume *Embodying* (2016), co-authored by Sharif and Cristiana de Marchi. *Sharp Tools* is another such communication between artists, adding a much broader scope and the audiovisual element absent from the print book.

As part of his dissertation research, Julius Lobo analyzed Muriel Rukeyser's efforts to turn her documentary poem on the Gauley Bridge tragedy in West Virginia (1930-35) into an actual film. The efforts to produce the film on one of the worst incidents of occupational silicosis were unsuccessful, but the existing samples allowed for Lobo's recognition of a montage technique common to both media. The findings of this research further made him realize that the projected film functioned as "gesture towards mass culture and popular entertainment" (Lobo 94). It might be stating the obvious that different forms of creative expression are bound to reach different audiences. What the present argument holds, however, is that generic overlap may divert a reader/viewer's attention from one form to another. The political engagement of the texts discussed in both Lobo's and Magi's essays, the issue of ethics, is at the centre of Noha Mellor's remarks on documentary film in a co-edited survey of recent developments regarding Arab media. Mellor describes the documentary genre as a "tool with which to debate and critique socio political problems" (115). This observation, at least to some extent, applies to Alghanem's work as well. Although commercial distribution is still missing, exposure during festivals and invited screenings provide outreach towards a larger audience. While *Nearby Sky* tackles women's rights, *Sharp Tools* traces the changing reception of experimental art in the United Arab Emirates.

In the extensive interview with Yunis, Alghanem, expresses frustration over the limitations determined by remaining taboos. She em-

phasizes how, sometimes, she wishes "to have the freedom of going securely straight forward on certain issues" (Yunis 454) and gives examples of how she has had to rely on suggestive symbols instead. Incidentally, such symbolism adds to the unique poetic nature of Alghanem's films. Yunis is right to point out the potential positive effect of a necessity that the proverb calls the "mother of invention," which makes Alghanem's films yet "more creative, magical." The following sections elaborate on the poetic ways in which Alghanem presents her characters and their concerns on screen, with a focus on the two films *Nearby Sky* (2014) and *Sharp Tools* (2017).

NEARBY SKY (2014): FATIMA AL HAMELI'S PRESENCE IN THE CAMEL INDUSTRY

Alghanem and Albudoor are both renowned poets in the United Arab Emirates. Together, they run the film production company Nahar Productions, named after the oldest of their three daughters. They often collaborate on films beyond production. Albudoor, for example, wrote the script for *Between Two Banks*. *Nearby Sky* as well as *Sharp Tools* were released during the past decade. They were selected for this study due to the contrasts between their respective protagonists, not only in gender but also in level of formal education. Both Sharif and Fatima Al Hameli share, however, a reverence for their natural environment, as well as for their related respective occupations. This kind of reverence is a crucial characteristic for the classification of Alghanem's films as docupoetry, since the setting receives as much attention as its characters. Yunis points out that the absence of material "not intrinsic to the setting" often owes to the slow funding processes of the films (453), which is another factor to consider when observing the film poetics. While the camel farm and the surrounding desert sustain the life and work of the main character in *Nearby Sky*, beach and wadi terrain play a crucial role in *Sharp Tools*, as they appear in and inspire Sharif's performance art and some of his installations. Since the artist's studios were always located in cities, urban space is much more prominent in *Sharp Tools* than in *Nearby Sky*. Both protagonists, however, also share an indebtedness to their socio-political en-

vironment, beyond the desert and the city. While Sharif's connection to his place of origin suggests itself in his decision to return there after his studies abroad, Al Hameli expresses explicit patriotism in attire as well as in statements (Fig. 1).

The title *Nearby Sky* highlights the significance of this film's setting. The protagonist is a widowed camel farm owner, who was the first woman to advance into activities pertaining to the camel industry in her country. Much of the film presents the desert environment (Figs. 1-2) as the source for this woman's livelihood as well as her passion. In clear contrast to Sharif, Al Hameli is an illiterate bedouin. She had never been to a cinema before the premiere of *Nearby Sky* (Shackleton). She is, however, as passionate about her work on the camel farm (Fig. 1), as Sharif is about his art.

Since both of Al Hameli's sons decided to pursue other occupations, she developed the ambition to present her animals at races, auctions, and beauty pageants herself (Fig 4). Throughout the film, viewers

Figure 1: Fatima Al Hameli on her farm.

Figure 2: Desert landscape in Nearby Sky.

learn about Al Hameli's rootedness in the desert (Fig. 2) and understand that it gives her the strength to demand her place among the male camel owners (Fig. 3). At the same time, Al Hameli seems prepared to stand out in the crowd, be that in the actual camel circuit or in its virtual representation on social media.

The business with camels, including races, auctions, and pageants, used to be exclusive to men; as Al Hameli explains, "the men said a woman shouldn't participate" (Fig. 3). Alghanem, however, also interviews younger camel owners who welcome the changes the protagonist of *Nearby Sky* represents. The latter's own sons show support even though they themselves do not want to work with the camels. The film moves Al Hameli's achievements into all kinds of other contexts—film criticism, for one. Mireille Rosello describes one of Agnès Varda's films as "a poetic and theoretical essay" (Rosello 29). In a similar vein, one might call Alghanem's films poetic biographies. They adjust rhythm and style according to their indi-

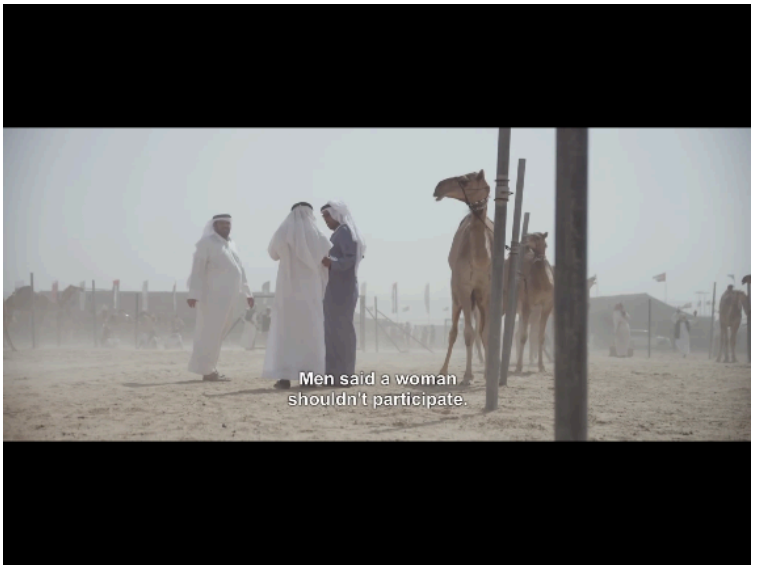

Figure 3: At the camel pageant.

vidual guest of honour. Yet, they are all recognizable as results of Alghanem's poetics, and its realization with the help of a reliable team. Yunis quotes the director's own comparison of working with Al Hameli in contrast to working with fellow artists, in this case the painter Najat Makki, Alghanem's maternal aunt, whom *Red Blue Yellow* (2013) is about:

> Sometimes the subject matter forces you to keep a certain way of telling the story. The style has to go with the story and the character. You can't be very experimental with someone like Fatma Al Hameli, although you can be symbolic. But when you make a film about an artist, the artist's world is sophisticated. It gives you the chance to dive in and explore the inner self, the inner peace, the inner questions –how this artist recalls the figures, how she draws the shadows, how masks and spaces appear in this artist's work. (Yunis 453)

Figure 4: Challenging male participants.

A fascinating way in which *Nearby Sky* uses symbolism, for example, is the alternation of scenes at the camel beauty pageant with Al Hameli's visit to a beauty salon. These scenes evoke feminist discourse on the so-called beauty myth and women's submission to fashion dictates. Such discourse receives a thought-provoking twist in light of the grooming of camels for their competition. Al Hameli's boasting about her social media followers during her pedicure adds a comic angle to a portrait that otherwise foregrounds serious determination and spirituality.

Sharif shares Al Hameli's determination, but his world, like Makki's, is more sophisticated, as the following section examines. Before turning to *Sharp Tools*, it is important to emphasize Alghanem's interest in diverse topics for her films. *Between Two Banks* tells the story of a former pearl diver and sailor, and *Sounds of the Sea* (2015) revolves around the songs of fishermen. *Al Mureed* introduces the famous Sufi Sheikh, and *Hamama* (2010) celebrates an elderly healer.

While the main characters of *Red Blue Yellow* and *Sharp Tools* are fellow artists, that of *Nearby Sky* is a camel farmer. Other films focus on a Syrian actress and a beekeeper. The individuals at the centre of Alghanem's films thus differ, as mentioned, in gender, age, level of formal education, national background, as well as specific location within the United Arab Emirates. Together, though, Alghanem's films contribute to a diverse record of her country's collective memory, as accidental or serendipitous this contribution may be. Yunis emphasizes how Alghanem rejects the idea that her films are about heritage, underlining that they are "about characters" instead (447). Yet, Chrysavgi Papagianni is right to detect a visualization of "communal experience that can transcend time" (330). Papagianni relies on the juxtaposition of the global versus the local to identify Alghanem's second feature-length documentary *Hamama* as "a force of localization" (326). Inasmuch as the protagonists of the various films expose certain customs and traditions, viewers do learn about those as much as they learn about any other facets of these characters' lives. While elements of heritage are always subordinate to individual occupations and concerns, it is worth noting that the poetry, "under our skin," in Alghanem's words, and a driving force behind the films, also belongs to the local collective memory.

Like *Hamama*, *Nearby Sky* rejects colonial discourses as it allows a strong woman to introduce herself and to elaborate on the ways in which she claims her place in her community based on her skills and determination. Al Hameli thus offers a different perspective on the collective memory in question, and she does this in the poetic way that connects to her specific rural setting. The succession of long shots surveying the desert, close ups on a camel's body parts, long shots of the pageant location, close ups on Al Hameli, her sons, or her assistant, all contribute to a tangible rhythm of the camel farmer's world. The rhythm of *Sharp Tools* is very different, as the following section shows.

SHARP TOOLS (2017): TRIBUTE TO A FRIEND

In contrast to Al Hameli, the protagonist of *Sharp Tools* is not only literate, he is an intellectual who received a diploma of Fine Arts from the Byam Shaw School of Art in London (Al Qassimi and Marta 290). After his return from London in 1984, Hassan Sharif collaborated with a group of artists in Sharjah and Dubai. This group exchanged ideas for different art forms as well as mutual support during a time when there was much less of an open-minded local audience (Alghanem, "Doing Performance"). *Sharp Tools* carefully traces the changes in public reception of Sharif's art from resistance and hostility (Fig. 5) to international recognition (Fig. 6).

The Sharjah Art Foundation online archive introduces Sharif as a "pioneer of conceptual art and experimental practice in the Middle East" ("Hassan Sharif"). His entry lists a great number of international group exhibitions that featured his work since the turn of the millennium, though his representation at Sharjah Biennials reaches back

Figure 5: Material for conceptual art.

Figure 6: Hassan Sharif as painter.

to the inaugural 1993 event. Sharif's work has further featured in solo exhibitions and is included in several international collections. The comprehensive retrospective titled "Hassan Sharif: I Am the Single Work Artist," curated by the Sharjah Art Foundation director Hoor Al Qassimi, provides a very moving record of artistic development about a year after Sharif's death in September 2016. Alghanem's film, which premiered at the Dubai International Film Festival's last edition in December 2017, offers invaluable context for any introduction to Sharif. It allows the artist to present himself in an intimate, at times ironic, and always thought-provoking way. His request not to show his smile in a close-up early in the film (Fig. 7) gives a glimpse of Sharif's tongue-in-cheek participation in a dialogue with the filmmaker and crew. It sets the stage for a series of seeming paradoxes, a concept the filmmaker herself celebrates in a well-known poem about an anticipated departure prolonged by deliberate delays (*Lo que queda* 286).[1]

Significant departures in Sharif's life relate to his studies in the United Kingdom, but after completing his studies there, he settled firmly within his group of fellow local artists. A decade prior to the film's premiere, in 2007, Sharif established a foundation called The Flying House, to promote contemporary artists in the United Arab Emirates (Sharif and de Marchi 156). During his studies at the Byam Shaw School of Art, the French conceptual artist Marcel Duchamp had become his main role model. Alghanem's film provides visual glimpses of Sharif's material for conceptual art (Fig. 5) and details of the production process. Consumer goods and, in some instances, found objects provided material only for some of Sharif's art, however. The diverse art forms practiced by him include, besides conceptual art, cartoons, sketching, painting (Fig. 6), and performance art (Fig. 8) documented in photographs, at times in combination with poetry. *Sharp Tools* celebrates the significance of all of these art forms for Sahrif's career, and it features Alghanem's original poetry on title cards.

Figure 7: Sharif close-up.

Figure 8: Performance art.

The poetry corresponds with Sharif's abstractions and often suggests his personal perspective. The first card, for example, less than a minute into the film, introduces the symbols of light and darkness, along with linguistic signifiers:

أحدهم أخذ مني الشمعة وأعطاني العتمة
بقيتُ في حيرةِ الحرفِ والنقطة

Someone took the candle from me and gave me darkness.
I have remained in the bewilderment of the letter and dot.

About forty minutes later, the fifth card returns to the symbol of light, but placed within the speaker this time:

داخل قلبي حفرة للفرح والخوف والغضب
داخل قلبي بياض الأيام ووحشة لياليها

Inside my heart a hole for happiness, fear, and anger
Inside my heart the whiteness and solicitude of the days

Much of the poetry on these cards refers to the speaker's position in relation to a second person, the poet or a single viewer, maybe. At times, however, it assumes a group, an audience. "They will come" is, for example, repeated on the fourth card. The third refers to "their voices and faces" as well as "their traces." While the traces are something the speaker tries to escape from, there is a more positive connotation when one reads "my heart is for them," in reference to friends, much later in the film. In the end, on the last card, one might even sense affinity in the line, "my eyes fall into their eyes," evoking memories.

At his own request, Sharif remains the only interviewee throughout the film, which gives him an extraordinary opportunity to reflect on motivations, philosophies, techniques, and interactions with his audience. Alghanem highlights Sharif's opinion that "the role of the artist is not only to create visual artworks but also to produce the right audience—to create the viewer" ("Doing Performance"). The film suggests how conflict and controversy seem to have had a stimulating function in this process. Alghanem also emphasizes Sharif's call on local artists to write indigenous histories of art, and some of his own critical essays exemplify this task. *Sharp Tools*, likewise, contributes to such an indigenous history with its focus on one key artist at a crucial time in the United Arab Emirates, shortly after the country's foundation. The film traces how, despite influences and inspiration in existing foreign art, the stunning originality of Sharif's works relies heavily on his natural as well as socio-political environment, the sea, desert, and sky, as well as the rapid modernization that accompanied the exploitation of oil resources. The same is true for Alghanem's art.

Repetition is a poetic device that dominates the structure of *Sharp Tools*. One of the re-occurring scenes illustrates Sharif's painting style (Fig. 6), and the high angle that allows the staircase to frame this shot may appear to represent the viewer's distance as well as the centrality of a certain creative process. The film surveys the artist's versatility on one hand, and explains intersections between Sharif's various art forms on the other. A specific concern would inspire him to focus on conceptual art at one time, and on performance at an-

other. The style of drawing from a very early phase resurfaces in a different way for a different kind of work much later in his career. Alghanem is careful to trace these developments, while returning to a large abstract oil on canvas in the house's hallway every so often (Fig. 6). The absence of other interviewees foregrounds the artist's own reflection on the development of his art, accompanied or enforced, by no means interrupted, by the poetry on title cards. Although Sharif speaks mostly to the camera, with the viewer implied, he sometimes engages in dialogue with other characters, such as his assistant.

There are also silent scenes, which require viewers to devote their undivided attention to a specific creative process. These scenes add to the rhythm of the film, along with the repetitions and the music. While *Nearby Sky* features music by Marwan Abado, *Sharp Tools* includes tributes to Sharif's admiration for Philip Glass and music by Mohammed Haddad. In general, the music as well as the cinematography match the personalities of individual represented characters. They complement the significance of settings. They further complement the use of symbols, such as the beauty salon in *Nearby Sky*. The more dominant symbol for Al Hameli, as the film title suggests, is the sky, or heaven. For Sharif, a recurring blue thread plays such a central role. As he pulls this rope through sand in the desert, he denies, with his appreciation for paradoxes, that he has a path. Observed together, all these elements create the poetic style at the centre of this essay. To understand Alghanem's films as examples of docupoetry allows for the appropriate recognition of the interaction of such elements. It might, furthermore, place her films in dialogue with other poets' documentaries.

CONCLUSION

While the characteristics of documentary poetry have received considerable critical attention, those of poetic documentary film have not. Studies such as Steimatsky's analysis of Mangini's *Essere donne* remain exceptional. This essay proposes the category of "docupoetry" in order to lend it an impor-

tance similar to that already assigned to docudrama or docufiction. Why, then, does an analysis of films like *Nearby Sky* and *Sharp Tools* benefit from their categorization as docupoetry? The poetic character of their cinematography, rhythm, symbolism, content selection, and presentation, I argue, is indeed such that it should dominate the reception. One need not simply consider the director's poetics for an interpretation, but one should make it one's point of departure. For his four-function model in "Toward a Poetics of Documentary," Renov uses verbs rather than adjectives as labels. He distinguishes between record/reveal/preserve, persuade/promote, analyze/interrogate, and express (Renov 22-24). The last, which he also refers to as the "aesthetic function," is the most relevant to an understanding of Alghanem's films. Renov blames the "institutionalization of the art/science opposition" for the general neglect of this function, and uses examples from photography to illustrate a "poetic effect" (33). In the conclusion of this expressive or aesthetic function's description, he cites "the ability to evoke emotional response or induce pleasure in the spectator by formal means, to generate lyric power through shadings of sound and image in a manner exclusive to verbalization" (35) for what he then parenthetically calls "artful documentary" or "documentary art." Inasmuch as Alghanem's films emerge within the young cinema movement referred to in this essay's introduction, with poetics very much connected to their settings, these remarks by Renov remain of limited use. A new term, such as "docupoetry" might instead lead the way to new theories of specific poetics or, rather, docupoetics beyond the idea of "Occidental poetry."

In the 1980s, British television introduced the "verse-documentary," and Peter Atkinson presents a detailed discussion of this genre in "Poetic License: Issues of Signification and Authorship in British Television Verse-Documentary, 1986-96." Alghanem's work does not fit into this category because it presupposes a collaboration between two different artists, a filmmaker on the one hand, and a poet on the other. Furthermore, Alghanem's films are not intended for television. The last Dubai International Film Festival film guide offered the special category of "creative documentary." This is a pleonasm if one adapts Grierson's definition of the genre. In "Funding the 'Cre-

ative Documentary': An Art Cinema of Refugees," Kay Dickinson and Viviane Saglier analyze the significance of this category within the Arab context, and their discussion confirms that it does not concern films such as Alghanem's (Dickinson and Saglier 134-135). Also, *Creative Documentary: Theory and Practice* (2013) defines this category as "factual entertainment" (De Jong et al.) which is clearly misguided in the context of Alghanem's films.

"Artful documentary" does not seem to offer more precision. Instead, this essay holds that "docupoetry" is the best term to describe the characteristic style for Alghanem's documentaries, whereby the production process derives from a poetic way of observing and representing selected material. As a category, docupoetry recalls the "first steps" Renov provided more than two decades ago, and whose lack of pursuit may owe to the same persistent art/science divide succinctly described by him in the same essay. It may also relate to a Western ("Occidental") lack of interest in poetry, while in the Arab world, to recall Alghanem's statement once more, poetry is "something that is under our skin" (Kennedy). Alghanem's extraordinary films all allow certain characters to represent themselves in a way conducive to their respective personalities, because the films employ poetic devices, such as rhythm, symbolism, and personified settings. Viewers therefore do well to foreground these techniques in their reception. While it is easy to agree with Sharif that "all art is storytelling," it does make a difference to understand the results in a more prosaic or in a more poetic way.

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IMAGE NOTES

Figures 1-4: screenshots from *Nearby Sky*.

Figures 5-8: screenshots from *Sharp Tools*.

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NOTES

1. "مفارقات," included in Alghanem's لا وصف لما أنا فيه, has been translated into German by Stephan Milich for the blog lyrikline.org, and into Spanish by Muhsin Al-Ramli for *Lo que queda del reproche*. https://www.lyrikline.org/en/poems/6223↩

THE RISE OF KETO MAN: THE MYTH OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY

GENEVIEVE WILSON

This paper examines how the keto (ketogenic) diet comes to meet the social and political needs and desires that go unmet in the context of neoliberalism. By tracking the ideology and rhetoric that emerges from personal anecdotes of people reliant on a meat based diet – with a specific focus to online platforms – I situate the diet as engaging with and reproducing a male chauvinistic ideology. I suggest that the person who finds themselves on keto wants to invest in themselves to contrast the anxiety and precarity that they face in a neoliberal society. I call this figure Keto Man.

Cet article examine comment le régime céto (cétogène) parvient à répondre aux besoins et désirs sociaux et politiques qui ne sont pas satisfaits dans le contexte du néolibéralisme. En suivant l'idéologie et la rhétorique qui émergent des anecdotes personnelles de personnes dépendantes d'un régime à base de viande - avec un accent particulier sur les plateformes en ligne - je situe le régime comme un engagement avec et une reproduction d'une idéologie chauvine masculine. Je suggère que la personne qui se retrouve sous céto veut s' investir en elle-même pour contraster l'anxiété et la précarité auxquelles elle est confrontée dans une société néolibérale. J'appelle cette figure Keto Man.

In an interview with Joe Rogan, Jordan Peterson relays his transition to a pure "carnivore diet" (Rogan 00:30). Peterson attributes his predominantly meat-based diet to resolving his bodily ailments and allowing him to go about his day "better now than [he's] ever been in [his] life" (09:45), and, crucially, frames his diet as allowing him to become intellectually "his best" (11:08). This personal improvement experienced by Peterson allows him to feel he is perform-

ing his intellectual labour at peak productivity and also has the physical strength to care for his family. These characteristics are constituted and structured in the most fundamental way as the 1950s man—one that is part social fact and part fantasy where he believed himself respected and valued for his labour in both social and the economic sphere, as head of the household and breadwinner, who was rational, strong, and in control. In this respect, Peterson idealizes a return to the past which has ignored how 1950s men were enmeshed in networks of social security. Instead, Peterson seeks to return to these coded material realities where contemporary men are no longer victims to a precarious social reality that once preserved their existence. This figure of the contemporary man is presented against everyone else who Peterson calls "fat and stupid" (Rogan 12:47). This secondary category has been made weak and victim to a social reality which no longer preserves their existence. However, men who have accepted Peterson's narrative and adopt his practices for themselves serve all the more as representations of a masculinity coded by the precarity of the socioeconomic landscape. Located at this intersection of transgressive culture and neoliberal precarity, I set out to track the emergence of a figure I call "Keto Man".

Keto Man is a "type" in the same way that one identifies themselves as being "punk" or a "hippie": they are sets of conformities that inform individual behaviour and practices under contemporary conditions (a "genre" of being). The anxiety of failing within the ideologically bound identity of Keto Man isolates him from becoming his most authentic self; this means that the Keto Man discourse is characterized internally by tensions, anxieties, and contradictions. The person who finds themselves on keto wants to invest in themselves to contrast the precarity that they face in a neoliberal society. They no longer want to find themselves victimized to the inauthentic lifestyle characterized by a feminine culture. Keto Man draws on ideas of caveman autonomy and primitiveness that free the individual from contemporary cultural constructions. As well, Keto Man draws on the hegemonic masculinity associated with the figure of Super*man*, situating the discourse as linked to patriarchal forms of power. To explore the identity of Keto Man in greater detail, I ex-

amine the Youtuber Aaron Marino, known on his channel as "AlphaM". As an influencer, Marino outlines the practices and behaviours which make up his life and creates a cultural image that other men can identify with and mimic. The practices he promotes become identifiable with a particular genre of being: encompassing figures like Jordan Peterson, Andrew Tate, and Jacob Chansley (also known as the QAnon Shaman).

The materially real practice of a meat-based diet, for Keto Man, is used with the aim to reawaken fantasies which are deeply rooted in constructions of hegemonic masculinity. His identity is a set of predetermined performances which even the working-class man feels he can relate to. On the bodily level, the dreams of recreating the strength of bodybuilding men are unattainable. But in the psyche, he reproduces images of power: over labour and over himself. This access to power, reinforced by keto discourse and culture, reinforces the belief Keto Man holds that he is a sovereign individual, where all values appear arbitrary in contrast to the immediacy of his desires. Yet keto is reproduced within contemporary food cultures like Instagram—a media ecology popularly known as "foodstagram"—not only as it offers itself as an extension of value of the individual, but, at the same time, becomes a form of currency being circulated in competition with others. As the individual shares images of their food, they aim not only to show the food's quality but also suggest they are eating better than others. But more deeply connected to the individual's identity is the adoption of a diet as it reflects meanings attached to foods often bordering on fully formed philosophy. The specificity of the discourse equates moral values, personal projects of health, and wider cultural beliefs. Keto, in this instance, emphasizes a narrative of personal strength.

It is precisely in this respect that this analysis of Keto Man is contextualized by the tradition of discourse analysis established by the Frankfurt School. Keto's practices and discourse are a type of "text" reproducing ideological thought. This critique of Keto Man is a "project emerging out of a specific image of time. It is this that separates the project from critique envisioned as mere *disagreement*… [but] designates time as the point of contact between two (or more) states

of being … [that] separates one future from another" ("Frankfurt" 7). A person on keto relates to, interprets, and acts within contemporary culture through the lens of the very specific and regimented ideology of keto. Here, keto frames itself as a solution to contemporary ails. Yet, beyond simply masking present social conditions (ideology as a false consciousness), keto points to a real critique within society. Keto's rejection of carbs—processed breads and pastries that are draped in decadence and fantasies of luxury—still registers a real problem in capitalist economies: the motivation of profit incentivizes food culture that is unhealthy in its large quantities. This approach, one that looks at both the inner logic of an ideology and subtly or unknowingly critiques the present order, derives from Fredric Jameson's conception of the political unconscious, which ultimately examines the embedded political context within a text. Though keto discourse acts as a utopian project of the self, aiming to separate itself from mainstream practices, it is both created from and unconsciously reproduces a capitalist system. Finally, I explore the discourse utilized by Keto Man through Roland Barthes use of semiotics.

What follows is a preliminary historicization of Keto Man. After unpacking the conditions which have brought about the emergence of Keto Man, I examine three distinct, yet interdependent forms of his identity. The first section presents a reading of the smart and savvy entrepreneur Keto Man imagines himself as within the neoliberal economy. This figure is grounded in a socioeconomic logic that maximizes productivity for its greatest return. In the second section, I examine how Keto Man frames his return to caveman practices as a restoration of what he believes makes up human essence. Finally, in the third section I confront the gendered nature of Keto Man; I examine his avowed return to traditional masculinity in contrast to the feminization of the world (and of men) he sees taking place. Tracked across all three sections are the relations of meat consumption to the configuration of stability characterized by Keto Man. This line of inquiry aims to examine how keto responds to gaps within contemporary culture that go unmet by present economic and social systems.

EMERGING FROM THE DISCOURSE

The keto diet is best understood through the primary consumption of animal-based protein and low-carb meals: classic meals like steak and potatoes are reimagined as complete with just steak. This combination is fantasized by many as a cure-all diet: from obesity to epilepsy to cancer (Wheless 4). The rhetoric of the keto (ketogenic) diet is mutually implicated in living a healthy life. But its success as a diet was based on producing physical results: its most compelling result remains rapid weight loss. This dieting subject wants to believe they have found a system in which they can establish a secure identity: one speaks of *being* keto rather than just being *on* the keto diet. While there is an established medical discourse surrounding the keto diet that legitimates its practices, I examine keto within the contemporary cultural context. Unlike the traditional understanding of keto which demands a strict and unwavering adherence—excluding pantry staples like breads and pastas, traditionally high in carbs, as well as vegetables and legumes—I broaden this working definition of keto to encompass variations of the diet like its more extreme version the carnivore diet and the paleo diet. Both streams reproduce the same narrative as keto through a focus on the naturalness of meat consumption but are narrated under a different name. Keto points towards a set of behaviours associated with copious consumption of meat. I suggest that the set of beliefs engendered by the keto discourse can be tracked against anyone's overreliance on meat as a primary form of sustenance.

It is, then, keto's restrictive habits which aim to define a person's consumption around the needs of their individual body. On keto, the body is sent into ketosis, which is considered by its adherents the most productive, physical state. No longer burning excess carbs as a source of energy, the body targets fat. As fat is naturally produced in the body and found in sufficient quantities in meat, keto is framed as reacting to the body's deepest and most primordial needs. The "good fats" from the meat are framed as powerful inducers to performance enhancement, with adherents to the diet claiming improved levels of energy, mental clarity, and developing otherwise unreachable levels

of strength.[1] Though its excessive consumption is traditionally linked to the fear of clogging one's arteries, meat is framed by those on keto as the primary cause of substantial personal transformation. This diet comes to be recognized, paradoxically, as a kind of cleanse. The body's shift into ketosis purges the inadequacy of carbs and rebuilds itself through the pure, naturalness of meat. This total body experience comes in the form of a "keto flu," a short-term sickness that commonly occurs in the shift of metabolic function. While its symptoms become comparable to weaning off of a drug addiction, the flu functions as a form of ritual rebirth with religious associations. Having passed through this rite, the body is now considered ready to face the harsh realities of neoliberal society. Keto is, thus, framed as a salvation – somewhere between diet and religion – that suggests it is capable of crafting one's body (and soul) into its most ideal form.

Keto Man maintains control over his consumption right from the beginning: earning the money to buy the cut of meat right through to its preparation. But whoever follows this diet in no way escapes the logic of the market. Jennfier M. Silva's text *Coming Up Short*—a sociology of working class peoples—explores people who have been unable to establish this security and become victims of the neoliberal system through economic precarity and a broad sense of purposelessness. Her text highlights how they first "experienced a steep decline in employment, job security, compensation, access to pensions, and employer-subsidized health insurance" and were displaced "to the service economy … where [they are] poorly paid, vulnerable to layoffs, and much more likely to be female" (14-15). The neoliberal subject is "individually negotiated and continually reinvented" (19) in an often-futile attempt to determine one's social existence. As the working class male attempts to navigate the harsh realities of the neoliberal economy, he is often nostalgic for the idealized American Dream life of the 1950s and 1960s when the "welfare state …guarantee[d] basic standards of living to all, and [directed] the economy towards socially desirable ends" (Gerbaudo 19). The neoliberal subject's nostalgia towards his parents' generation focuses on men as they were independent. These men were enmeshed in social networks of welfare state programs, allowing them to live more digni-

fied lives. They were not victims to the "coercion, restriction, and discrimination" (Silva 15) that presently plagues their existence.

The identity of Keto Man did not emerge solely as a response to the market conditions but, in part, arose as a reactionary movement to a growing feminist culture. At a time when the alt-right narrative was only beginning to gain mainstream traction, Donald Trump's campaign and Presidency split the Republican party between those who "may eventually go down the road of outright fascism", legitimating the movement and its concerns, and those who have a "greater resemblance to nineteenth-century rabid conservative nationalism" (Gerbaudo 28). These men who identify with the culturally transgressive movement—which is at the same time preoccupied with rebuilding a society based on white masculine ideals—follows from a long tradition of meninist discourse. Meninism is a male-chauvinistic discourse that emphasizes a perceived innate superiority and privilege of the male sex. Symbols of this meninist participation come from cultural touchstones like the film *Fight Club*. Men are depicted within the film as utilizing the rawness of their bodies for savage fighting against other men to demonstrate their strength and power. *Fight Club* is a reclamation of masculinity in a consumerist, post-industrial culture seen as having transformed men into lazy (feminized) office workers. This gendered essentialism calls for a return to traditional binary gender roles when men held absolute social power.

The meninist subcategory of the alt-right established itself within a new form of online society. The transgressive space that Keto Man participates in is outlined by Angela Nagle's text *Kill All Normies* where she tracks how men utilize the alt-right narrative and rhetoric to offer themselves a greater sense of domination and power. These men move away from a society they see as perverted from its natural state of male superiority and long to reestablish society through a community of men who claim to see reality for what it truly is: a prison-like, feminized society. The meninist discourse attempts to reveal how sociocultural behaviours have become unfair for men as feminist practices are suggested to pervasively control individual actions. These men have constructed, in turn, a networked culture termed the "manosphere" (Nagle 86) which encourages men to utilize

a perceived intrinsic power to create a reality based around a desired sovereignty to become a "real man." The power they conceive within this system is based on performing their masculinity for other men; they want to impress men on a near-homoerotic level where other men desire to be like them, in character and physicality. While men are simultaneously in competition against and empowered by other men to completely restore traditional codes of masculinity into their daily lives, they are driven by a social misandry to which they feel victimized against the feminist wave. This bitterness and resentment of their personal struggle fills these online spaces and creates subcultures that are free of the "feminized networks [as men actively and] aggressively seek to defend the[ir] borders" (Nagle 112).

In 2008, Aaron Marino uploaded his first men's advice video to his *YouTube* channel "AlphaMConsulting." His platform would become an empire that celebrated men "looking and feeling their best" (Marino "I Am Alpha M") through fitness, eating for physical optimization, and behaving like an alpha male. Further, the transformation of diet and lifestyle would ensure that men attain sexual conquests and economic success. The content of the channel centres on demonstrating to others how to be a "real man." Marino's *YouTube* channel, presently, has traffic of over 1 billion views and over 6 million *YouTube* subscribers. Though influencers like Marino exist primarily in online spaces, social media has become a prominent way of meeting and engaging with others, opening avenues to transform their online beliefs into physical experiences and expectations. Populist figures like Trump have capitalized on these communities to promote his own agenda while continually being emboldened by the increasing number of his followers.

Marino's behaviours can be read as reproducing a hegemonic masculine identity. As both an entrepreneur and fitness influencer, his identity is based on both a notion of individuality and reproducing a traditional image of masculinity. The hair products he sells and physical fitness routines he expounds contribute to ideas of physical optimization which construct notions of hegemonic masculinity. Further, Marino's identity is based on his diet. Marino's physique, a defined six pack and muscular arms that he brags about creating through his

diet, is interpreted as a sign of masculinity. R.W. Connell delineates this practice of reading the body as a text as body-reflexive practices, bodies as "both objects and agents of practice" (61). Marino's diet is also linked to notions of rugged individualism and self-reliance which literally shape his body into a hyper-masculine appearance. Marino prioritizes protein consumption through meat and the exclusion of processed foods, but he frames these keto-like behaviors as self-customization, a narrative that will be examined in greater detail in the following sections. These dietary practices are described as exclusively suited to his body, yet when the diet is broken down it mimics the regimented keto diet. Like the broader influence network he is a part of, his success is based on being a reproducible figure. I suggest that Marino, but especially his AlphaM brand, while promoting a loose version of keto, is nevertheless a paradigmatic expression of the Keto Man narrative. In what follows, I examine how Marino's diet and behaviours are constituted through "social relations and symbolism" (Connell 64) to form the social reality of Keto Man.

KETO MAN: "A VERY REGIMENTED DUDE":[2] THE RATIONAL NEOLIBERAL SUBJECT

From William Whyte's *The Organization Man*, the man who vows all parts of himself to institutions, using the language of individualism to "stave off the thought that he himself is in a collective" (5), to the contemporary apparatus of Silicon Valley and the entrepreneurs who imagine themselves as non-conformists and creating new practices, Keto Man idealizes the entrepreneur as the height of neoliberal success. The entrepreneur does not see his obedience to the neoliberal system as a form of control over him, but rather sees himself rising to the top and dominating the system itself. The entrepreneur "perform[s his] identity on the edge of convention" ("Sovereigns of Risk" 595), allowing him to push the acceptability of the system while still appearing bound by the neoliberal order. The entrepreneur works without questioning the legitimacy of the capitalist state. His ability to master the conditions of the neoliberal state for his own benefit frame him as the most worthy of success. Keto Man creates a distinction between the smartness of the entrepreneur

and the run-of-the-mill white-collar worker. A tension arises in the discourse as Keto Man rejects the capitalist participation of the white-collar worker. The white-collar worker is framed within the discourse as being no more than a cog in a machine: a faceless paper pusher. He is resented by Keto Man for reproducing an ostensibly stagnant life and allowing socioeconomic conditions to direct and shape him. He is nothing but an effect of a larger system: he lacks self-directedness and creativity. Although the entrepreneur often begins as a nerdy office worker, the white-collar labourer is regarded as being a lesser type of man until he discovers a niche product that drives him to fantastic success. Keto Man sees the entrepreneur's rise to the top as possible for anyone as he is not born into the entrepreneurial power, but rather must carve his own path.

The brutality of making it to the top of the economic system is less physical than it is an entrepreneurial drive to risk everything for innovation. Keto Man wants to be seen as equally a natural and powerful force within the knowledgeable, invisible hands of the market. What makes Keto Man's entrepreneurial drive so distinctive is his belief that a meat-induced power has procured his financial success rather than the mechanics of the market. Anything less than the high quality of the meat would devastate the performance of the entrepreneur. Thus, the average man believes himself also capable of attaining economic and social freedom through his consumption of meat. The economic independence necessary for Keto Man to be able to afford meat in such large quantities becomes analogous to gaining personal freedom. To be on such an expensive diet like keto would appear reserved for the upper working class, or middle-class citizens. Yet, it is often the working-class man who finds himself drawn to keto. As meat is targeted toward and consumed by "wealthy markets" (Otero 10), it becomes a part of a refined sense of taste and from here, offers the consumer symbolic capital. I suspect that the working-class male in these contexts desires to imitate the middle-class lifestyle promised by keto to reap its elevating social benefits. It is not just a promise to make one capable of appearing to be a part of the upper classes by augmenting the subject's appearance; the actual cost itself of being on keto suggests that the subject is already there.

It is through the self-disciplinary behaviors crafted through the restrictiveness of keto that Keto Man imagines meat as a form of rational individualized control within the neoliberal system. Yet, he remains fearful of being misperceived solely as a meathead. Contemporary culture defines the meathead as the guy who spends all day in the gym and does nothing but gorge on burgers. Thus, Keto Man actively seeks to expand his identity beyond just being perceived as simply healthy, strong, and physically attractive; he further imagines himself as resourceful, clever, and a successful neoliberal agent. He recognizes that *just* being physically fit is no longer a means to getting what he wants in this world. This reimagined self constructs his life through the controlled behaviours engendered by keto. It is through these behaviours that he sees himself as becoming prepared to face the unstable conditions of neoliberal reality. Keto Man mimics the productivity ketosis has on the body within his labour production. He aims to be constantly maximizing and expanding his output. His view towards constant production offers him status in return for his productivity. Adhering to regimented practices of keto is proof to others that he takes all aspects of his life seriously and applies to it the same level of control and rationality: he sees his own body as a factory in need of constant management and improvement in order to be made most efficient. Within the coordinates of this new imaginary, Keto Man takes a performative pleasure in rejecting the pre-made commercialized foods – foods that he often characterizes as carbs – that are sold in stores. He distinguishes his own dietary habits as superior and freer than those of the mass consumer; he is not captivated or enslaved by the addictiveness of eating cookies or breads, all things he has reduced to carbs. Carbs are framed within this narrative as irrational. They link the individual to consumerism for self-pleasure and stagnancy rather than active production. The individual is weighed down and kept from doing more than their menial, monotonous, and valueless labour.

Marino frames his weekly consumption of meat as providing him with a socially respected power. From Marino's meal preparation ("THE ULTIMATE 'ALPHA' DAILY ROUTINE" 05:14) to running a business (06:14), meat consumption is imagined as a tool of the al-

pha male: innately knowing how to utilize the system around him for his own advantage. He notably "stocks up" on meat from Costco ("What to Eat to Get LEAN" 00:51), a store exclusive to those who have the disposable income to pay for membership. For Marino, it is the thriftiness of these grocery trips which matter. The consumer is made to look disciplined in their shopping experience at Costco through their savviness in shopping in bulk to save money. He maintains this control beginning at work and earning money right through to buying the meat. The purchase of meat in transparent bags and free of branded packaging foregrounds the product itself as indicative of value: meat has symbolic value that does not need to be qualified by branding. It is the fuel that enhances and breeds a sly and fierce competitor that is like the "king of the jungle." He feels as though he has greater purchasing power because even though he spent "a hundred and twenty-five bucks at Costco [he] got a month's worth of chicken and salmon" (01:43 - 01:50). The transaction between Keto Man and private enterprise illustrates what neoliberals perceive as a mutually beneficial system. Thus, Keto Man aims to maintain the system for both his own liberation from the state, and in turn, to secure the self-governing system and practices which support the privatized businesses.

For Marino, the image of the entrepreneur—a ruggedly individualistic shark like Kevin O'Leary—takes on a life of grandeur. He narrates his life journey as one from bankruptcy to billionaire—having failed as a gym owner, Marino began his entrepreneurial journey creating the online business "AlphaMConsulting"—where he understands the conditions of the world through the market as both systems have grown and established themselves together. Having appeared twice on the television show *Shark Tank,* a show where aspiring entrepreneurs pitch their ideas to successful businessmen, Marino's product receives validation from its appearance on network television for a clientele who legitimize his status as an entrepreneur. His ability to attain success and perceivably become a persona with the magnitude of Kevin O'Leary transforms Marino into a powerful individualistic figure. Marino identifies this persona as the "alpha" male. Marino equates the alpha to someone who is "capable and is going to kick ass

Figure 1

at life" ("10 Rules 'ALPHA' Males Follow that 'BETA' Males Don't" 00:16-00:21).

IN THE RAW: PRIMITIVE AUTHENTICITY

Not until the dismantling of the welfare state and the subsequent need to fend for oneself would caveman imagery be used to express contemporary behaviours. Silva's interviewee recounts entering a society he blames "for all our problems, and one thing [he] agrees with is that we have no coming-of-age rituals to dictate when we are a man… maybe a tribe back in the day would take you on a hunt and you might have a ritual combat" (50). The only semblance of a secure identity he is left with is that of the caveman. Keto Man calls to reawaken the caveman buried inside of himself. Though this lifestyle is popularized in the form of a caricature: sitting by *his own* fire and eating meat that he has hunted, *by himself*. Through this reanimation of the past, Keto Man believes himself to be returning to his natural essence. Human essence—for Keto Man a primitive authenticity—makes the claim that humans are innately primal beings. Fantasies of the caveman life are highlighted through

the adoption of self-sufficient behaviours that go beyond simply eating meat. According to Keto Man, one's essence has been interrupted amidst the perceived falsity and unnaturalness of cultural practices in contemporary society, contextualizing Keto Man's desire to return to a narrative of the Noble Savage. Ter Ellingson unpacks Rousseau's understanding of the savage as someone who may remain a "personification of natural goodness by a romantic glorification of savage life" and is idolized for living as an individual "in a 'pure state of nature' – gentle, wise, uncorrupted by the vices of civilization" (1). This state of being reaffirms conceptions of individual and self-sufficient survival as natural. The fantasy of sovereignty from the social state is established through his adherence to keto. The transition towards unobstructed "freedom" is characterized through animality and brute power as meat consumption leads to connotations of muscularity and invigorated masculinity.

The makeup of meat for the caveman is different than for the rational neoliberal subject: it has not yet undergone its transformation into a refined, scientifically validated diet. Rather, meat is primarily associated with the primal instinct of hunting for one's food. One is seen as having a "bull like strength" (Barthes 62) that can be imagined back to a primitive era where the caveman would rip meat with his teeth "in such a way as to make one keenly aware at the same time of its original strength and of its aptitude to flow into the very blood of man" (62). These cuts of meat—soaked with animal blood—are envisioned as a part of a "dense and vital fluid" (Barthes 58) that converts itself into a supplement that can aid the human body. This blood that is pumped into the body and circulates in the veins of the human is infused with the power of the animal. The joining of the animal and the human body heightens the natural animality that links the two species. This strength is transferred from the animal to the human through ideas of protein. When proteins are utilized within the terms of the discourse, they offer a mythical superstrength that repairs one's body and sustains its function. They target muscle growth, making the individual feel indestructible, and in a way, allow them to feel immortal. At the same time, the discourse positions carbs more generally as artificial and derivative when compared to

the naturalness of meat. The characterization of carbs is as the make-up of processed foods: foods that have been manufactured within an industrial system and have fundamentally altered their makeup. Within the conditions of the discourse, the weak and sluggish person who goes to the grocery store, where the work has already been done for them, becomes like the very carbs they eat puffy figures with little purpose. They have allowed themselves to be determined by the unnaturalness of carbs, a weakness that holds them victim to the equally unnatural construction of social democracy and culture.

An immense distance separates figures like weak betas from the icons of Keto Man. For figures like Jordan Peterson and Andrew Tate, the desire to thrive as an alpha male—believing to live authentically in line with his deepest nature and uphold superior conditions of health and power—points towards the social Darwinist idea of survival of the fittest. Keto Man imagines having keto-enhanced abilities that support him as he moves to conquer the cruelty of life, a state of affairs he naturalizes rather than situates within a contemporary context built around neoliberal norms and practices. He sees his natural abilities and instincts as already "hardwired into [his] animalistic brain" (00:47-00:55 "7 PRIMAL Behaviors that ALL Men Must Embrace"). Marino plays out this narrative in his video "7 PRIMAL Behaviors that ALL Men Must Embrace," emphasizing and prioritizing an indebtedness to primal caveman behaviours that he suggests have allowed him to take control of his life. For example, Marino frames making money as a modern-day equivalent to being "out on the hunt," looking for gazelle's and emus to bring home (03:11-03:22) for sustenance. Both practices sustain the individual as supposedly capable of self-sufficiency. Neither the caveman nor modern man is depicted as worried about their vulnerabilities amidst the precarities of the wilderness and market. They are, as Marino suggests, like the "king of the jungle, the big lion [who] walk[s] around with giant lion nuts [and not] walking around going oh sorry, I didn't mean to be the *king of the freaking jungle*" (01:20-01:31, original emphasis).[3] He posits the figure of the alpha as reflecting social dominance. Appearing as a legitimated power, Keto Man as an alpha rejects other au-

Figure 2

thority which tells him how to live. He is not to "doubt [his] ability" (A WARNING TO ALL (Modern) MEN, 00:13-00:14) to "be a leader."

"AM I TOO MACHO?": A RETURN TO AUTHENTIC MASCULINITY

The intensification of masculinity can be understood through its aim to restore a gendered essentialist view to the world. This form of masculinity, in other words, was once at the heart of social practices which no longer mediate one's relationship to the world. The key means through which Keto Man reinscribes himself as a "man" is, first and foremost, bound up in traditionally masculine practices. But Keto Man can no longer trace his status within contemporary society, one which he perceives as increasingly feminine, as he believes his own intrinsic rights have been minimized. Rather, Keto Man's origin of masculine power emerges from online communities where he is once again in a position "to take up space" ("10 Things that Make Men look FEMININE!" 02:29-02:31), as traditionally male conduct is reimagined as socially necessary practices. These online support systems become contemporary versions

of the "old boys club" where wealthy men would go to help other men both professionally and with personal problems. But the online networks are not exclusive to class – though their online access is in some ways exclusive and mediated by gatekeepers– nor are they filled with chatter regarding one's financial security held around whisky and cigars. They are concerned with one's perceived masculinity and how it is secured.

The key means through which Keto *Man* reaffirms his masculinity is through his drive for meat consumption as it offers him an unrefined strength and power within the terms of the discourse. It is, then, not only the artificiality of carbs which reinforce the idea of their deficiency when compared with the natural strength of meat, but also their inadequate nutrition. They are framed as creating a consumer who is both unhealthy and weak in contrast to Keto Man who sees himself as superhuman. Carbs are framed as lacking any valuable substance for the consumer who is then imagined as resembling this inefficiency within their own lives. Certainly, a rise in the notion of comfort foods—foods made largely of carbs and sugars like breads, pastas, and pastries—coincides with the rise of a culture that is perceived as female. The self-care narrative that is strongly linked to women emphasizes eating these comfort foods as an emotional support as they make an individual feel better about the present insecurities that they are facing. This weakened individual is understood within the terms of the discourse as susceptible to the addictiveness of carbs as they are reproduced by consumer markets that aim to trap consumers in a constant cycle of heedless consumption. From their initial doughy state to the fluffiness of pastries, carbs lack a spine (literally lacking the vertebras of cows and pigs); rather, they are made up of such a vulnerable consistency that they have the potential to fall in on themselves, just as the consumer who eats bread is seen by Keto Man as powerless to their surroundings.

Marino notes in "HOW MASCULINE ARE YOU? (10 Signs You're MORE Masculine Than You Think)" that "being a dude in today's world is a little bit confusing, right, because masculinity is kinda like a dirty word; everybody's yelling about toxic this, and masculine that, and you're like woah, what should I do, am I too macho?" (00:34

-00:47). Today's man, Marino reassures his male viewers, is *born* to be perceived as "a masculine man" (01:00-01:02) and should be afforded the ability – despite a culture Keto Man recognizes as feminine – to perform traditional and dominant codes of masculinity. Commenters on Marino's channel, for example, look to implement the fantasy of male dominance into their daily lives beyond their online haven. After Marino's video "9 'NICE GUY' Mistakes DESTROYING YOUR LIFE" was posted, commenters sought further advice on how to build bonds with men and exclude women from their social circles – as talking to women was not a "look" they wanted amidst a culture seen as already feminized. Commented responses included going to the gym or joining the army as a means of reaffirming their masculinity. While these men sought communities of men to affirm their masculinity, these subcultures dominated by men utilize discourses of masculinity to regain a semblance of social control lost amidst contemporary society.

The last key element in Keto Man's show of dominance is his ability to control women. He has been taught this trade from incel subculture which "tend[s] to read like a sinister Darwinst guide" (Nagle 88-89) on enhancing his sexual dominance. The hunt for women is a game Keto Man learns at a young age. Keto Man tracks the "loathed female prey into surrender[ing]" (Nagle 88-89). Here, hunting as a motif is used as it connects Keto Man's masculinity to the primal, animalistic behaviours and imagery discussed in the last section. For Keto Man, this is a game he knows he can win. He practices these behaviours in spaces like Tinder that become a hub for men to swipe right on women until they get the perfect "spicy ass senorita on [their] junk" ("Make A Woman WANT You MORE Than A Friend!" 00:04-00:06). While dating and hook-up apps have made it easy to access sexual gratification, Keto Man wants to be more than just a "player" but have women "obsess over [his] sexy ass" ("Make A Woman OBSESS Over You" 00:13 - 00:15). Keto Man will repeatedly use what Marino refers to as "psychological tricks" to gain control over women: Marino suggests that asking women about things she is passionate about will "automatically … make her start to think about you in a more passionate and exciting way" ("Make A Woman

WANT 02:06- 02:12) as Keto Man and her passion become seemingly intertwined to become one and the same. It is in this haze of lust that Keto Man pounces on his prey (the woman) with the same desire as the primal self does over the meat he sees as hunted for personal satisfaction.

Where Marino's brand "AlphaM" actively seeks to recast him outside of contemporary, feminized networks, and in doing so, attempts to frame it through traditional male practices and behaviours, Marino's videos remain grounded in the rhetoric utilized by present feminine, society. This tension is evident as Marino talks about "grooming" himself via his own line of skin and hair care: born out of a rejection of mainstream products while recognizing the social benefits of being well kept. Marino's aim is to frame this line of beauty care as something men both "need and love" ("Alpha M. / Pete & Pedro – Shark Tank" 02:59) by taking it out of a feminized practice of beauty products and framing it as a step of becoming the king of the jungle. He equates the idea of grooming as being larger than the simplicity of vanity which he believes is the cycle in which women are caught (though, that is exactly what this is for men too) but suggests having clean hair makes you competitive against other men both as they attract women and are perceived as more manly. In the same capacity, the keto diet, though framed as aggressively masculine is similarly embedded with feminized cultural codes. The *diet* within contemporary society is often linked with the thinning of women's bodies: reaching a social ideal through regimented foods and exercise routines. Though Keto Man denies any objective of complying with social codes or expectations he strives to meet the physical standards of a "perfect" body. Keto Man's performances are developed out of a so-called feminine presence.

CONCLUSION

Anything beyond what Keto Man views as conducive to his world view is considered to be false. These personal interests are at the heart of how Keto Man allows privatized experiences to define his sense of self. The world of Keto Man—more

frequently in the form of online networks—functions as a personalized utopia. One key factor here is that the system Keto Man created and formed online fills in gaps in mainstream culture. These two worlds are no longer distinguishable for Keto Man; he desires to participate in the social reality to the same extent that he does in his online haven. The "populist's rights departure from… social and cultural issues" is "ultimately just a contemporary recrudescence of fascism" (Gerbaudo 27). Suggestions of Donald Trump's supreme authority – through his appointment of what were seen as unquestioning federal and Supreme Court judges – have peppered commentaries of him as the ultimate power. Men have felt emboldened by Trump's rhetoric to reproduce similar systems of dictatorial power. The January 6 Capitol riot incited by Trump, bringing together a "militia [which] seemed to confirm the worst fears about a new fascism" (28), validates Keto Man's own desires to radicalize his own discourse. Here, the Keto Man discourse springs into motion. Nagle points to men like Elliot Rodger, who after posting online his intention of shooting women inside a sorority house in California as compensation for still being a virgin (98-99), was depicted as a "God" as noted in a commenter's username "ElliotRodgerIsAGod". The performance of authority, over both his personal actions and social space, reveals Keto Man as someone who believes himself as having a natural right to power.

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IMAGE NOTES

Figure 1: Screenshot of Aaron Marino pitching to investors on Shark Tank from Stover, Logan. "Alpha M. / Pete & Pedro - Shark Tank S07XE29 Season Finale (FULL SEGMENT) (FULL HD) [Fixed Audio]", *YouTube*, 27 Aug. 2018.

Figure 2: Marino, Aaron. "7 PRIMAL Behaviors That ALL Men Must Embrace!". "AlphaMConsulting" *YouTube*. 13 Dec. 2021. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BmuoOlGLgsY

NOTES

1. In Gary Taubes' book *The Case for Keto*, Taubes advocates that keto is the *most* effective diet based on *his* personal satisfaction with the results and further, the *only* way to live a healthy lifestyle.↩

2. Marino, Aaron. "THE ULTIMATE "ALPHA" DAILY ROUTINE (Men's Lifestyle & Productivity Tips) 24 Hour VLOG". "AlphaMConsulting". *Youtube*. 12 May 2021. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fNjPR81n6zk 00.38.↩

3. Note Figure 2, Marino acts out grabbing his "lion balls".↩

FROM APOTHEOSIS TO REVERSE CONVERSION: A POSTHUMAN READING OF EURIPIDES' AND PASOLINI'S MEDEA

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Medea is an ancient mythical figure who has caught the imagination of artists and authors across the centuries. In this essay, I focus on Euripides' 5th-century BC eponymous tragedy and Pasolini's 1969 cinematic adaptation. Through a posthuman reading of Medea, I propose that in Euripides the heroine sheds her humanity and embraces divinity in her final apotheosis. In Pasolini's film, on the other hand, we witness a reverse conversion, a journey towards a loss of the sacred and a spiritual catastrophe. In my analysis, I explore how posthuman forms of subjectivity embrace monstrosity to emphasise the divine power of alterity. I propose that, by deactivating normative discourses and making possible resistance to norms, posthuman subjec-

Médée est un ancien personnage de la mythologie qui fascine artistes et auteurs depuis des siècles. Dans cet essai, je me concentre sur la tragédie éponyme d'Euripide au Ve siècle av. J.-C. et sur son adaptation cinématographique de Pasolini en 1969. Grâce à une lecture post-humaine de Médée, j'avance que chez Euripide, l'héroïne abandonne son humanité afin d'adopter la divinité dans son apothéose finale. Dans le film de Pasolini, au contraire, on observe une conversion inverse, commençant par la perte du sacré et aboutissant à une catastrophe spirituelle. Dans mon analyse, j'examine comment les formes post-humaines de subjectivité adoptent la monstrosité afin de souligner le pouvoir divin de l'altérité. Je suggère qu'en déactivant le discours normatif et en permettant la résistance aux normes, les subjectivités post-humaines

tivities can be a powerful tool to break the spell of the present and create productive alternatives to the seemingly timeless dominance of global capitalism.

peuvent constituer un outil puissant pour briser l'emprise du présent et créer des alternatives productives à la domination apparemment éternelle du capitalisme global.

A house is burning in flames. A man approaches. A woman stands on the rooftop screaming: "Nothing is possible anymore!" A still image of the sun rising over the horizon appears on the screen. End credits roll in. Such is the closing scene of Pier Paolo Pasolini's 1969 film *Medea*, starring Maria Callas in what

Figure 1: "Medea", image created by the author on Midjourney

was to be the only cinematic role of her career. A symbolically charged scene that could be interpreted as the bitter end of an era, perhaps even as the start of a new one. But is this a clean new slate, or an ominous beginning?

Medea is an ancient mythical figure whose human and divine entanglements have provoked inspiration, awe, and disquiet in authors and audiences alike. She's enigmatic and mysterious. An infanticidal mother. Yet, although she appears in myriads of poems, plays, and films, to say nothing of being painted on vases, canvases, and murals, we have no account of her death in any of the ancient Greek and Roman classics (Hall 145). This may attest to her divine status or perhaps hint that her spirit still lingers with us, ready to make yet another disconcerting appearance. Like many people over the centuries, I could not help being fascinated by such a complex figure, and what caught my imagination was Medea's divine monstrosity, her venom and vulnerability, and most of all, her unwillingness to be written off, laughed about, or forgotten in the tales of humans and gods. On a deeper level, Medea asks us to reflect on the very basis of our humanity. As a barbarian, a sorceress, and a woman, Medea was herself hardly considered a human in her days in ancient Greece. One could argue that she may not even qualify as "human" in our apparently liberal world of today. And the question of what it actually means to be human is at the centre of this essay; it is driven by my interest in posthumanism, not as much in its speculative, technology-obsessed form, but rather the more philosophical type of posthumanism, emphasizing that we already are posthuman, or perhaps, as Katherine Hayles once said, we always were (291).

What follows is largely divided into four parts. I start by engaging with posthumanist discourse, drawing connections with antiquity through some of the key concepts used in its radical deconstruction of the human, and locating the mythical character of Medea within this framework. In the second part of the essay, I approach Euripides' *Medea* focusing on the concept of apotheosis. Here, I examine how Medea, during the course of the tragedy, dwells deeply in her humanity to then embrace her divine side and go beyond the human. The third part of the essay is a reading of Pasolini's 1969 film *Medea* based

on the concept of reverse conversion. Rather than a leap from the human to the posthuman, in Pasolini's adaptation we see the opposite take place. A sorceress and ancient mythical figure, Medea abandons her homeland on the shores of the Black Sea to follow Jason and the Argonauts to Greece. For Pasolini, this journey represents a loss of the sacred and the cause of Medea's spiritual catastrophe, the erosion of her divine nature that will lead to her final demise. In the fourth and final part, I search for answers to the core question of this essay: are the monstrous and the divine inherent dimensions of humanity? If they are, what can Medea tell us about our current human condition? Following Giulia Maria Chesi and Francesca Spiegel's concept of the "heterogeneous self," I explore how posthuman subjectivity embraces monstrosity and divinity to bring human knowledge to its limits (18). Highlighting the sacred dimension of alterity, posthuman subjectivity explores the monstrous and the divine to deactivate normative discourses, in an attempt to break with the present and create new temporalities, thereby freeing us from the ahistoricity of our lives under the reign of global capitalism. I propose that Pasolini's depiction of Medea's spiritual catastrophe can thus be seen as a warning: it is only by breaking the spell of the present that we can start to imagine a different future.

1. THE HUMAN, THE POSTHUMAN, AND THE DIVINE

Michel Foucault famously penned the final words of *The Order of Things* by comparing the human to a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea, being washed away by the waves of history (422). No one better than Foucault could have highlighted how our awareness of a concept already embodies a sense of crisis, the idea that this category may have lost its lustre and appeal. Indeed, when we nowadays think of the human, we think of the Man of the Enlightenment—white, male, heterosexual, wealthy, propertied, and the list goes on. The human category, that is to say, is formed and maintained through practices of exclusion. But this is nothing new, and it happens today as much as it did 2,500 years ago in ancient Greece. Interestingly, Foucault wrote these words just a few years before the release of Pasolini's *Medea*, which indicates a

shared sense of crisis pushing various authors, artists, and intellectuals to question the legacy of the Enlightenment in late 20th-century Europe, at a time when empires were crumbling, and the continent was split into a booming capitalist west and an authoritative and repressive east.

"Much of what we know today as posthumanism was developed at the crossroads of poststructuralism, feminism, and postmodernism, and took shape in the 1990s, developing into what Rosi Braidotti calls a "convergence" rather than a cohesive philosophical movement (*Posthuman Knowledge*, 18). Posthumanism is therefore transdisciplinary in nature and branches out of academia to include contributions from various areas such as art and design, science and technology, and popular culture. In order to facilitate my reading of Medea, I will mainly focus on Francesca Ferrando's theoretical framework, as outlined in her 2019 book *Philosophical Posthumanism*.

The concept of posthumanism can be a slippery one, as it indicates an overall framework of theory, but is also at the same time an ontology and a praxis (Ferrando 44). Starting from the broader theoretical frame, it is worth emphasizing its differences from another current of thought known as transhumanism. Transhumanism develops in fact within the framework of the Enlightenment. It is a form of ultra-humanism with the ultimate goal of human enhancement (3). For transhumanists, the posthuman is the next phase of human evolution, which can only be achieved through the application of technology to the human body (27). Posthumanism, on the other hand, is non-technocentric and emphasizes a symbolic move beyond the human, by acknowledging various aspects of the human within a post-anthropocentric approach (27). This means "we can already be posthuman now, by fully embracing the consequences of the historical and material deconstruction of the notion of the human" (28). In the following paragraphs, I engage with a series of concepts rooted in ancient Greece to elucidate some of philosophical posthumanism's key principles.

1.1 TECHNĒ, POIĒSIS, EPISTĒME

In her discussion of philosophical posthumanism's relation to technology, Ferrando tells us how Heidegger looked back at ancient Greek literature and philosophy, finding that the term *technē* (meaning handcrafts and arts) was necessarily associated with *poiēsis* (the creative process) and *epistēme* (the domain of knowledge) (40-41). According to Heidegger, the ancient Greeks saw the creative process as something sacred, related to divinity (40-41). However, modern societies have lost their understanding of *technē* as *poiēsis*, making technology utilitarian rather than creative (41). While technological utilitarianism is closely associated with transhumanism, philosophical posthumanism "follows on Heidegger's reflection that technology cannot be reduced to a mere means, nor to a reification, and thus cannot be 'mastered'" (42). From a posthuman perspective, we may be entangled with technology due to how it has entered our everyday life—think of pacemakers, prosthetic limbs, or plastic surgery as examples—but we don't see it as a means to an end, rather as something to engage with critically.

1.2 BIO, ZOE

If our relationship with technology shows how humans have become incredibly hybridized, awareness of our complex relations to the environment, geological forces, and other living species indicates that we can no longer imagine ourselves as the centre of the universe. In her analysis of the posthuman condition, Braidotti adds complexity to our understanding of "life" by highlighting the distinction between *bio* and *zoe*. She explains that, traditionally, while the former represents the human and its social organization, the latter stands for the non-human and is largely unprotected and vulnerable (*Posthuman Knowledge*, 10). Braidotti writes: "Where *bio* is anthropocentric, *zoe* is non-anthropocentric and non-anthropomorphic. Moreover, in the posthuman convergence, *zoe* embraces geologically and technologically bound egalitarianism, acknowledging that thinking and the capacity to produce knowledge is not the exclusive prerogative of humans alone, but distributed across all living matter and through-

out self-organizing technological networks" (115). By placing the human within the realm of *zoe*, therefore, we effectively decentre it and acknowledge its shared agency with technology and the natural world. This is not only a necessary step we need to take in facing the challenges of the Anthropocene, but also empowering as it recognises our vulnerability and stresses the importance of promoting sustainable ways of life.

1.3 ANTHROPOS, POLIS, LOGOS, PAIDEIA

Our current-day word "human" derives from the Latin term *humanus*. According to Ferrando, this is an adjective cognate to *humus*, meaning ground, soil, and pointing to the notion that humans are earthly beings whose realm was defined in opposition to gods, animals, or barbarians (89). The word *humanus*, however, emerged in Rome allegedly among the so-called Scipionic Circle, a group of intellectuals of the Republican age who had a strong interest in Greek culture (89). This points to the relation of *humanus* to the Greek term *anthropos*, which is at the basis of our current understanding of the human.

The Greek philosopher Aristotle famously defined the human (*anthropos*) as a political animal (*zoon politikon*) that is wholly connected to the *polis*, which means the city and represents civilization (Ferrando 90). Here, it is vital to point out that "this 'political man' is placed in a hierarchical scale through not only its external, and explicit, 'citiless' people, but also its internal, and implicit, others: in Athens, for instance, women, slaves, and resident aliens were excluded from the political life" (90). What is more, Aristotle characterized the human through *logos* (meaning speech, language, and reason), effectively placing Greek-speaking people above barbarians, such as the Persians, the Egyptians, and the Phoenicians, who in reality had their own remarkable civilizations (90). According to Chesi and Spiegel, in ancient Greece, the faculty of *logos* is what defined humans as autonomous and free, and losing one's *logos* would amount to a loss of identity, symbolizing the ultimate loss of humanity (6).

The Aristotelian primacy of *logos*, Ferrando tells us, connects reason to ethical standing, and it is the privilege of belonging to the city that gives access to *paideia'*—the formal education of its recognized members—and also to the informal shared culture promoting the identification of the individual with the political ethos (90-91). As it happens, *humanitas* is the Roman revisitation of the Greek notion of *paideia,* showing us how the human category as we know it today is historically connected to classical notions of "culture," "reason," and "civilization" (90-91).

1.4 MEDEA AS A POSTHUMAN HEROINE?

Having looked at the classical roots of some recurring concepts in philosophical post-humanism, I now establish a methodological framework to discuss whether Medea can be read as a posthuman heroine. According to Ferrando, philosophical posthumanism is defined through three analytical frames: posthumanism, post-anthropocentrism, and post-dualism (22).

Post-humanism is a radical deconstruction of established traditional concepts of the human (Ferrando 3). Being a woman, a sorceress, and a barbarian, it is quite clear that Medea lives within the margins of what was considered human in ancient Greece. While her birth and upbringing outside the sphere of Greek civilization place her as an outsider to the Corinthian society where her drama unfolds, her *logos* and high emotional intelligence have the effect of allowing her to integrate. As we will see in Euripides' play, Medea has no trouble winning over the chorus of Corinthian women, who give full support to her revenge against Jason, right until they learn about her infanticidal plan. Thus, from a post-humanist perspective, Medea embodies the liminal subjectivity of a woman and a barbarian, someone who understands all too well the exclusionary practices performed by society against those who are judged as inferior to human status.

Post-anthropocentrism aims to decentre the human by placing it side by side with non-human others in a non-hierarchical fashion (Ferrando 54). These non-human others can be understood as pertaining to the animal, geological, technological, and divine realms. From this

point of view, Medea's ontology places her at the border between the human and the divine. We know from Hesiod's seventh-century BC poem *Theogony* that her father Aeëtes and his sister Circe were children of the sun god Helios and that her mother Idya was the daughter of the titan Oceanus (McCallum-Barry 24). Moreover, Medea's familiarity with herbs and magic, and her ability to engage with gods make her a shaman of sorts. According to Ferrando, shamans are "trans-specific beings" that "can transcend their species-specific cognitive organization and perceive consciousness beyond a particular bodily appearance or manifestation" (156). Her ontology and subjectivity, therefore, can be seen as going beyond the human toward embracing a certain post-anthropocentric, semi-divine status.

Post-dualism is the final deconstruction of the underlying dualist logic of western philosophy, whereby thought is arranged according to dichotomies that are essentially hierarchical, such as male/female, human/non-human, citizen/foreigner, able/non-able, white/black, et cetera. This is an important analytical frame in philosophical posthumanism, because "[w]e, as a society, may eventually overcome racism, sexism, and even anthropocentrism, but if we do not address the rigid form of dualistic mindset that allows for hierarchical sociopolitical constructions, new forms of discrimination will emerge" (Ferrando 60). Here, Medea's blurring of gender roles, her markedly masculine heroic attitude, and her emphasis on honour present her as challenging the conventional male/female dualism. Also, her ambiguous identity as a semi-divine figure places her character firmly outside dualistic models of subjectivity.

In light of all this, I propose that we understand Medea as an ancient posthuman heroine. Someone whose subjectivity can be defined as nomadic, that is to say multiple, complex, and multilayered (Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory*, 77). Travelling across the border between the human and the divine, and finding repeated incarnations in the history of literature, theatre and film, her spirit continues to inspire us and terrorize us. In the next part of this essay, I will engage with Euripides' play, focusing on Medea's apotheotic leap from the human to the posthuman.

2. APOTHEOSIS: FROM HUMAN TO POSTHUMAN

It was 431 BC when Euripides' *Medea* premiered at Athens's Dionysian Festival. The city was at the height of its power, yet war with Corinth and its Peloponnesian allies was in the air. Pericles was promising the Athenians a relatively easy victory, but many knew that once conflict is unleashed, there is no easy way of knowing the impact it will have on people's lives. That year, Euripides presented three tragedies: *Medea*, *Philoctetes*, and *Dictys*, and perhaps the satirical play *Reapers*, all of which approached themes of otherness and exile (Stuttard 3), possibly hinting at a certain anxiety and a pensive attitude towards war.

In this part of the essay, I start by placing Medea in the context of her mythical origins to pose the question of how her 431 BC Athenian audience may have reacted to the play. I then go on to analyze Medea's character as a woman, a sorceress, and a barbarian, highlighting her human side, before engaging with her metamorphosis into a demigoddess who commits a terrible act of infanticide and makes a final apotheotic exit, unscathed and unpunished. I interpret Medea's apotheosis as the shedding of her humanity to embrace divinity in an authentic—if tragic—leap to the posthuman.

2.1 MEDEA: MYTHICAL ORIGINS AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE AUDIENCE

Medea is one of the most famous surviving Greek tragedies from the fifth century BC, but the mythical character herself was already known in Greek literature since at least the eighth or seventh century. According to Carmel McCallum-Barry, Medea's first appearance was in Hesiod's *Theogony*, where the author traces divine genealogies including her lineage (24). Her relation to Corinth was first approached in the seventh century by Eumelus in a poem called *Corinthiaca*, where Medea was invited by the Corinthians to be their queen and was unintentionally responsible for her children's death (24). However, we can infer that in literature from the Archaic period, there must have been at least one more tradition concerning

the death of Medea's children, namely that they were murdered by the Corinthians (24-25). In the fifth century, Medea appeared in a poem by Pindar called *Pythian 4*, where she is portrayed as foretelling the events leading to the founding of Cyrene, a city on the African Mediterranean coast (25). Pindar also makes one of the earliest mentions of Medea's involvement in the death of Pelias, Jason's uncle who sent him to retrieve the Golden Fleece. Euripides himself attributes to Medea a role in the death of the tyrant in his play *Daughters of Pelias* (455 BC), where he portrays her as inducing Pelias' daughters to kill their father by unwittingly boiling him alive inside a cauldron, in an attempt to rejuvenate him with magic herbs (26). Around the same period, we also encounter the heroine in plays by Sophocles and Euripides focusing on the Athenian king Aegeus, where we learn that after her escape to Athens, she tries to poison his illegitimate son, the mythical hero Theseus (26). Aside from these literary appearances, Medea is also often represented in vase paintings from the early fifth century onwards, focusing on scenes from both her mythical past and from her life in Corinth as portrayed in Euripides' eponymous play (26-27).

In light of what we know of Medea's mythical past, we can attempt to imagine how the 431 BC Athenian audience may have responded to the play. It is likely that they were "familiar with Medea as a foreign princess, from a faraway land, a descendant of Helios, the sun god. She was known as the helper of Jason in seizing the Golden Fleece from Colchis and then escaping with him and the Argonauts" (27). However, we can also assume that she was not recognized as a child murderess (Griffin 20). Thus, as they entered the Theatre of Dionysus, the audience was probably wondering which parts of her story Euripides would include in the play and where he would innovate. They were clearly in for some surprises.

2.2. WOMAN, SORCERESS, BARBARIAN

One of Euripides' great qualities was his ability to portray women with a complexity superior to that of his contemporaries. Thematically, "his plays seem especially concerned with questions of gender,

of women's lives, of their relation to men and their role in society" (Bondell et al. 80). However, we should stop short of viewing him as a "proto-feminist," as his interest in transgressive women has sometimes been seen as evidence of misogyny (80). Nevertheless, it could be argued that Euripides gives an excellent portrayal of Medea, and he does that by playing down her mythical past and focusing on her humanity. According to McCallum-Barry, "Euripides builds on her past rather than retells it" (29), and in the present, we see Medea in her full complexity as a woman and a victim of betrayal.

Within the context of Athens' dominance of the Greek world in the 5th century BC, it may be tempting to speculate that it was the scene of numerous foreign erotic entanglements (Griffin 19). It is likely that many Athenian men, both soldiers and merchants, brought back foreign women to Athens from their travels across the Aegean and beyond. Still, "we are not well informed about their *vie passionelle*" (19) and may just have to assume that ethnically mixed couples such as Medea and Jason were not a rare occurrence. These entanglements, just like the well-documented Periclean laws of 450 BC restricting citizenship rights to children whose parents were both of Athenian descent, must have been playing in the minds of the mostly male audience as they watched *Medea* being performed on stage.

In a world where women had a lower social status and were mostly confined to the home, Medea comes through as an extremely intelligent character. Although of foreign origin, she has adapted well to Greek society, and her skillful use of *logos* allows her to win the support of Greek women. This is why "the chorus of local women in Corinth are puzzlingly sympathetic towards the foreign barbarian. They can feel for her because all (married) women are foreigners, strangers in their husbands' household, frequently regarded with suspicion as outsiders; Medea's situation is an exaggerated example of the common female experience" (McCallum-Barry 31).

Men, on the other hand, are often uneasy about Medea and her skills in drugs and magic. Medea plans her revenge against Jason by plotting to poison Glauce, the woman he is about to marry; meanwhile, Creon, Glauce's father and king of Corinth, senses this ominous

possibility and decides to expel Medea from the land. According to William Allan, "[w]hen Creon comes to announce his decree of banishment, the first reason that he gives is his fear of Medea's skills in drugs and magic" (74). Interestingly, in early Greek myth, Jason was also connected to drugs and their healing powers as medicine, but this knowledge was "transferred to Medea as part of the myth's articulation of fundamental ethnic (and gender) differences" (74). What is more, McCallum-Barry points out that the theme of drugs and magic makes a recurrent appearance in various Greek dramas, and "shows that strange potions were not unknown to Greek women" (32). This explains how Medea's identity as a woman and a barbarian interacts with generalized perceptions that the mostly male audience of the time might have had of women. That is to say, Medea's feminine and barbarian identity triggered anxieties in the psyche of her male audience: "what is going on, back home, in my house, while I am away, out at work, or on business, or in the army, or on my travels?" (Griffin 20). Euripides exploits all these anxieties in the second part of the play, where Medea decides to act on her terrible plan of revenge.

2.3. METAMORPHOSIS

There is a moment in the play where we start to feel Medea's wrath arise as she elaborates on her plan. Just after Creon's visit to banish her and her sons from Corinth, she engages in a monologue, part of which I quote below:

> I'll push my daring to its violent end,
> For, by the mistress I revere above all, fellow worker,
> Hecate, who has her place in the recesses of my hearth,
> Not one of them shall rack my heart with pain
> And get away with it.
> I shall make sure this match of theirs is turned
> To bitter anguish; bitter also that man's
> Marriage arrangements and attempt to exile me.
> So down to work, Medea,
> Don't relax one jolt of all your expertise
> In schemes and in contrivances.
> On the dreadful test; now's the time to try your mettle.

> You see what your position is: you must not become
> A laughingstock because of Jason's union with this Sisyphean dynasty.
> You're from a noble father and a descendant from the Sun.
> You have the expertise. What's more, we are born women.
> It may be we're unqualified for deeds of virtue:
> Yet as the architects of every kind of mischief,
> We're supremely skilled.
>
> (Translation by Oliver Taplin, in Grene and Lattimore 145)

While at this point Medea hasn't yet revealed her full plan, we seem to experience a buildup of emotions in which she channels her fury toward Jason and Creon's dynasty. Medea refers to herself as a woman, but at the same time invokes her protector deity Hecate, who was associated with female witchcraft and sexual desire (Hall 143-144), and reminds herself of her divine lineage originating from Helios, the ancient sun god. These divine references in Medea's speech appear to strengthen her delivery, and when she tells herself "You see what your position is: you must not become / A laughing-stock because of Jason's union with this Sisyphean dynasty," we see her full determination to act heroically in a way that borders the masculine, if not the divine.

Quite interestingly, the chorus' immediate response to her monologue seems to emphasise the divine nature of her wrath:

> Pure rivers are running their currents upstream,
> Order and everything's turned upside down,
> The dogmas of men are exposed as a mere sham,
> Oaths by the gods prove no longer firm ground.
> The stories of women shall be about-turned,
> So that my life shall achieve proper glory,
> New value is coming for our female kind,
> No longer shall slander pollute our story.
>
> (Translation by Oliver Taplin, in Grene and Lattimore 146)

Singing of chaos and rivers running their currents upstream, the chorus appears here not only to support Medea's plight but also to call on her intervention as if she were a hero, or even a god. While Medea still refers to herself in human terms, it is my opinion that these passages mark the beginning of Medea's metamorphosis from a human to a demigoddess. This is then followed by a passionate *agon* between Medea and Jason, Medea's encounter with King Aegeus, and the full revelation of her ominous plan.

2.4. FROM INFANTICIDE TO APOTHEOSIS

Infanticide is Euripides' main innovation to the story of Medea. According to Jasper Griffin, in fact, "Medea was a magician, but she was not (it appears) a child-murderess. That Medea, the Medea who would fascinate and eventually monopolize the minds of posterity, was the creation of Euripides, in this play" (20). Hence, we can infer the sense of shock in the audience upon witnessing Medea's infamous act. In order to better understand this, I propose we look at how the final scene of the play may have been staged.

Rosie Wyles points out that Euripides' "choice to make Medea the murderer of her children offers dramatic potential for new levels of *pathos*" (58). This is achieved through stage mechanics and an interplay of onstage and offstage action, and Euripides makes full use of these dramatic devices to build tension in the audience. In Greek tragedy, we find two types of stage mechanics that are often used in scenes of murder and apotheosis, the *ekkuklēma*, also known as the rolling-out machine, and the *mēchanē*, or stage crane (Rutherford 89-90). The *ekkuklēma* was frequently deployed when the plot required the revelation of corpses or unconscious characters, while the *mēchanē* was used to represent a character in flight or descending from Olympus (89-90). Following this logic, we could infer that the audience may have expected the infanticide scene to end with a rolling out of Medea's children's corpses on the *ekkuklēma*, however, the playwright takes a different approach. He builds suspense when Medea takes her children offstage and into the house to murder them; the audience cannot see what happens inside but hears the

children's cries for help. In an unconventional move, Euripides has the children cry and break into a choral ode, forcing the chorus into shockingly direct contact with the murder, the victims responding to what the chorus says (Wyles 58). As their cries abate, we expect the house doors to open, climaxing with a reveal of the corpses on the *ekkuklēma* at centre stage. But this is not what happens. The author opts for using the *mēchanē*, showcasing a menacing and victorious Medea suspended above the stage, holding the corpses of her children while riding the Chariot of the Sun.

Medea's apotheotic appearance is of great significance on two levels: first, it shocks the audience into believing that her infanticidal act received divine approval; secondly, it shows Medea as a semi-divine figure—a demigoddess. According to McCallum-Barry, infanticide takes Medea's character to its limits and beyond humanity, and her escape seems to imply the backing of the gods (33). "Medea's divine ancestry has not been emphasized during the play" (33), but in the final scene we see the gods coming to her rescue. Apparently, this was disquieting to the Athenian audience to the point that Medea's infanticide and apotheosis do not appear on Attic vase paintings of the time, "as if the events were too disturbing for public taste" (33). By contrast, these same scenes appeared to be widely popular in southern Italy, where painters recreated them with artistic flair (33). This traumatic response could be related to the appalling nature of the murder or could be interpreted as unease with a certain prophetic image of Medea that Euripides created in his tragedy (Stuttard 10). The audience may in fact have been aware of how Medea would bring trouble to Athens by attempting the murder of Aegeus' son Theseus. While no reliable visual representation of this final scene survives, there is a chance that the Chariot of the Sun was drawn by serpents (Wyles 60). This would have been particularly shocking to the audience as "[s]erpents played a central part in Athenian ideology and were essential to the city's identity" (61). Be that as it may, one thing is certain: Medea's exit in the direction of Athens cast a dark omen on the minds of the audience.

But was this a real apotheosis? Richard Rutherford raises an objection, saying that Medea is no goddess. She "remains a wronged wife

and a murderess; she lacks the detachment as well as the power of a god," and her apotheosis is no such thing (93). "She must return to earth, and resume human existence which will include the pain and grief that she here thrusts aside and treats as secondary to revenge" (96). Indeed, it is fair to say that Medea is not a fully-fledged goddess, nevertheless, she has left her humanity behind and embraced her divine side. Therefore, I propose we describe her as a demigoddess, a semi-divine figure who inhabits both the human and the heavenly realms. Her semi-divine status is supported in Euripides' play by her prophetic speech where she proclaims that a cult will be set up to atone for her children's death at the temple of Hera Akraia. According to Edith Hall, such a cult centre existed just across the Corinthian gulf at Perachora, where various votive objects such as amulets worn by pregnant women have been found by archaeologists, showing that it was visited by individuals anxious about the health of babies and young children (143). "The killing of Medea's children was therefore presented by the tragedy as the 'charter' or 'foundation' myth for a specific set of cult practices in the Corinthian area" (143).

What strikes me about Euripides' *Medea* is exactly this strange interaction between the human and the divine. Here, we see fiction and reality interconnect in ways that confuse those who approach the play. If Medea was just a woman, how did she manage her triumphant escape to Athens? How did such a fictional character interact with the actual creation of a cult in ancient Greece? And how did it inspire so many artists and authors over its long history? To me, this speaks for the power that stories have on our human psyche. As Hall tells us, "when we approach Euripides' play, it always needs to be remembered, that it is the awesome, unknowable religious element, the metaphysical power embodied in the mysterious figure of Medea, which ultimately underlies all these interpretations" (154). Thus, I conclude that Medea is a posthuman heroine from the ancient world who retains her power to enthral audiences throughout the centuries and up to the present. While she's depicted by Euripides in her full humanity as a woman, a sorceress, and a barbarian, the author shocks the audience in the second part of the play, when Medea quickly develops her evil plan and metamorphoses into a tri-

umphant demigoddess. In the next part of this essay, I will look at a contemporary reincarnation of this mythical figure, Pasolini's cinematic rendition of Medea, exploring how an ancient myth serves as an ideological tool to describe the present.

3. REVERSE CONVERSION: MEDEA'S SPIRITUAL CATASTROPHE

Pier Paolo Pasolini was a man of immense contradictions. He was a catholic and a communist, he loved the subproletariat but maintained a heavily bourgeois lifestyle, and he was an "out" homosexual but did not support the gay movement (Calabretta-Sajder 14). He was also a poet, writer, intellectual, and filmmaker who was fascinated with the idea of ancient Greece as the site of an unresolved dialectic between classical reason and barbaric myth, between knowledge and instincts (Rossetti 176). This is what drew him to Medea, and he chose to adapt her myth through the universal language of cinema due to his distrust of *logos,* and in favour of a language focusing on gestures, rituals, and dream fantasies (Barberà 92).

Pasolini's 1969 film *Medea* is one of many adaptations of Euripides' classic, which, as Walter Zidaric notes, has the tendency to come back in times of crisis (208). Major examples of this go from Cherubini's eponymous opera premiered in the years of the French Revolution to Pasolini's 1960s Italy, where the crisis of Catholic values was met by incipient capitalism and the outset of political terrorism (208). On the other hand, Hall shows us that Medea often returns to her audience to challenge dominant narratives. Examples of this are the 1907 production by Harley Ganville-Barker in connection with the suffragette movement in the United Kingdom (148-149), and Chico Buarque and Paolo Pontes' 1985 play *Gota d'Agua* (Drop of Water), with its reinterpretation of Medea's magic and religion as a symbol of the suppressed African origins and identity of large portions of the Brazilian population (152).

In this essay, I have decided to focus on Pasolini's adaptation as it gives a fascinating reading of Medea undergoing a reverse conversion, leaving behind her identity as an ancient mythical creature to become an ordinary woman, faced with the complexity of human

emotions. In my analysis, I read this as the abandonment of her posthuman status to embrace humanity. I start by presenting Pasolini's concept of the loss of the sacred as narrated by the Centaur, one of the film's most enigmatic characters, and then move on to a reading of scenes related to Medea's arrival in the Greek world, her sexual awakening and spiritual catastrophe, leading to her final demise.

3.1. THE CENTAUR

Pasolini's *Medea* starts with scenes from Jason's childhood in Iolcus. We see him together with the Centaur, an ancient mythical figure who is half man and half horse. The Centaur tells Jason that he has looked after him but is not his father, and narrates the story of his lineage, the myth of the Golden Fleece, and how his uncle Pelias usurped the throne of Iolcus. In the next scene, Jason is already an adolescent and the Centaur shares with him his wisdom about nature and the sacred:

> Everything's sacred, everything's sacred, everything's sacred. Nothing is natural in nature, my lad, remember that! The day nature seems natural to you, it means the end, and the beginning of something else. Farewell sky, farewell sea! What a beautiful sky! What silence! How luminous! Doesn't it seem that a small piece of that sky is quite unnatural and possessed by a god? And so is the sea, on this thirteenth birthday of yours when you can fish barefoot in the warm water. Look behind you! What do you see? Something natural perhaps? No, all that you see behind you is an apparition, like clouds reflected in the calm, still water at three in the afternoon! Look at that dark streak on the sea, lucid and pink as oil. The shadows of those trees and the reeds. Wherever your eyes wander, a God is hidden! And, if by chance he's not there, he left hints of his sacred presence, the silence, or the smell of grass or the freshness of the cool water... Yes, everything's sacred, but the sacred is also a curse. While the gods love, they also hate. (Pasolini, *Medea* 00:04:43-00:06:23)

Everything is sacred, without origins, without cause, without any creative principle. Everything prevails and lives as a result of divine power, and nothing—including human beings—is hierarchically distant from the rest (Barberà 96). Pasolini here chooses to give voice to his own views on the sacred nature of reality through a hybrid figure combining human and animal characteristics. From a posthuman perspective, the presentation of such a "humananimal" figure has the function of decentring the human by conceptualizing it as interconnected in inextricable entanglements (Chesi and Spiegel 10). The Centaur is at the intersection of nature and myth, and his narration showing the non-separateness of nature and the sacred brings to the fore Pasolini's views that God is everywhere and is the bearer of both human happiness and misfortune (Barberà 97). Quite surprisingly, in the next scene he loses his animal element. Jason is now an adult, and the Centaur appears in full human form. He says:

> Maybe you think that, besides being a liar, I am also too poetic. But, you see, for ancient man, all myths and rituals are concrete experiences which are a part of his bodily and daily existence. For him, reality is such a perfect unity that the emotion he feels in the silence of a summer sky equals the most intimate experiences of modern man. You will go to your uncle, the usurper of your throne, to reclaim your rights and, in order to get rid of you, he will need an excuse, that is, he'll send you on a quest. To retrieve, for example, the golden fleece. And so you'll go to a distant land beyond the sea. There you'll find a world whose use of reason is very different from our own. Their life is very realistic, as you'll see, because only those who are mythical are realistic and only those who are realistic are mythical. (Pasolini, *Medea* 00:06:40-00:07:41)

Here, the Centaur hints at the mission that Jason will be sent on by his uncle Pelias. The fact that the Centaur has already lost his mythical form and appears as a human seems to point to Pasolini's desire "to denounce a true anthropological change in the human race" (Barberà 98). The loss of the sacred in our present-day humanity is the result of greed for power, and the desire for accumulating material possessions. As a word of warning, the Centaur, who has been con-

taminated by modernity, tells Jason that his journey to Colchis will put him in touch with the ancient wisdom that comes from myth. He who is mythical is realistic and understands that nature is not natural, but divine. But throughout these scenes, Jason appears passive and uninterested in the words of the Centaur. He represents *logos,* the reason and greed of the man of modernity and the First World. For Pasolini, this world is intrinsically anthropocentric, and nothing can be sacred anymore because only man is worthy of being worshipped. There are no gods, and humans have never been so great, yet never have they been so alone (Barberà 99).

Following these scenes, Pasolini takes us to Colchis, where we first meet Medea, portrayed through a long shot sequence free from montage, that sees her immersed in her life of ritual sacrifices and magic. After stealing the Golden Fleece, Medea kills her brother to slow the Colchians' pursuit of her and Jason and sets sail with the Argonauts on her way to Greece.

3.2. ACROSS THE WATERS

Medea's life in Colchis was dominated by the sacred, regulated by and dedicated to ritual. But when she reaches the Greek shores, Medea faces a hard landing. Nothing is sacred, rituals have lost their meaning, and she will have to abandon her mythical identity to embrace a human world dominated by *logos*. She will forsake her posthuman condition, on a one-way journey marked by the impossibility of returning to her land, which she has betrayed under the spell of her attraction for Jason.

Pasolini presents the scene of Medea's landing on the Greek shores as a moment of shock. The hard realization of a loss of identity. As the boat approaches the shore, Medea starts shouting:

> This place will sink because it has no foundation. You are not praying to God that he bless your tents! You are not repeating the first act of God! You are not seeking the centre, you are not marking the centre. No, look for a tree, a post, a stone! Speak to me, Earth! Let me hear your voice! I can no longer re-

> member your voice. Speak to me, Sun. Where must I go to hear your voice? Speak to me, Earth! Speak to me, Sun! Are you losing your way, perhaps never to return again. I can no longer hear what you are saying Grass, speak to me! Stone, speak to me! Earth, where is your meaning? Where can I find you again? Where is the bond that linked you to the sun? I touch the earth with my feet but I do not recognise it! I look at the sun with my eyes, but I do not recognise it! (Pasolini, *Medea*, 00:48:28-00:50:16)

Medea walks away from the Argonauts, feeling lost as she can no longer communicate with her grandfather, the sun god Helios. Everything around her is foreign and deserted. Meanwhile, the Argonauts sit around a fire and eat a meal, looking at Medea with amused eyes. According to Colleen Ryan-Scheutz, the use of long shots in this scene effectively places her in the new setting. But, unlike when we see Medea performing rituals in Colchis, this long shot sequence does not connote communion with, and immersion in, that world. Rather, it suggests disorientation, discomfort, and lack of belonging to this foreign land (69). Thus, in this scene, Pasolini presents us with an important step in Medea's loss of her posthuman, semi-divine status. Here, on Greek soil, her reverse conversion takes shape and will be completed once Medea experiences the full force of *eros* in her union with Jason.

3.3. SEXUAL AWAKENING AND SPIRITUAL CATASTROPHE

Medea's love for Jason gives her the comfort she needs after the initial moment of disorientation upon arrival in Greece. Jason leads her to their tent and makes love to her. She utterly surrenders, once again finding herself and her sacred link with the world. But while for Medea love and the loss of her virginity are conversion, for Jason, *eros* is simply a domination technique (Tellini 216). Medea wholeheartedly submits herself to Jason's desire, losing her ability to exercise control over his psyche. Nevertheless, she will eventually eliminate his ability to control his own future (Ryan-Scheutz 72), as we will see in the final part of the film.

After arriving in Corinth, Jason has another encounter with the Centaur, or rather with a double version of him, the ancient "humananimal" appearing next to its anthropomorphic alter ego. The ancient Centaur is present as a remnant of its posthuman past, and his human-like version acts as a medium for communicating with Jason. The Centaur tells Jason that he loves Medea, and noticing Jason's surprise, he says:

> Yes. And you also pity her. You understand her spiritual catastrophe, her disorientation as a woman of an ancient world, in a new world which ignores her own values. The poor woman has experienced a reverse conversion, and has never recovered. (Pasolini, *Medea*, 01:00-01:02)

The Centaur's words confuse Jason, but he nevertheless goes ahead with his plan to marry Glauce, the daughter of King Creon. Meanwhile, Medea has a dream in which she connects again with her grandfather, the sun god Helios. Although having experienced a loss of the sacred, part of her still clings to her ancient semi-divine self. In her dream, Medea has a vision where she sends a poisoned robe to Glauce, who after wearing it is set on fire and dies an excruciating death. This dream becomes the inspiration to act on her vengeful plan, but when in a later scene we see Glauce wearing the dress, she does not burn but rather runs away and kills herself by jumping from a high wall, confusing the viewer with two different versions of the events. It would appear that Medea is clinging to her posthuman self, but her magic powers are waning as the result of her reverse conversion.

Thus, after her arrival on the Greek shores and the realization of her love for Jason, Medea experiences the loss of her posthuman status as a semi-divine figure. The Centaur's double-form appearance tells us that there are remnants of the past in the present, but there is no way of reconciling these two worlds, and this is shown in Medea's weakening ability to perform magic spells. All is lost, and it's just a matter of time before the full-scale tragedy unfolds.

3.4. *EROS* AND ITS FINAL DEMISE

Medea's reverse conversion is at the core of Pasolini's message to his audience. He emphasizes the indomitable power of *eros*, thus rationalizing Medea's betrayal of her own people and of herself, that is, rationalizing her spiritual catastrophe (Barberà 103).

Eros is a natural sign of what is sacred. It is the source of pleasure but also of the greatest personal errors, and Pasolini portrays Medea as a mythical figure whose life is dominated by ritual, while Jason is shown as the bearer of masculine *logos*. In this sense, her encounter with Jason would appear to represent an unresolved dialectic between *eros* and *logos*. The ancient world she represents inhabits its own temporality and works according to its own logic, but when it meets the exploitative universe of modernity—in this case represented by Jason and the Greek world—it loses its identity and embarks on a self-destructive process. According to Barberà, Pasolini uses his portrayal of Medea as a sign of his own times, whereby the Third World's betrayal of itself can only be explained by its fascination for the First World (104). Therefore, modernity and capitalism cause a loss of identity in the developing world by tempting it with an erotic form of development, that is, capable of generating desire (104).

It is important to mention that Pasolini's critique is not only related to a generalized non-western developing world but also to the working classes of western capitalist societies. As Viola Brisolin points out, Pasolini talks of a radical anthropological antagonism encompassing class conflict, whereby classes and subclasses do not only belong to the social sphere but also have their own distinctive anthropological dimensions (47). Hence, Pasolini shows a tendency to associate the non-western developing world and the working classes of capitalist societies with his longing for mythical places and people "outside history," untouched by bourgeois institutions (47). Problematic as this may be, it sheds light on his anthropologically oriented, non-Hegelian view of dialectics, whereby there is no resolvable duality within the human, which must be treated instead with the eye of a geologist, an expert in stratigraphy (Barberà 109). That is to say, humans are made of strata and substrata accumulated through histo-

ry, and here Pasolini is selectively interested in the most recent anthropological change, from peasant to industrial society and leading to irrational consumerism (109).

In its primordial form, *eros* is entangled with the sacred nature of reality, and Pasolini represents it as "an essential and ungovernable power that has always caused great disasters and always will" (Barberà 104). Its creative potential is associated with a great risk of personal catastrophe, and when it meets the *logos* of the modern capitalist class, it can easily become "a tool of submission, injuring those who still believe in love as an end rather than a means" (Tellini 222). Medea, after betraying her people and escaping to Greece with Jason, must face the consequences of her loss of the sacred. Her semi-divine self, dominated by a primordial form of *eros*, must face the *logos* embedded in Jason's opportunism and the reality she encounters in the Greek world. Her sacred essence remains buried inside the deeper strata of her self, but it loses its power and fails to rescue her from personal catastrophe. Still, she chooses to go ahead with her vengeance, poisoning Glauce, causing the death of Creon, and murdering her own children. Nevertheless, at the end of the film, she stands on the roof of a house in flames, uttering her last words: "Nothing is possible anymore!" Her life is over, and so is Jason's. There is no reconciliation between *eros* and *logos*. Medea has forsaken her semi-divine essence and is now a mere human, left to burn in flames, the same flames that once represented her connection to the ancient sun god Helios.

EPILOGUE: THE MONSTROUS AND DIVINE POWER OF ALTERITY

> There's honey in the hollows
> And the contours of the body
> A sluggish golden river
> A sickly golden trickle
> A golden, sticky trickle
> You can hear the bones humming
> You can hear the bones humming
> And the car reverses over

> The body in the basin
> In the shallow sea-plane basin

Such are the opening verses of a song by British experimental band Coil titled *Ostia (The Death of Pasolini)*.[1] On 2 November 1975, Pier Paolo Pasolini was brutally murdered on "the bloodstained coast of Ostia," as it is poetically portrayed in Coil's song. His body was found on the beach, in a terrible state, apparently run over multiple times by a car, multiple bones broken, and his testicles crushed by what appeared to be a metal bar. In the official narrative, his killer was a young prostitute. In reality, there are good reasons to believe that organized crime was behind the killing. But of course, for the conservative Italian society of the time, the former version was the logical demise of a depraved intellectual. Yet another human face drawn in the sand, washed away by the waves of history.

Some questions come to mind. Where do we find the real monstrosity of it all? Does it live in human prejudice and in the violence it generates? Or is it a divine manifestation of alterity? Perhaps Pasolini and Medea were not too unlike one another. Just like Medea, Pasolini had forsaken himself in adoration of a young man named Ninetto, whom he loved intensely until the day Ninetto left him to get married to a woman. In a 1971 letter to a friend, Pasolini writes: "I am almost mad with grief. Ninetto is over. After nine years Ninetto is gone. I lost the meaning of life" (qtd. in Tellini 221). "Pasolini and Medea suffered abandonment by Ninetto and Jason, but their suffering is made more acute by their awareness of the fact that it is their way of being and loving that has caused it" (Tellini 221). They lost themselves and surrendered to the Other until tragedy hit. A very human story. But here, loss of identity is not the Aristotelian loss of *logos*, it is rather the very encounter of the primordial power of *eros* with a more rational and calculative *logos*. It is the moment of reckoning of a lover who chooses power—as in Jason's case, and assimilation into society—as Ninetto probably did. And I would like to believe that in human tragedy, prejudice and violence do not merit being associated with monstrosity. I propose we instead see monstrosity as a manifestation of the divine power of alterity.

Chesi and Spiegel, in the introduction to their edited volume *Classical Literature and Posthumanism*, introduce the concept of the heterogeneous self. They come from the perspective of rejecting the ideas of flat ontologies, a stream of thought found within posthumanism that emphasizes an ontology "made exclusively of unique singular individuals, differing in spatio-temporal scale but not in ontological status" (DeLanda, qtd. in Chesi and Spiegel 2). To them, this type of approach amounts to a process of "saming alterity," whereby divine and natural forces, among other forms of existence, are reduced to a particular kind of personified entity. Difference is crucially relevant, as assimilating it to a generalised "same" always conceals a strategy of domination over weaker subjects. The concept of the heterogeneous self, on the other hand, is "an ontology of the human as inhabited by difference and a subjectivity that embodies its alterity." Within this understanding, difference is not in opposition to but in continuity with identity, and this is extremely important, as difference without identity erases diversity (2).

The heterogeneous self is a non-cannibalistic form of subjectivity, in the sense that it does not require the sacrifice or loss of identity in the face of alterity (18). On an epistemological and political level, it embodies the monstrous within, and monstrosity brings human knowledge to its limits, deactivating its normative discourses and making possible resistance to norms (18). Therefore, monstrosity as a divine manifestation of alterity dissolves the borders between normal and abnormal, actually working against human prejudice and the violence it brings to this world.

In the final analysis, what Medea can show us through the eyes of Euripides and Pasolini is that monstrosity is intrinsic to human nature. Just like the primordial power of *eros*, it can open our minds, but also lead us to great errors. However, it is not this inner essence that wreaks havoc on our lives, but rather its unresolved dialectic with the calculating rationality of *logos*, and its manifestations in our world, dominated as it is by greed for status and power. Perhaps, what is needed is a new posthuman horizon for our subjectivity: a fresh view of the self as the Other within, rejecting the duality that pits *eros* against *logos*, allowing us to explore the deeper metaphysi-

cal strata of our monstrosity, and a conscious determination to create new temporalities that challenge the lack of alternatives, in the apparently timeless dominance of capitalism. In this way, and in constant dialogue with one another, we may be finally able to imagine a different and better future for humanity.

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IMAGE NOTES

Figure 1: "Medea", image created by the author on Midjourney (https://cdn.midjourney.com/aa3e6bc5-9756-491c-bd93-aa590ff45da0/0_0.png).

NOTES

1. Source: https://open.spotify.com/track/6BJIxnku7keldgmaN6vhkV?si=a66f10aa948e4702↩

FROM PANORAMA TO PARKING GARAGE: AN ARCHITECTURAL AND ARCHIVAL HISTORY OF THE TORONTO CYCLORAMA

ISABELLE GAPP
JESSICA MACE

This text presents an architectural and archival history of the Toronto Cyclorama, built 1887 and demolished in 1976. Through an examination of its genesis and changing uses over time—as a cyclorama, machine hall, then parking garage—the text unveils its history, situating it within the scope of Toronto's architectural heritage and North American cyclorama buildings. With this text, the authors also champion the study of all kinds of local art and architecture rather than just those deemed to have superlative qualities, and provide a case study for the value of adaptive reuse and its inclusion in architectural histories.

Ce texte présente une histoire architecturale et archivistique du Cyclorama de Toronto, construit en 1887 et démoli en 1976. À travers un examen de sa genèse et de l'évolution de ses usages au fil du temps - cyclorama, salle des machines, et ensuite stationnement -, le texte dévoile son histoire, le situant dans le cadre du patrimoine architectural de Toronto et des bâtiments de cyclorama nord-américains. Avec ce texte, les auteurs défendent également l'étude de toutes sortes d'art et d'architecture locaux plutôt que ceux réputés avoir des qualités superlatives, et fournissent une étude de cas sur la valeur de la reconversion et son inclusion dans les histoires architecturales

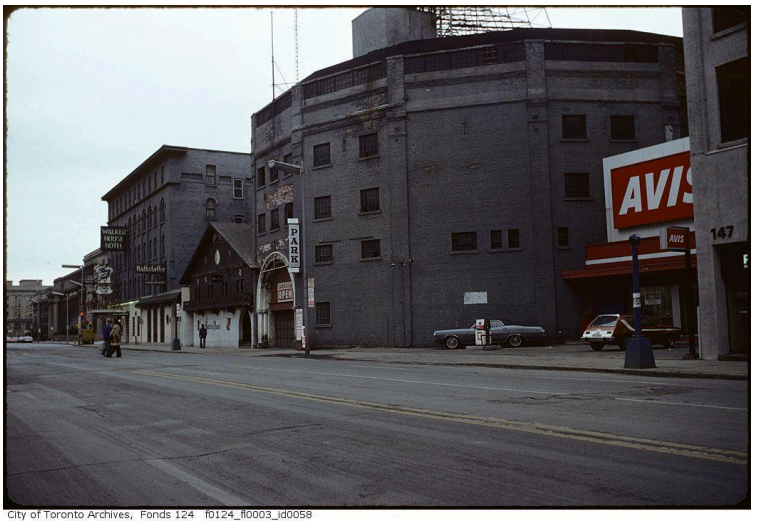

Fig. 1. Parking garage, City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 124, File 3, Item 58, 1976.

In 1976, a parking garage was torn down in Toronto (fig. 1). Unlike most parking facilities, however, this building was nearly a century old at the time of its demolition, predating the widespread use of motor cars or even the need for parking at all. Clearly this was a building with a storied past, but by the 1970s, few would have known it as anything but a garage.

Built in 1887, this large, polygonal brick building near the waterfront was once Toronto's Cyclorama, a purpose-built structure intended for the display of panorama paintings. The building retained its original function for only six years of its existence: the last panorama was shown in 1893, and the building was left vacant until 1903, when it was transformed into a machinery exhibition hall, and then into a parking garage in 1928. The Cyclorama building was thus twice resurrected and adapted to serve a new function.

The short lifespan of the cyclorama speaks to the nature of quickly changing forms of visual-sensorial entertainment in the nineteenth century, but also to an interest in creating a spectacle within the ur-

ban fabric of a city. Strangely, but perhaps unsurprisingly given its changing uses over time, the Toronto Cyclorama has not been written about in any comprehensive manner.[1] It is not mentioned within global studies of the panorama nor in any architectural histories. With this research, drawing on archival materials scattered across the City of Toronto Archives, the Toronto Public Library, and several historic newspapers, we start to piece together the beginnings of a comprehensive archive to tell the architectural history of the Toronto Cyclorama for the first time.

Although contemporary newspaper accounts and ephemera provide much of the context that we draw upon for the building and its use, it is important to note that scant visual material exists from the time that the Cyclorama operated as intended. To gain a fuller picture of the history of the site and to piece together the visual record, we had to turn to the subsequent lives of the building through to the 1970s. Architectural histories typically focus on original design and intent by calling on original drawings, contemporary accounts, statements by the architect, et cetera, often leaving the subsequent lives of a building overlooked. We argue, however, that they can equally provide valuable insight into a place, and in some instances, might in themselves be the best archival documents. This is the case of the Toronto Cyclorama—photographs and ephemera from *later* iterations of the building make up a substantial portion of the archival materials contributing to our understanding of the site and form the bulk of the visual record of the Cyclorama overall. That the building was made to last is a testament to the investment in panoramas across North America nearing the turn of the century and proved by its adaptive reuse over time. Moreover, in the case of cycloramas worldwide, if their reuse is discussed at all, it is simply to note the destruction or loss of the paintings. So, not only is this an interesting case study in adaptive reuse and expanded archival explorations generally, it also contributes to our understanding of cycloramas on a broader scale.

On a local scale, our interest in the Toronto Cyclorama is born out of a need to better understand Toronto's heritage architecture over

time. Architectural history and heritage practices in Toronto, as elsewhere, have typically focused on the biggest, best, most spectacular examples of architecture, stacked against a national or even global standard, and on buildings that retain their original function. Taken together, this neglects most types of buildings and relays only a small fraction of our shared history, impacting subsequent studies and heritage preservation.

Through an examination of the context, architecture and panoramas, we consider the legacy of the Toronto Cyclorama. With respect to architecture, this building reminds us that there is more at stake than the original lifespan of the buildings to better understand the phenomenon of cycloramas writ large. In this instance, the conversion and transformation of the rotunda, though now demolished, has left us with a rich visual record of a cultural history that would have otherwise been forgotten. In short, the Toronto Cyclorama demonstrates that there is often more than meets the eye, and that fascinating, important histories and lessons can emerge, even from a parking garage.

WHAT IS A CYCLORAMA?

In North America and during the first half of the nineteenth century, the term "panorama" was typically associated with moving panoramas (where a static audience would be seated in an auditorium as a long roll-painting was moved before them) and not the circular panorama that had achieved great success in the United Kingdom and Europe. In the 1880s, however, there was a revival in interest in the latter. The circular panorama was rebranded the "cyclorama," with many paintings now addressing topics of particular interest to a North American audience: namely scenes of recent warfare, such as the Battle of Gettysburg and Battle of Atlanta. The history of panoramas worldwide has been well documented, notably, and most recently, in Erkki Huhtamo's *Illusions in Motion: Media Archaeology of the Moving Panorama and Related Spectacles* (2013), Katie Trumpener and Tim Barringer's edited collection *On the Viewing Platform: The Panorama between Canvas and Screen* (2020), and Helen

Kingstone's *Panoramas and Compilations in Nineteenth Century Britain: Seeing the Big Picture* (2023).[2]

To display these massive paintings, large rotundas or what were called cyclorama buildings were erected. The term "cyclorama" often stood as a shorthand for the building type, as well as for the paintings held within. Centralized in plan, the building typology featured a raised platform in the centre, on which the viewers would stand to take in the continuous painting that lined the walls. The platform would be reached by a kind of enclosed tunnel from the exterior entrance. The scenes were lit from above, either by natural daylight—from which the viewers were shielded by draped fabric—or lit by electric lighting, especially at night.

"WHAT IS THAT STRANGE LOOKING BUILDING?"[3]

The Toronto Cyclorama was built in 1887 at a cost of $25,000 CAD. Designed by Thomas Kennedy (1849-1916) and William J. Holland (1848-1899), the building caused a stir with its massive size and peculiar appearance. Described as "a high octagonal structure with not a window in its walls," ("The Amusement World" 3), the Cyclorama was articulated with classical details, like the pilasters framing each corner of the (actually sixteen-sided) polygon, the broad cornice of textured brick patterns below the massive dome topped by a lantern, and the large round-headed entrance arch framed by multiple, stacked orders (figs. 2a and 2b). The use of brick as the main construction material speaks to the intended permanence of this Cyclorama as compared to many of its temporary counterparts.

While few records survive today, the *Toronto World* newspaper provided a remarkably detailed account in August of 1887, a few weeks before the Cyclorama opened. Precise dimensions were provided in the newspaper, which give us a better sense of how it towered over its neighboring buildings "to a giddy height": "It is 125 feet across inside, its internal circumference is over 400 feet, its walls are 60 feet high, its height to the apex of the roof is 100 feet, to the apex of the dome 126 feet and to the ball on the top of the flagpole 150 feet"

Fig. 2a. Cyclorama and the Walker House Hotel, 1897, City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1268, Series 1317, Item 201.Fig. 2b. Entrance arch of former Cyclorama, September 5, 1976, City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 200, Series 2454, File 48.

("The Amusement World" 3). The size corresponds to the spectacle within—panorama paintings were massive. For instance, the same article notes that the Toronto canvas of the Battle of Sedan measured "over 50 feet from top to bottom and over 400 feet in length" ("The Amusement World" 3).

Given its size, it is perhaps no surprise that it was built near the Toronto harborfront. Mainly filled with industrial and transportation buildings to this point, there were large plots of available real estate in the area. Additional land had been created during the 1850s as the shoreline was pushed further south by infilling sections of the harbour (McIlwraith 15-33). An esplanade, public parks, the railway, and marine depots all occupied this newly liminal space. But in a quickly growing city,[4] the potential of this site was also likely clear for an attraction like this. The number of hotels in the area speaks to the potential for out-of-town spectators, lured by the Zoological Gardens, with its "evil-smelling whale," ("Children of Days Before Movies" 23) on the opposite (northwest) corner of York and Front (figs. 3a and 3b).

In this location, near the southwest corner of York and Front Streets, the Cyclorama could capitalize not only on the proximity to two local originally horse-drawn streetcar lines (Fortin and Ettinger), but also on visitors arriving by rail to Union Station—the first iteration

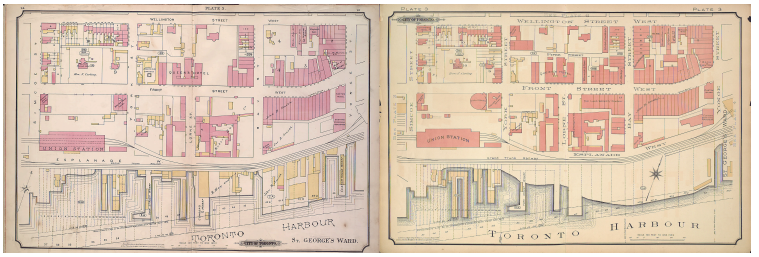

Fig. 3a. Goad's fire insurance map of 1884 showing the plot of land prior to the construction of the Cyclorama. Charles E. Goad, *Atlas of the city of Toronto and suburbs from special survey and registered plans showing all buildings and lot numbers*, Toronto: Chas. E Goad, Ltd., 1884. Courtesy of the Toronto Public Library. Fig. 3b. Goad's fire insurance map of 1890 with the Cyclorama in place. Charles E. Goad, *Atlas of the city of Toronto and vicinity from special survey founded on registered plans and showing all building and lot numbers*, Toronto: Chas. E Goad, Ltd., 1890. Courtesy of the Toronto Public Library.

of which was on the same block as the Cyclorama. Both trains and streetcars can be seen in a small lithograph from the time, emphasizing the modernity of the spectacle (fig. 4).

Such was the allure of the Toronto Cyclorama that newspapers in towns across southern Ontario advertised the exhibitions,[5] and special excursion rates were offered by the Grand Trunk Railway in partnership with the Cyclorama management. For instance, the Toronto *Globe* eagerly reported on a large group of visitors from out of town in late 1887:

> "Three hundred residents of Stratford, Guelph, Berlin [Kitchener], and Waterloo took advantage of the cheap rates offered by the G.T.R. and visited the battle fields [*sic*] of Sedan yesterday. This was the first of the Cyclorama excursions, and judging from the liberal patronage the management will continue them throughout the winter. All who visited were pleased."("Cyclorama" [*Globe*] 8)

Fig. 4. "Cyclorama." *Toronto illustrated, 1893: its growth, resources, commerce, manufacturing interests, financial institutions, educational advantages and prospects : also sketches of the leading business concerns which contribute to the city's progress and prosperity : a brief history of the city from foundation to the present time*. Toronto : Consolidated Illustrating Co., 1893, p.171.

The Barrie-based newspaper *The Northern Advance* further wrote of the Toronto Cyclorama that "our country cousins cannot afford to leave the city until they have at least seen [The Battle of Sedan] once" ("The Battle of Sedan" 1).

It is important to remember that the railway network was much more extensive then than it is today, with connections throughout the province, as well as into Quebec and the United States. That there

were close ties between the railway and the Cyclorama for tourism purposes is reinforced by an advertisement for the Grand Trunk Railway in the commemorative program for Toronto's *Battle of Gettysburg* cyclorama guide.

While it is long gone, we can read the impact of the Cyclorama on the current fabric of the city, having helped to set the precedent for large, blockbuster buildings and entertainment in this part of the city. The area continues to thrive as a tourist hotspot today, playing host to the CN Tower, the Rogers Centre, the Scotiabank Arena, and Ripley's Aquarium, to name but a few major attractions. As hordes were flocking to lose themselves in the panoramic experience, the city began to extend the land even further south, infilling sections of the harbour to create more streets and plots for building. It is possible that the Cyclorama's crowds and popularity may well have helped with this decision.

In any case, the siting and the ties to the railway are similar to cyclorama buildings in other cities in North America. The *Cincinnati Gazette*, for example, reported in 1885 that: "The great [Cincinnati] panorama is worthy to be widely known as one of the attractions of the city. If its merit was understood throughout the cities of Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky, and in all the metropolitan and railway districts, excursion trains to see it would be in demand" (*Cincinnati Gazette*). As in many other locations worldwide, the Toronto Cyclorama was seen as encouraging local travel to experience something global.

With the ideal site selected, it would have been a matter of management—originally C.A. Shaw (who also ran the Toronto Opera House)—finding the right architects to complete their vision (Walden 401). We have been unable to, as yet, locate any records for the architectural commission, and so it is unclear as to why the firm of Kennedy and Holland was hired. To this point, they had only completed a few commissions in Toronto. Based in Barrie, Ontario—home of *The Northern Advance* and roughly 68 miles north of Toronto—the firm opened a satellite office on York Street in 1882 (the same street on which the Cyclorama would stand), and worked with a variety of different building typologies, from residences and

schools to churches and masonic halls (Hill). While the firm had never built a cyclorama building, the basic requirements were likely familiar to them.

The Rotunda in Leicester Square in London, England of 1793, designed by Robert Mitchell for Robert Barker's panorama, was the first purpose-built structure for the exhibition of panoramas, and was well known, as its design was published in 1801 (Mitchell). From there, both permanent and temporary structures of similar design were built throughout the century, including for world's fairs and local industrial expositions. Even closer in date and availability, the design for a cyclorama rotunda was published and described in *The Scientific American* in 1886, which is a likely source for the architects north of the border ("The Cyclorama" [*Scientific American*] 296). It is also possible that they visited nearby American cyclorama buildings, for instance in Boston (1884) or those that formed part of the same circuit of traveling panoramas, like Cincinnati (1885), Cleveland (1886), Buffalo (1888), and Montreal (1888), which was moved to Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré, Quebec (1889). While panoramic paintings might be put in conversation with other forms of visual culture and mass visuality, such as billboards and advertising, our analysis of the Cyclorama is not one of mass media but rather "mass" geography—a phenomenon that reshaped the North American cityscape during the space of a decade.[6] By the end of the nineteenth century, they were relatively commonplace in the Western world. In short, it would have been easy for the Toronto architects to find precedent for the design of their cyclorama.

THE SPECTACLE OF THE PANORAMA

Cycloramas, like arcades, as Walter Benjamin argued in his unfinished manuscript, existed as "a phantasmagoria which a person enters in order to be distracted" (7). Vance Byrd further considers how "Panoramas belonged to the genealogy of department stores, arcades, and world exhibitions" (12). The cyclorama allowed the viewer to vicariously travel through both time and space. David Spurgeon writing for *The Globe and Mail* in 1954 went so far

as to compare the effect of the Toronto Cyclorama to that of H.G. Wells' time machine (13). It also offered a totalizing experience of the panoramic painting, through lighting, sound effects and narration, three-dimensional set design, keepsakes, and ephemera. Such was the impact of the Toronto Cyclorama that *The Globe* reported that, "The optical illusion is complete. Many persons suppose that this [totalizing] effect and the admirable areal [sic] prospectus are produced by skilful arrangements of magnifying glasses from above. But this is not so" ("Battle of Sedan" 10) The architecture of the panoramic display achieved what Vanessa Schwartz describes as "the project of verisimilitude," offering an immersive realism from a central point of view (154). That is, the sensorial experience of the panorama often extended beyond the canvas. At the Gettysburg Cyclorama in New York City (at City Hall Square) in 1886, *Scientific American* described how: "Earth and sod covered the boards. Real trees, evergreens and others, with shrubbery, portions of fences, and the like are set about, and tufts of grass, wheat, and similar things, lend their aid to fill up the scene" (296). Such effects were known to have been incorporated into the Toronto Cyclorama, making use of many of the latest tricks and technologies into the rotunda's design and panoramic display, to heighten the viewers' experience. When viewing the *Battle of Sedan*, for instance, it was reported in the *Globe* that "on looking down the spectator cannot tell where the ridges of real turf, the banks of real red and brown earth, the shattered roofs of real buildings mingled with and emerged into similar features in the painted scenery" (10). Other features like actors, sounds, and smoke would have enhanced the effect of a fully immersive atmosphere, in which the viewer could feel like they were actually on site, magically transported to another time and place. Not limited simply to the realm of architecture or painting, this demonstrates that cycloramas can be considered as part of the larger body of visual culture in Toronto, building on and serving as a complement to existing studies of photography, exhibition, and display culture in the city.[7]

In terms of lighting the grand space, while mirrors, achieving a similar effect to magnifying glasses, were later used in the display of sev-

eral other panoramas (Gapp 161), it seems that, at least initially, the Toronto spectacle relied largely on natural light during the daytime:

> "The light comes indeed from the roof of the brick edifice, but it passes through plain, clear glass only, and is modified when too strong or too weak by moveable screens of white cotton, so that to the artists' skill alone are due the remarkable effects of light and shadow of distance that, on a canvas only thirty feet from the spectator present him with a landscape perfect in detail as in its ensemble [...]" ("Battle of Sedan" 10)

A later photograph reveals the clerestory windows circling the dome (fig. 5); the means by which the panoramas were lit by day. But, as contemporary accounts report, "at night it is furnished by a score of electric lights" ("Battle of Sedan" 10). Electricity first came to Toronto in the 1880s, spreading slowly, so the electric lighting of a large building such as this would have still been fairly novel by 1887. It is unclear how exactly the electric lighting worked, but perhaps like the Boston rotunda, electric lights hung from the domed ceiling (Barber 107).

Fig. 5. Cyclorama Building, December 6, 1926, City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1548, Series 393, Item 20964.

Turning to the roof itself, it was singled out as the most notable architectural feature of the Cyclorama building and as a marvel of engineering:

> "It is circular and its weight is so arranged as not to give the slightest chance of shoving the walls outwards, because of the many strong iron girders which run from each principal and meet in the centre. It fits on the walls like the lid of a teapot; or, as the architects, Messrs. Kennedy & Holland, express the idea, it is like a large umbrella without a handle" ("The Amusement World" 3).

Clearly, this remained an impressive feature well into the twentieth century as shown by the photograph of the unaltered dome taken by a local photographer in 1926, decades after the building had changed functions.

THE EXHIBITIONS

During its roughly six years of operation, the Toronto Cyclorama played host to three panoramic scenes: the Battle of Sedan (a scene from the Franco-Prussian war) opened in 1887; the Battle of Gettysburg opened in 1889; and lastly Jerusalem on the Day of the Crucifixion opened in 1893.

Months after it opened, the *Battle of Sedan* cyclorama in Toronto still remained popular:

> "Since its opening day in September, the Battle of Sedan has enjoyed a large patronage, and has pleased and instructed nearly 40,000 people. To-day an extra inducement in the shape of handsome and costly souvenirs, is offered to all who attend. People who have formed or conceived peculiar ideas as to what a "Cyclorama" is, should visit this place to-day and be surprised. It is an exhibition that leaves an everlasting impression upon your memory—a work of science and art, that is instructively witnessed. Men die, nations change, but art is immortal" ("Musical and Dramatic" 2)

Having been shown in Cincinnati the year prior, among other locations, the realism of the *Battle of Sedan* and the impression it made on Torontonians was arguably long lasting. Such was the authority and credibility of the cyclorama that advertisements in the *Toronto World* "invited spectators to an 'actual battlefield' to view 'the most realistic war scenes ever exhibited'" (Watts 965). A sheet of printed ephemera further advertised "A Novel Entertainment" of "Brilliant and Interesting Lectures Descriptive of this Famous Battle" that accompanied the panorama and were delivered every half hour. They were "New, Novel and Instructive."

Meanwhile, the final panorama to open at the Toronto Cyclorama in 1893 was *Jerusalem: On the Day of the Crucifixion*. While an archival record in the Library and Archives Canada suggests that this is the same painting that is still on display in Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré, Quebec ("Cyclorama of the Holy Land"), an article from Toronto-based newspaper *The Globe* in 1901 noted that "The [Toronto] board [of Control] approved the sale of Cyclorama picture, 'Jerusalem on the Day of the Crucifixion,' to Mr. McConnell of Ludlow, Ky., for $500" ("Pin-holes in Cedar Blocks" 18). Such confusion is not surprising given that so few extant examples exist, having rapidly deteriorated as they were moved from city to city. Trumpener and Barringer claim that "Cyclorama closures or reuses often damaged, or even doomed, canvases" (37). As previously mentioned, the adaptive reuse of cyclorama buildings is typically seen only as impacting the lasting archive of the artwork and not the architecture itself. As we continue our research into the Toronto Cyclorama, it is likely that there are even more archival materials out there that might illuminate its visual and architectural histories. However, without any literature or scholarship to frame the significance of the Toronto Cyclorama, how these archives are labeled, handled, and managed are likely restricted.

THE AFTERLIVES OF THE TORONTO CYCLORAMA

The popularity of Toronto's Cyclorama did not last. The precipitous decline of the cyclorama as a medium has often been attributed to the invention of the cinematograph, Kineto-

scope, Eidoloscope, and other similar technologies that were developed to record and publicly display motion pictures.[8] Yet, the decline of the cyclorama predated the advent of cinema. As Caroline E. Janney writes, with more than forty cycloramas opening across the U.S. over the course of a decade, the oversaturation of the market and the familiarity with the panoramas traveling the circuits resulted in an inevitable loss of interest (Janney 238-255). Attendance figures and profits already marked a dwindling popularity, in Toronto as elsewhere, by the 1890s. The first signs of trouble for the Toronto Cyclorama came in 1891 when it fell behind on city taxes against both the property and the expensive panorama painting. At this time, *The Battle of Gettysburg* panorama painting and the building were opened to bids and purchased by a Mr. Harton Walker "understood to be buying for parties in Detroit."[9] Regardless, the rotunda continued to operate as a Cyclorama until 1893, when *Jerusalem: On the Day of the Crucifixion* was displayed.

Following this, it ceased operations as a cyclorama and the building saw various lease proposals: in 1895, an indoor cycling track was proposed ("By the Way" 8)—which would have given a fun, new meaning to the word "cyclorama"…—and in 1900, the Crescent Athletic Club sought to lease the space for prize fights and other athletic events ("He Clings" 10; "Water Famine" 7), but these uses were rejected by the city. In 1901, the building was approved for rental for one year by the Electric Cab Company for $60 per month ("Bold Charge" 7), but ultimately, this offer was withdrawn by Toronto's Board of Control ("Will Discuss" 12). It was first proposed in 1902 that the space be rented for manufacturing purposes ("Will Ask" 12), and it was leased in that same year to H.W. Petrie for $2,000 per year plus taxes ("Opposed to Monopoly" 7).

Interestingly, its new life as a machinery exhibition hall, as opened in 1903, was not too far removed from its initial function. The new owner, H.W. Petrie, Limited, intended the building to continue to serve as an attraction: "It is commodious, well lighted, easy of access, and affords splendid facilities for the inspection of machinery. Day and night its doors are open from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., and somebody is al-

ways on hand to receive visitors" ("H. W. Petrie Machinery Exhibit" 7).

It was at this time that three galleries were built inside the space: this is shown in a rare interior photograph of the building (fig. 6). The massive scale of the open rotunda is provided by the men, hardly visible, posing with the machinery. This is the only interior photograph that we were able to find from any period in the building's history. It is a rare survival that was tucked away on a microfilm of old lantern slides of various scenes in and around Toronto. While we have not yet found (and may never find) an interior photograph of the Cyclorama in use, this later photograph attests to the impressive size of the viewing space and just how immersive the spectacle of the panorama would have been.

The building remained a machine hall until 1927, at which time the Petrie company applied to the Board of Control to convert the space into a parking garage ("Children of Days Before" 23). The interior was then subdivided into multiple concrete storeys connected by ramps (fig. 7), the walls were perforated with windows, and the

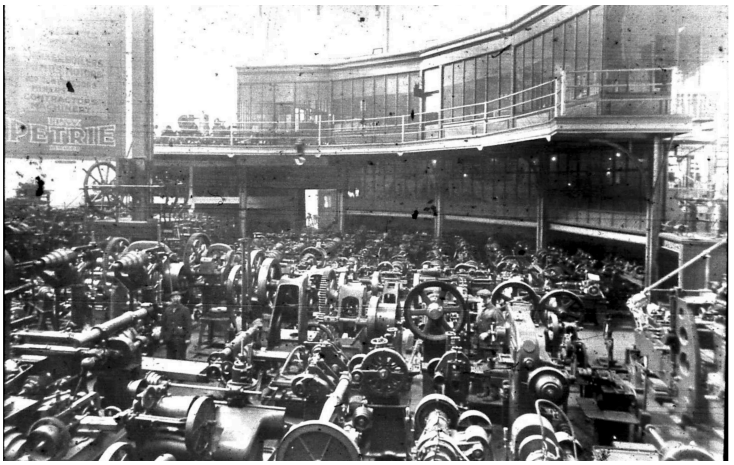

Fig. 6. Interior of Cyclorama as H.W. Petrie Limited Machinery Hall, City of Toronto Archives, "H.W. Petrie, Front St. Machines." Fonds 1244, Series 2119, Item 55.3.

Fig. 7. "Famous Old Cyclorama is now Petrie's Parking Place," *The Globe*, Apr 30, 1928, p. 14.

domed roof was removed at a total cost of $125,000 ("Construct New Ramp" 7; "Famous Old Cyclorama" 14).

Architectural drawings do still exist for this conversion and are held at the City of Toronto Archives ("Parking Garage for H.W. Petrie").

Fig. 8. Elgin Motors in the former Cyclorama Building, 1953. James V. Salmon. Courtesy of the Toronto Public Library.

Unfortunately, however, they are in poor condition and not accessible at the time of writing. Similar to the earlier iterations of the building, it seems as though the owners were keen to capitalize on its novelty, boasting not just its convenient location, but the fact that it was an adapted historic building or "a building within a building," as noted in the advertisement. The building continued to serve as a parking garage—later under the ownership of Elgin Motors (fig. 8)—until its demolition in 1976 as the area was further developed, and as new, modern parking amenities were built.

While it might seem odd to us today that the Toronto Cyclorama was converted and reconverted again over time, other North American cycloramas had similarly long and eventful lives. To date, these parallel instances of adaptive reuse have only served a footnote in the global history of cycloramas and yet help elucidate local architectural and social histories (Trumpener and Barringer 37).

Already in the 1840s, the first Philadelphia Cyclorama building (pre-1847) was turned into a Horse & Carriage Bazaar, later known as The Herkness Bazaar.[10] The Cincinnati Cyclorama of 1885 was only

ever intended as a temporary structure, having been constructed out of wood clad in iron (Leonard 19). Despite its popularity, it was demolished in March 1889. The Cleveland Cyclorama of 1886, by contrast, was constructed out of brick and was built within a pre-existing structure. This became known as the Lennox Building and housed a variety of goods, services, apartments, and for a while the cyclorama. However, by 1896, according to a Sanborn Fire Insurance map, the cyclorama had been repurposed as a "Bicycle Riding School," and by the time the Lennox Building was demolished in 1921, the cyclorama had already been removed. Meanwhile, in Buffalo, the cyclorama of 1888 was similarly constructed out of brick, but unlike many of the others remains standing today. After being acquired by the City of Buffalo in 1910, the cyclorama played host to a livery, a taxi garage, and a roller-skating rink. Between 1942 and 1963 it was a library, resplendent with a reading room and lecture halls. After decades of being vacant, the building, now divided into separate floors, has for the past almost forty years housed a local construction company.

The longevity of these buildings has contributed to our understanding of the typology of cyclorama buildings worldwide, and now with the Toronto Cyclorama, we may also begin to tease out some new and exciting pieces of this history. For instance, having a nearly complete visual record of the exterior through its later iterations might help us better understand subsequently built rotundas, like the Buffalo Cyclorama of 1888, or the Montreal Cyclorama of 1888, which was shipped to, rebuilt, and later re-clad in Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré. We might ask: did the design of the Toronto Cyclorama influence these later ones? What other connections might exist between these buildings? And in turn, what might a close study of Buffalo and Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré teach us about the missing information of the Toronto Cyclorama?

Beyond architectural history, we might also better understand the dissemination of cyclorama canvases and how the circuit operated across North America. Not only this, but if Toronto had a Cyclorama that was lost to time and left out of the global literature, what other cities might have had a rotunda that played an important role in its

time? While many questions remain, and much work has yet to be done, we now have the foundations for future study and scholarship.

CONCLUSION

While most of the literature on panoramas and cycloramas simply discusses the paintings and the end of this trendy medium, the Toronto Cyclorama proves that there is a greater story to tell. It reveals a complex network of ideas across the continent and how these correspond to changes made to the built fabric of a city. Its longevity and changing uses speak to the value and potential of these large buildings over time. To posterity, it also provides a historic case study of the adaptive reuse of a heritage building and the need to study local buildings of all stripes.

In the context of Toronto's architectural history and heritage, unfortunately, this is not the only significant space that has been forgotten. At a time when our built heritage is constantly threatened by development pressures given the rapid growth of the population in a dense urban core, or risks being destroyed or left to fall into disrepair due to lack of funding, researching buildings like the Toronto Cyclorama highlights the need to study and record local architecture—typically under-researched and undervalued in Canada—and contextualize it within the broader built environment of North America. Overall, our immediate hope is that this study of the Toronto Cyclorama might provide a platform for future exploration into the many overlooked histories that might be told about the city's built environment and architectural heritage.

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"Will Discuss Gas Purchase. Board of Control to Take Up the Subject Today. Mayor's Third Levee to be Called for Lease of Cyclorama […]." *The Globe*, 8 March 1901, p. 12.

IMAGE NOTES

Fig. 1. Parking garage, City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 124, File 3, Item 58, 1976.

Fig. 2a. Entrance arch of former Cyclorama, September 5, 1976, City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 200, Series 2454, File 48.

Fig. 2b. Entrance arch of former Cyclorama, September 5, 1976, City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 200, Series 2454, File 48

Fig. 3a. Goad's fire insurance map of 1884 showing the plot of land prior to the construction of the Cyclorama. Charles E. Goad, *Atlas of the city of Toronto and suburbs from special survey and registered plans showing all buildings and lot numbers*, Toronto: Chas. E Goad, Ltd., 1884. Courtesy of the Toronto Public Library.

Fig. 3b. Goad's fire insurance map of 1890 with the Cyclorama in place. Charles E. Goad, *Atlas of the city of Toronto and vicinity from special survey founded on registered plans and showing all building and lot numbers*, Toronto: Chas. E Goad, Ltd., 1890. Courtesy of the Toronto Public Library.

Fig. 4. "Cyclorama." *Toronto illustrated, 1893: its growth, resources, commerce, manufacturing interests, financial institutions, educational advantages and prospects : also sketches of the leading business concerns which contribute to the city's progress and prosperity : a brief history of the city from foundation to the present time*. Toronto : Consolidated Illustrating Co., 1893, p.171.

Fig. 5. Cyclorama Building, December 6, 1926, City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1548, Series 393, Item 20964.

Fig. 6. Interior of Cyclorama as H.W. Petrie Limited Machinery Hall, City of Toronto Archives, "H.W. Petrie, Front St. Machines." Fonds 1244, Series 2119, Item 55.3.

Fig. 7. "Famous Old Cyclorama is now Petrie's Parking Place," *The Globe*, Apr 30, 1928, p. 14.

Fig. 8. Elgin Motors in the former Cyclorama Building, 1953. James V. Salmon. Courtesy of the Toronto Public Library.

NOTES

1. See Watts, Graham. "'The Smell O' These Dead Horses': The Toronto Cyclorama and the Illusion of Reality." *University of Toronto Quarterly*, vol. 74, no.4, 2005, pp. 964-970; and Bateman, Chris. "The history of the long lost Cyclorama building in Toronto." *blogTO*, 6 Jan, 2012, https://www.blogto.com/city/2012/01/a_brief_history_of_the_cyclorama_building_in_toronto/, Accessed 26 June 2024.↩

2. See Hyde, Ralph. *Panoramania! The Art and Entertainment of the 'All-Embracing' View*. Trefoil Publications, Barbican Art Gallery, 1988; Huhtamo, Erkki. *Illusions in Motion: Media Archaeology of the Moving Panorama and Related Spectacles*. The MIT Press, 2013; Trumpener, Katie and Tim Barringer, eds., *On the Viewing Platform: The Panorama between Canvas and Screen*. Yale University Press, 2020; Grandjean, Lucie. "Saisir l'horizon: la circulation de l'image panoramique à travers les Etats-Unis au XIXème siècle," Doctoral thesis. January 2022, Université Paris Nanterre; and Kingstone, Helen. *Panoramas and Compilations in Nineteenth Century Britain: Seeing the Big Picture*. Springer International Publishing, 2023.↩

3. "The Amusement World, The Front-Street Cyclorama To Be Opened on Sept. 1," *The Toronto World*, 20 Aug. 1887, 3.↩

4. The population of Toronto was 86,400 in 1881 and 181,000 by 1891.↩

5. See, for instance, "A Wonderful Work of Art," *Canadian Statesman* (Bowmanville), 22 Feb., 1888, 5; "The Battle of Sedan," *The Northern Advance* (Barrie), 24 May, 1888, 1.↩

6. For more see: Stephan Oettermann, *The Panorama: History of a Mass Medium*. Zone Books, 1997.↩

7. See for instance, Sarah Bassnet's book *Picturing Toronto* (MQUP, 2016); Philip Gordon Mackintosh's *Newspaper City: Toronto's Street Surfaces and the Liberal Press,* 1860-1935 (UTP 2017); and Keith Walden's *Becoming Modern in Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition and the Shaping of a Late Victorian Culture* (UTP, 1997).↩

8. See Angela Miller, "The Panorama, the Cinema, and the Emergence of the Spectacular," *Wide Angle* 18, no. 2 (1996): 34-69.doi:10.1353/wan.1996.0010↩

9. "The taxes against the battle amounted to $819, and a further sum of $1,000 was against the property for rent." — "General News of the City. The Battle of Gettysburg Sold by Auction…" *The Globe*, Feb 17, 1892 p.8.↩

10. Between 1888-1890, another brick cyclorama building was constructed in Philadelphia at the northeast corner of Broad and Cherry Streets.↩

THE DESIGN IN THE VISUALIZATION OF UNCERTAINTY, ABSTRACT MODELLING AND VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY

DOMINIK LENGYEL
CATHERINE TOULOUSE

INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to present a visual language that directly depicts the imagination of the sciences, which is capable of reproducing architectural statements in the humanities as unadulteratedly as possible even if they are formulated in an uncertain way because they are based on uncertain knowledge (Fig. 1). In this way, the architectural statements can be communicated visually and also have a reflexive effect on the humanities. Because these images have a direct effect on the imagination, they are simultaneously a means of communication and research. The paper is aimed at an assumed readership with a general interest in science and design without any particular subject-specific background. Since the journal is based in the academic discipline of art history, the authors attempt to address the specifics of the design disciplines in some places, where there is occasionally a need for clarification of procedures and working methods. The authors are architects themselves, so that the transdisciplinary presentation explains many things that are self-evident in architecture, in order to awaken an understanding for these things in general, on the one hand, but above all an interest in interdisciplinary work.

Fig. 1 Cologne Cathedral around 1320 CE

REFERENCE

Images can have different purposes and appear in completely different forms. The relevant purposes in this context are information and inspiration, whereby suggestion also plays a major role, and the relevant forms here are those in the intermediate space between the image of physical reality—the common photograph (Fig. 2)—and the highly abstract diagram—the pictogram of an escape route, for example. Purpose and form are therefore two dimensions that may not be comparable, but which frame the area where the visual language presented here operates.

The visual language presented here has developed out of the discipline of architecture, if a disciplinary origin can be claimed at all for interdisciplinary approaches. However, the origin is significant insofar as architecture fundamentally has an effect on the public, which is characterized, among other things, by being intended to apply in general language, while the terminologies used have different meanings in the different disciplines. Strictly speaking, this can lead to conflicts in meaning, depending on the direction from which the term is understood. For this reason, in the following the authors will try to use terms in a generally understandable way. In some excep-

Fig. 2 Circus Maximus, Rome

tions, however, it seems unavoidable to the authors to take up certain specifications, also in order to avoid misunderstandings. For example, the term "physical reality" refers to that reality which is generally considered to be our own immediate perception, that is without the aid of technical means, but also without the effort of constructing any theoretical concepts. In order to understand the visual language, the authors also do not consider it necessary to further define which reality is meant or even how many realities exist in total (Fig. 3).

FORMS OF IMAGES

The now most common form of images is that which depicts physical reality. Images can always be classified according to their degree of realism, and this is independent of whether they are perceived in physical reality or, for example, in virtual reality, that is, through 3D glasses. The common language formulation for this form of appearance is to describe it as looking real. Although every form of representation that looked just as real as was technically possible was described in this way, this classification remains

Fig. 3 Naga Royal City Exposition, Egyptian Museum, Munich

significant because it places a meaning in the foreground of the description of the image, namely to be truthful, that is, to reproduce reality unadulterated. The term "documentary" fits into this pattern

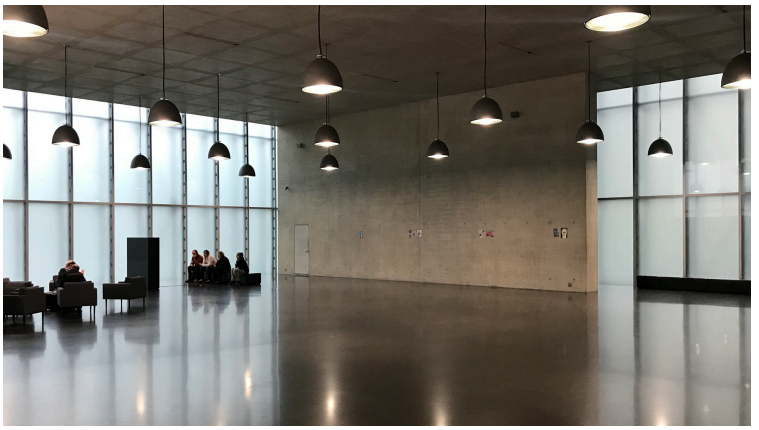

Fig. 4 Kunsthaus Bregenz, Austria

of meaning. Especially in visual communication towards the general public, this authenticity of whatever kind plays a major role (Fig. 4).

The authenticity of an image has a direct effect on its subjective plausibility. Images that are considered genuine are often interpreted as genuine without further questioning. Things shown in such images are assumed to be real and true (Fig. 5). There is no other explanation for the controversy surrounding manipulated photos or even images calculated by artificial intelligence. The fact that such calculated results are called photos in the general press shows the confusion in the perception and interpretation of those images that are readily assumed to be real. Apart from the importance of the classical photographic composition of point of view, angle of view, and direction of view, not to mention lighting and exposure, even before the artificial calculation of photo-like images in every apparatus there was a change in what was visible in front of the lens, be it in the form of granularity due to the chemical sensitivity of the film to digital processing and alleged optimization of the electrical signals on digital sensors.

Realness is thus perceived as absolute—images are either real or not—while the relation of the visual appearance of an image to phys-

Fig. 5 T-Cell gas to power transformer

ical reality in any other form is readily perceived as gradual and also accepted. Oil paintings, which are generally described as realistic, are readily received as illustrations of physical reality, whereas this is not the case with paintings of cubism, for example. The term "abstract" is used for this form of representation, and the authors will continue to operate with this term merely in order to distance themselves from the form of physical reality. In the expanded concept of reality, on the other hand, such a distinction would be much more difficult, since it could be claimed that the reality of the abstract artist is precisely that which is visible in abstract painting (Fig. 6).

Even if the first impression of realness is particularly pronounced in paintings, the same basically applies to every other form of image generation, from drawings to collages. The question of authenticity, of the relationship to physical reality, always dominates the perception. Especially in the case of drawings, however, there is already an important differentiation, namely the separation between geometry and materiality. Drawings are allowed to be genuine in a certain way, namely to reproduce the geometry, that is the spatial structure, close to reality, to be genuine in this respect, while materiality can be completely disregarded, not only in the general sense but even in the case

Fig. 6 The Gulf of Marseilles Seen from L'Estaque, by Paul Cézanne, around 1885

of line drawings. This form of abstraction of materiality alone will be of importance in the following (Fig. 7).

In the case of fully abstract images such as diagrams, which obviously do not depict physical reality, the question of authenticity becomes obsolete and is replaced by the question of relevance, of meaning in relation to what is indirectly represented. Symbols such as the indication of the escape direction by the use of generally understandable signs certainly refer to elements of physical reality, but in a highly abstracted way. The figure running in the direction of a rectangle, that is, the person running towards an opening, symbolizes the way to an exit enabling escape. Much of what is depicted is learned, yet such symbols strive to be universally understood (Peirce, p. 205).

So nevertheless there is indeed a reference to physical reality, only this is in need of interpretation and also requires a higher mental processing load. If we look at the perhaps most common form of diagram in architecture, the floor plan drawing, it represents a diagram

Fig. 7 View through the Herculaneum Gate, Pompeii, by Giovanni Battista Piranesi, 1778

that has an unmistakable reference to the geometry of the building, while neither the appearance as a whole nor a large part of its elements correspond to their appearance in physical reality (Fig. 8). Rather, it is the spatial relationships of the elements to each other, merely in terms of their horizontal positioning, that are depicted in this diagram. Still, floor plan drawings are accepted and commonly used as relevant, if not indispensable, components of the representation of architecture. The reason for these forms of representations lies in their purpose of use. This becomes especially clear in the case of the floor plan, which in adapted form also represents the basis for its construction during the building process.

PURPOSES OF IMAGES

This brings the purpose of the image into focus. The level of meaning spanned here ranges from information to inspiration, and here, too, it is primarily a matter of the space in between. If a scope for interpretation will always be given, it imposes

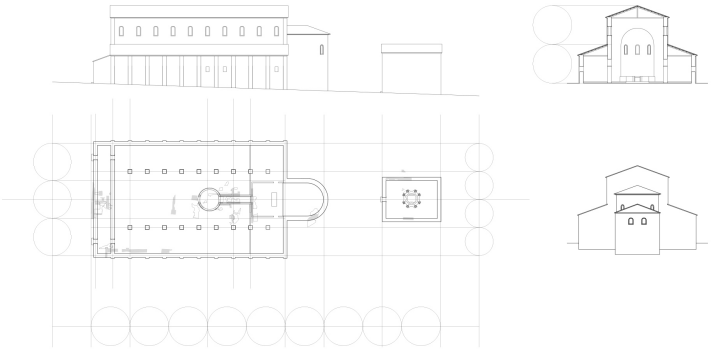

Fig. 8 Cologne Cathedral's predecessor of the 6th to 7th century CE

itself sometimes more and sometimes less, depending on the form of representation. The least obvious impulse to reflection, and thus inspiration, arises naturally from the depiction of physical reality, the invocatory character of which is already made difficult by the attribute of realness that the image, whose form at first glance, as explained above, is given, and can arise solely from the content depicted. The more abstract a picture, on the other hand, the more interpretation necessarily becomes involved (Fig. 9). But here, too, it is ultimately a question of habit and the unambiguousness of the signs (Arnheim, pp. 134–138) that result in highly abstract images, such as the image of the figure walking in the direction of a rectangle described above, nevertheless being unambiguously interpreted in terms of their meaning. Of course, this does not exclude misinterpretations, as the similarity of the symbols for elevators and washrooms show.

The communication of information via images is perhaps the most common purpose, even if one assumes that the countless snapshots that populate social networks also convey a sense of life via the information about where one is with whom and what activity one is engaged in. The genre of documentary illustration, or photo doc-

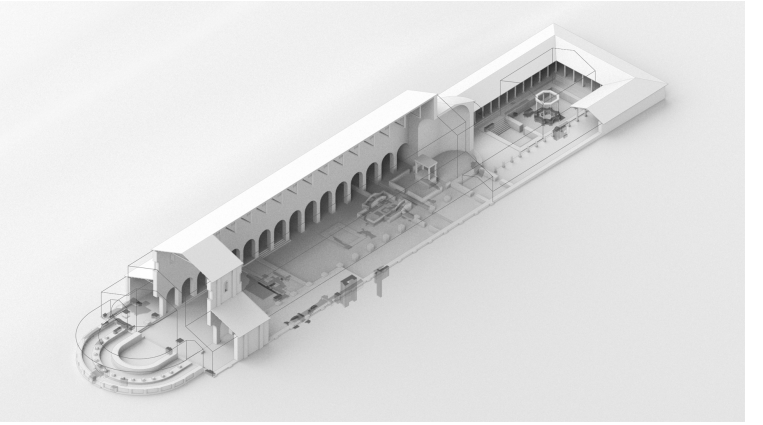

Fig. 9 Cologne Cathedral's predecessor of the 7th to 8th century CE

umentation since the expansion of photography, already aptly describes this intention. Nevertheless, and here then lies the concept of quality of the design level of photography, there are also considerable differences in the alleged documentary photography which do not concern the technical implementation, but already the level of design. In this way, however, a photograph designed as a documentary can be considered to fall into the realm of art. However, this is in no way an attempt to define art as such (Reinhard, p. 68) or to sharply divide photography into documentation and art. Rather, it is a matter of affirming a tendency, namely that photography, even if it intends to document, may communicate itself as a composed image or as something commonly referred to as a snapshot. The composed image, however, pursues the enhancement of the message to be conveyed through the means of image composition (Fig. 10).

Thus, the primary goal of diagrams is to point out facts as directly as possible, that is, to inform about matters. Also, diagrams can be at various levels of design, but here the general view is directed even more to the easiest possible extraction of the desired information, whereas the level of design is given much less weight (Fig. 11). The visualization of quantity ratios in diagrams, called pie charts, is un-

Fig. 10 Piazza St. Ignazio, Rome, Francesco Borromini

questionably informative, provided that the adjacent areas can be distinguished with a high contrast and that a legend is provided, because it informs visually about portions, that is fractions, quotients, ratios, relations. Many complex relationships, such as the proportions of some fractions to each other, are in some cases less directly readable, and also the placement of the individual components at the top, side, or bottom of the diagram may induce further connotations, but essentially the representation is objective and unambiguous.

Halfway between an image that serves purely to inform and an image that merely serves to inspire, if it is possible to separate the two so clearly, is the deliberately suggestive image, presupposing information that tendentiously suggests a thought process that goes well beyond the actual content. Diagrams in particular are often designed to suggest conclusions. Bar charts, for example, stacked components of a quantity distribution, which at the same time show the change of the sum of their individual parts over time, like to place the most strongly changing part directly on the time axis, so that all the components seem to be changing, even if the smaller parts are basically only shifting, while their size actually remains unchanged. The bor-

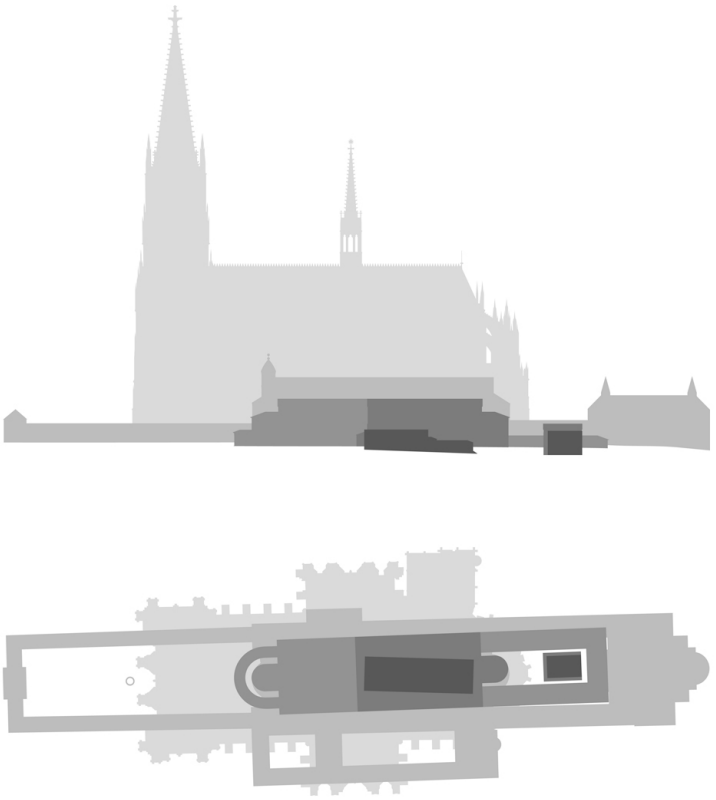

Fig. 11 Cologne Cathedral and its predecessors from the 1st century CE until today

der to manipulative representation is fluid here, intended or unintended.

Finally, inspiration is a function of an image that can naturally arise from any image, and in this respect the listing of these three purposes of an image is not to be understood as comprehensive and conclusive, not even a selective ranking. With regard to the pictorial language presented here, however, inspiration plays an important role, since these pictures suggest that we ought to think further. Inspiration always arises from images when the viewer is motivated to

take more from what is perceived than is objectively represented. In the case of a real photo, this can be anything—the planning of a city greening at the sight of a street intersection, or the same idea at the sight of a diagram showing biodiversity in the context of industrial agriculture. However, inspiration can also arise to a particular extent when a picture suggests matters in such a way that it is obvious that there is something invisible behind it, for example in the form of silhouettes. Shadows are so clearly reduced images of their more complex origins that the first question that arises when looking at a shadow is what it is from (Fig. 12). Not without reason do shadow figures offer an extremely popular game with perception and the simplicity of deceiving it. Plato's Allegory of the Cave likewise uses the image of the shadow to paraphrase the phenomenon of human cognition (Fig. 13).

Here, however, a distinction can be made between implicit and explicit inspiration. Here, too, it is merely an attempt to comprehend the relationship conceptually; a distinction could also be made between intended and unintended inspiration. But even this is not un-

Fig. 12 Ancient city of Messene, Peloponnese, Greece

Fig. 13 Antrum Platonicum, Jan Saenredam after Cornelis van Haarlem, 1604

ambiguous. The relation between inspiring sense impression and generated inspiration is always manifold, and also depends on something in between, namely that of the unconscious inspiration, which nevertheless determines the active participation. The following juxtaposition shall illustrate this.

The visual perception of unadulterated nature, for example, and to remain in the image of the image, an ordinary, casual, that is at least not consciously composed photograph of a forest, can inspire bionic constructions (Fig. 14). At least this form of inspiration from the side of the sensory stimulus, the forest, considered, is unintentional and probably also implicit, since the explicit perception of forest presumably concerns the tree, while even firewood and relaxation are interpretations which, however, do not necessarily cause any inspiration.

It is different with artifacts. These can be designed in such a way that they almost provoke inspiration, all the more so the more abstract they are. The *Black Square* by Kasimir Malevich is perhaps the most

Fig. 14 Hollow Oak Tree, Fontainebleau, by Gustave Le Gray, 1855–57

extreme example of this. The square, like the forest, holds a multitude of interpretive possibilities, but the square takes a more offensive approach here. It practically demands an interpretation; it is not least its declaration of being an artwork that is clarifying in this respect. But even this need not include the intention of the author of the artifact, and in the context of the visual language presented here, it is irrelevant what the author himself intended. Rather, what is decisive is the quality of the artifact, which, including all mediation parameters as well as its positioning as a work of art in a museum, induces an active engagement that may result in inspiration, but which depends primarily on the viewer and is therefore perhaps intentional, but in any case implicit (Fig. 15). This phenomenon can thus also be explained by the viewer's expectations, perhaps his or her previous education, that is, the retrievable readiness to immediately question the ambiguous for its implicit potential for inspiration. The emp-

ty black square, simply found, offers so little explicit information, merely colour, proportion, and absolute measure, presumably always in that order, provided one faces not its photograph but the original; otherwise, only colour and proportion remain. At almost every point in the contemplation of images, the contemplation of the contemplation of images, as well as the creation of images, one encounters the limits and traps of verbal terminologies. One only has to think of the fact that black is not even called a colour in contexts other than the common language, which can likewise give rise to inspiration. If black was not a colour, what would the title say about the square?

THE VISUALISATION OF HYPOTHESES

The description of forms and purposes of images above is, as mentioned, not intended to be complete or to serve as evidence. Perception is much too subjective for that, even if there are statistically ascertainable effects that can be researched and

Fig. 15 Erwin Heerich, Museum Insel Hombroich

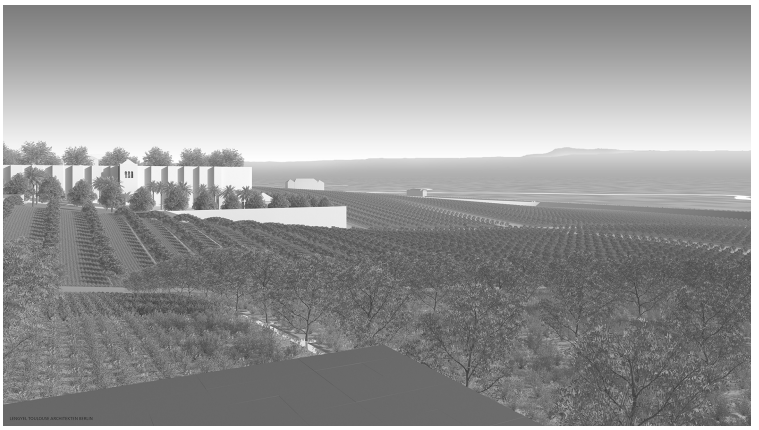

Fig. 16 Orchard in the Umayyad palace city of Medina Azahara in present-day Andalusia in the 10th century CE

proven strictly according to the rules of psychology (Glaser, et al., 2016, pp. 1135–1151). It is only to point out those aspects of the images of the visual language presented here, in order to be able to understand why the images look the way they do. Basically, the images are offers to draw more from the scientific content they represent than from the verbal description alone, both for the viewer and for the creator of this content. The visual language is thus an offer in both directions (Fig. 16).

The objective of the visual language presented here is, as already mentioned at the beginning, the visualization of hypotheses from the humanities of archaeology, historical building research, and art history in a way that combines a liability in spatial composition of architectural components with the greatest possible openness in terms of uncertain knowledge (Glaser, et al., 2022, pp. 1097–1131). What is thus almost always excluded is the actual appearance, as is generally suggested when reconstructions are referred to. To achieve this objective, traditional sub-disciplines from architecture and related design disciplines are combined to make use of experience in design itself on the one hand and tradition in perception on the other, and

this with the purpose of directing perception to the actual matter rather than to the form of representation. For all the deviation from the depiction of physical reality, which is thus as inevitable as it is in need of explanation, the viewer should nevertheless engage as directly as possible with what is being represented. The two sub-disciplines therefore originate not only from the pre-digital, but in part even from the pre-industrial era, namely abstract model making in the design phase and photography in the course of documentation. One reason for this, among others, is the ephemeral nature of design trends in the still relatively new medium of the digital image (Locher, et al., pp. 9–12). The recourse to pre-digital design traditions is intended to prolong the lifespan of visual artifacts (Fig. 17).

Abstract model making is a timeless characteristic of architectural modelling. Several-thousand-year-old Egyptian funerary objects show extremely reduced buildings, obvious abstractions of buildings of physical reality. Wooden models of the Renaissance, such as that of the Cathedral of St. Peter and Paul in the painting by Domenico Cresti da Passignano, in which Michelangelo presents his design to Pope Pius the IV, show simplified geometry without materiality. Clearly, the painting demonstrates that this simplified model representation received attention and even resulted in the realization of the building. Cork models also reproduced a variety of buildings without reference to actual materiality, simply through their simplified geometry. Likewise, and with even less material impression, plaster models were for a long time the standard in the communication of architectural as well as urban planning (Fig. 18). The visual tradition interprets such models without hesitation as reduced, that is, abstract, architectural representations that provide information about exactly what is recognizable, namely the geometry. Nevertheless, the work is part of the current discourse on digital architecture (Hirschberg, et al., pp. 285–302).

The method for achieving this goal is thus the combination of two traditional disciplines. However, it is necessary to take into account some peculiarities of this new content, because it is not about the construction of buildings. In a figurative sense, a direct assignment of the involved sizes and people is possible; nevertheless, the involve-

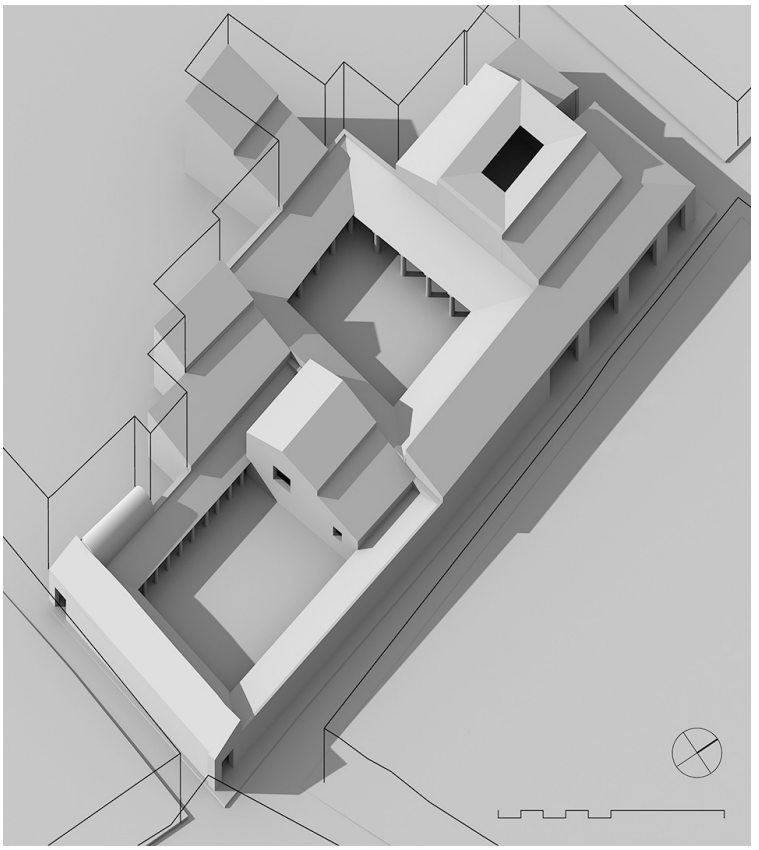

Fig. 17 Republican Baths, Pompeii

ment of the same is not quite the same as in the traditional construction project.

ABSTRACT MODEL MAKING

Model building in the design phase of architecture serves both the designing architect as well as the client as a tool in the concretization of the general, often rough idea about the building to be created, up to its realization. In the course of

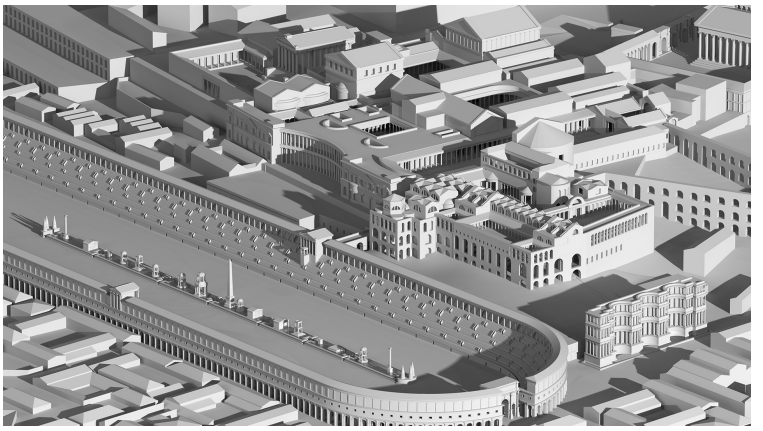

Fig. 18 Palatine Palaces in the time of Emperor Maxentius, Rome

the planning process, more and more decisions are made, often also revised, so that the models in the different design phases increasingly resemble the physical reality up to the stage of the mockup—a section of the building to be realized in the original scale with the original materials—with only the construction process not corresponding to the later realization. Thus, while the model becomes more and more condensed from the abstract to the concrete, it accompanies and guides the design process. But it always aims at its realization. This is the main difference to the visualization of hypotheses. For while in the design process decisions have not yet been made (Fig. 19), because first the rough concept is agreed upon, the knowledge of the humanities sets limits to concretization (Fig. 20). In the openness up to this moment, both processes—the planning of architecture as well as the visualization of hypotheses—still contain contradictions. Alternative planning on the one hand corresponds to alternative, that is, contradictory, but equally valid hypotheses. Only it does not go beyond a certain point. This point, of course, cannot be determined objectively. It is rather the moment in which the inevitably speculative reaches a degree which causes discomfort to the author of the hypothesis, the archaeologist, for instance. It is the same uneasiness that afflicts science in the face of the complete cre-

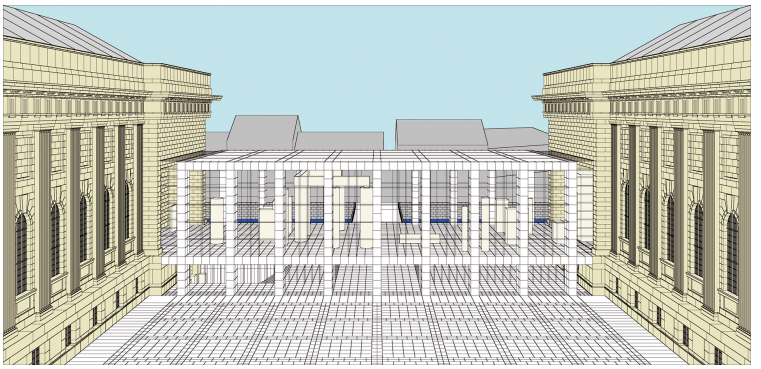

Fig. 19 Entry for the 2001 completion for the conversion of the Pergamon Museum Berlin

Fig. 20 Palatine Palaces in the time of Emperor Maxentius, Rome

ation of real-looking fantasy worlds that is common in the film and games industry, only in consideration of the scientifically acceptable, justifiable part of the representation. Ideally, it is possible to achieve a state of the model that at least does not contradict science (Fig. 21).

However, model building in the design phase differs in one very decisive point from model building that imitates physical reality. Where-

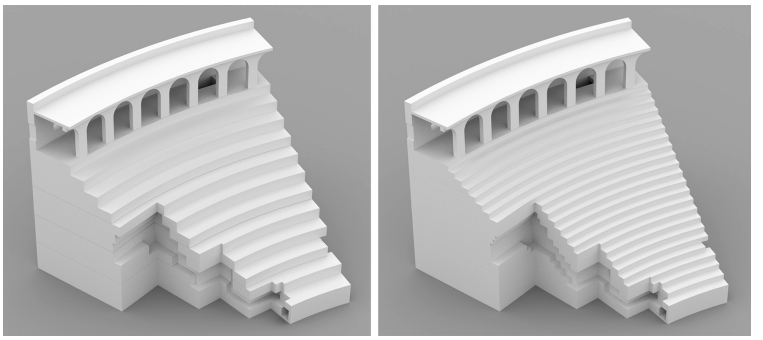

Fig. 21 Simulation of wooden models of a 16th section of the Roman amphitheatre of Dyrrachium, Durrës, Albania

as imitation has an unquestionable reference, namely physical reality, and can not only orient itself to it, but is also measured against it in order to look real, as well as only having to imitate its components, model building in the design phase has no visual reference in physical reality at its disposal. The only references are other models from other design processes. These, however, do not have to match the content at hand, and so it is a matter of weighing whether or not they apply at all. Finally, in any case, in abstract model making there is a need to create forms completely from scratch, representing ideas that have a completely different appearance in physical reality. It is this need to create something entirely new that necessitates the involvement of a design discipline, and in the case of the creation of space-representing forms, this would be architecture (Lengyel and Toulouse, 2013, pp. 327–352).

Now it may seem plausible, and practice shows that this is often the case, to understand the visualization of hypotheses as a technical process. Humanities scholars, unaware of the importance and raison d'être of designing disciplines, may hope that technically skilled model makers, whether analog or virtual, classical model makers or computer experts, are able to translate verbal hypotheses into models. And often what emerges is something that reveals a non-negligible relationship between hypothesis and model, merely that such

models often lack that which, even in architecture, makes the difference between those buildings that merely serve their purpose and those that go beyond it. This issue is perhaps the most difficult in the entire field of visualizing hypotheses as well as in design as a whole. It is as easy to argue that design is a matter of experience as it is difficult to impossible to argue this to someone who has no perceptual sensitivity to design. For this reason, this paper intends to be no more than a proposition. Perhaps the only truly viable argument may be that there is precisely a discipline that has dealt with the design of architecture over millennia that goes beyond the purely utilitarian. It is therefore at least very unlikely that the design level, that is, the quality of the design alone with the same measurable usability of a building, is mere illusion. Perhaps at some point it will be possible to quantify design, but the discipline is still dependent on people of the same mind who recognize the value of high-level design from other disciplines, even if they themselves are not actually equipped to create it.

The design of abstract forms intended to stand for ideas, as formulated in the verbal hypotheses in the humanities, proceeds, like the architectural design process as a whole, through the tentative creation of a variety of alternative forms that are evaluated while still in the process of being created. This procedure is inherent in designing as a whole; it is fundamentally different from any form of reasoning, inductive or deductive, if only because there is no unambiguous or even objectively measurable result, not even a comprehensibly optimal solution. There is basically nothing but the subjective assessment of appropriateness, and the more people involved, the broader the basis of this subjective assessment. As already described in the evaluation of design above, the level of design depends on the qualification, in purely disciplinary terms, of the persons, even if this itself is again not measurable. In concrete terms, all possible forms are examined one after the other to see whether they are suitable for what is to be represented. Thus, it is explicitly not merely considered whether they come into question. The fundamental difference between any form of theoretical science and design lies in the trying out. The forms are apprehended and thoroughly tested in use. Even

for experienced designers, it is the trial that provides insights that did not occur in the theoretical preliminary consideration. A common example of this cognitive process is hand drawing, where the line is evaluated in the process of its creation and then validated or discarded, that is, overdrawn (Fig. 22).

Perhaps the most fundamental component of architecture is the house. The house as a metaphor of meaning is already inexhaustible, but the house as geometry is no less complex. Built, the house does not consist of the one building, but of the multitude of concretizations of the idea of the house. One possible explanatory model is to describe the house as the geometrical framework that facilitates accommodation. But this is only one of many possible ways of explanation. Nevertheless, the verbal term is as common as it is unsuspicious. But only in its verbal form. As soon as it gets to the object level, it becomes difficult to retain its generality. In the visual, the pictogram still succeeds best, especially since it has been used as a metaphor for the starting point of any kind of visual branching and has been given the basically strange addition of being a button. How little building is left in the term home button, however, is another question, and on many digital devices that still have input keys at all, the designated home button does not even carry the symbol of the house anymore, so that its name has developed a life of its own. However, the temporarily visible symbol of the house is, in its simplest form, a symmetrical pentagon with at least two right angles rising above a horizontal baseline. The spatialization of this pictogram is far less common, but works in the same way. Repeated in the third dimension by displacement with a volume added that extends exactly between these two then-parallel pictograms—a process geometrically called extrusion—basically results in a three-dimensional version of this pictogram with an identical interpretation depending on the viewing direction, just like a house. Geometrically, it is then a so-called vertical prism, and the viewing direction is therefore decisive, because the essential features of the house continue to be revealed only in the elevation. From the side, on the other hand, at the contour of the object is a pure rectangle, just a rectangle with a horizontal subdivision, which can be interpreted as a divided rectangle or as

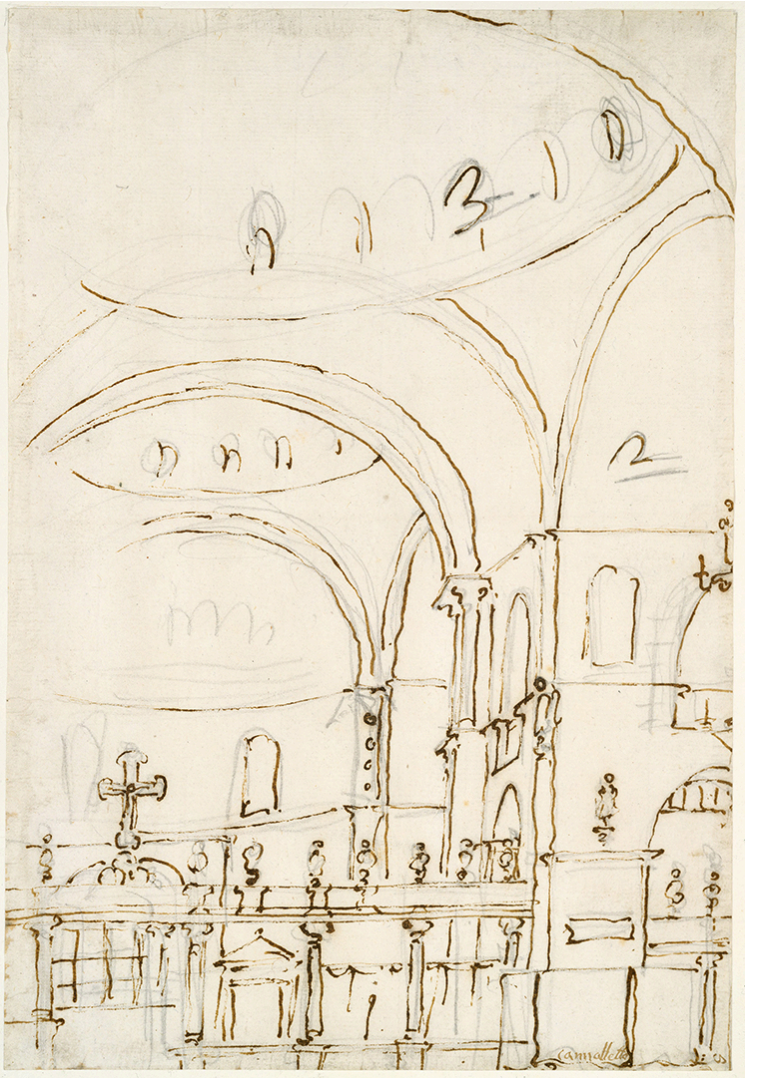

Fig. 22 Interior of the Basilica of San Marco, Showing the Crossing and the Choir, by Giovanni Antonio Canal, about 1763–68

Fig. 23 Three Streets, Hubert Kiecol, 1989, Museum für Moderne Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna

two rectangles with a common side. Here already it becomes clear that the viewing direction, geometrically speaking the projection, of a three-dimensional model has a considerable influence on the interpretation of the visible, especially, this should be taken in advance, in the case of abstract geometry (Fig. 23).

Just as the house described above is representative of all concrete variants of the house type, most architectural elements can be summarized in the form of types at almost any conceivable hierarchical level (Fig. 24). The lateral appearance of the house as a divided or double rectangle, for example, already specifies the house as a house with a gable roof, while other roof forms such as the hip roof or the pointed roof would create a completely different appearance. The same applies to subordinate elements of the house such as the window or, to remain with the example of the hypotheses from the humanities, to capitals of the classical Greek temple architecture. For even if this type is narrowed down one step further, that is if, as in the example of the temple on the Niyazitepe near Pergamon, the architectural fragments found clearly indicate a Corinthian column order, that is if it is a Corinthian capital, on the one hand much has been said, and presumably a completely clear image comes to the reader's mind, leaving no further questions unanswered, but in fact this component is also of the greatest abstraction, as is the

house described above. For as little unambiguously as the term house describes a concrete house, so little unambiguously does the type Corinthian capital describe its actual appearance. Because there is not the one Corinthian capital; there are very many which are summarized in this type. But the type in itself is not a concrete object; the type does not exist in physical reality, just as a house that resembles the pictogram of the Home Button does not exist. The type is a pure idea; it has no appearance. However, it is possible to communicate the idea of the type visually, but this visual appearance is by no means unambiguous or even objectively right or wrong, but merely a suggestion that functions in the respective context, a suggestion that may point to the correct idea depending on the recipient.

The aim of the design, the invention of a form for the idea of a Corinthian capital for the temple on the Niyazitepe, was to complete the picture of the visualization of the hypothesis of the appearance of a corner of the temple front. The finds, sparse as they are, allow a very extensive reconstruction of almost all parts of the corner, but just not of the capital. Thus, it would be almost possible to reconstruct the corner in such a way that it resembles the physical reality, but the capital is missing completely. However, in order to make the

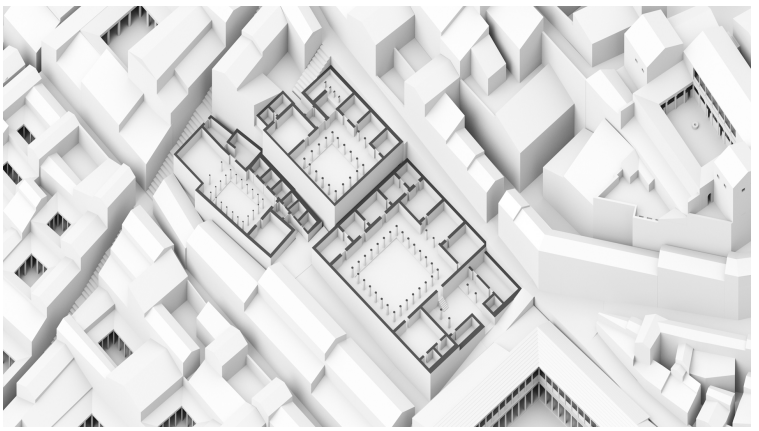

Fig. 24 Vernacular buildings in Pergamon around 200 CE

finds appear in their original function as part of a larger composition, they ought to be arranged in their original context, as the corner of the temple front. Here, however, there remains a significant gap between the column shaft and the column entablature, which is so obvious that the corner cannot develop its original spatial effect in any way. Something must clearly, visibly connect these two components, and according to the rules of classical antique architecture (Binding, pp. 100-104), this can only have been a Corinthian capital (Fig. 25).

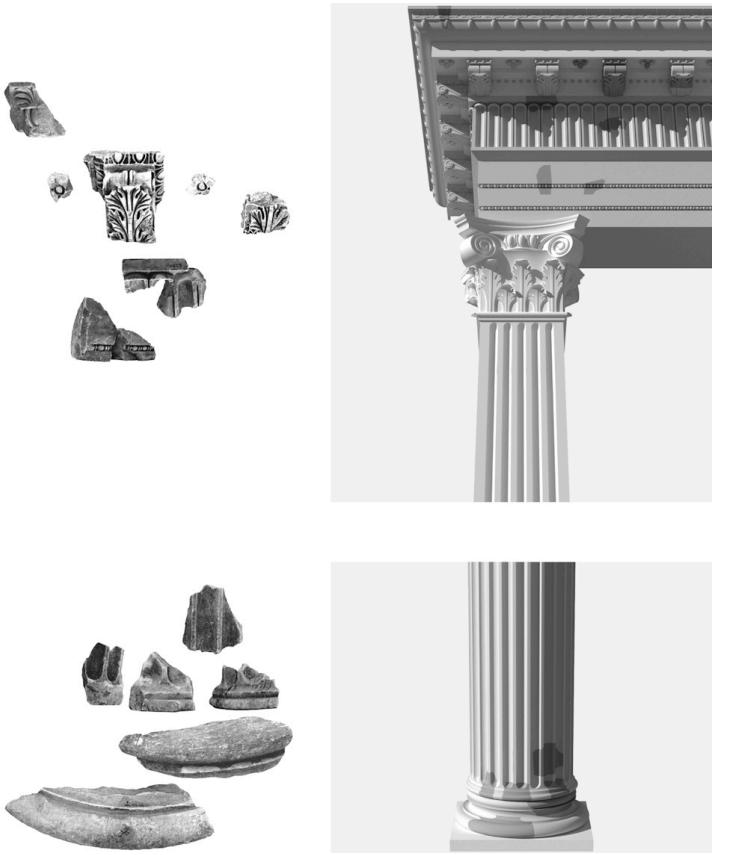

Fig. 25 Temple on the Niyazitepe near Pergamon

A conceivable solution to fill this gap would be to use a Corinthian capital from another building (Fig. 26). This would have plausibly filled the gap at first, but Corinthian capitals are individuals, so such a capital would be a traceable set piece of another building. This would create a significant semantic link to the building of origin of the set piece, for which there is no other justification. The fact that ignorance of the origin avoids the misunderstanding is irrelevant because, first, the ignorance can be cleared up, and second—and this is perhaps the more significant objection—the fact that the capital does not belong to the finding would be obscured for the viewer. Another conceivable solution would be an imitation, that is, a new variant created from the multitude of known Corinthian capitals, which may well seem plausible and could well exist for some time as an unidentified plagiarism in the manner of a forgery. But even if this circumstance is disclosed in an accompanying text, it is initially, that is, in the visualization, concealed, and thus subject to a similar potential for falsification in the perception of the viewer as the approximation of physical reality.

One solution to complete the corner of the temple front, avoiding the problems of concealment mentioned above, is to use a representative that is obviously, immediately, and intuitively recognizable as a type, such as does not occur in physical reality—the abstract. To be able to recognize this object thus created as a type, while at the same time integrating itself into its context, that is, creating for the viewer a plausible environment for the findings, bringing them together, and making the visible appear as a part, as a section of a building, it must be in an ambiguously definable state that can be called uncertain. Uncertain, however, is not meant in the same way as completely without any knowledge, but in the way that the object is not determined, that it resembles many individual Corinthian capitals, but resembles not one of them, and at the same time clearly does not look real, but clearly simplified, so that it is not mistaken for an individual imitation, taken from or imitated by physical reality. It is this delicate balance that requires the competence of designing, the iterative, open-ended, non-calculable process of finding form out of nothing (Fig. 27).

Fig. 26 Acrotere on Trajan's temple in Pergamon

Fig. 27 Temple on the Niyazitepe near Pergamon

The situation is quite similar at the other end of the scale of architecture, the urban quarter. Here, too, findings provide the basis, but here, too, neither copies nor imitations can avoid misunderstandings. Therefore, it is also important here to develop representatives of the type that relate as clearly as possible to time and region and can thus be assigned without giving the impression that they are concrete findings. In the example of Pergamon, the authors have applied this method in different weightings, which result from topographical circumstances such as the slope of the hill or from classical urban planning circumstances such as the proximity to main traffic axes, the city wall, and the city gates, and were defined accordingly by the archaeologists as parameters for certain types, sizes, and arrangements of buildings. The basis, however, for the concrete design of the abstract geometry, which again had to be able both to establish a clear relationship to the architecture of the time and region, and to clearly reveal that these are types, was an excavation on the ridge of the slope, which was analyzed in two different ways in order to obtain a large fund of templates that could be recombined in many ways. The method was to consider separately the two dimensions of geometry and topology, meaning the size of the spaces and their interconnection. In this way, as in reverse engineering, it was possible to recreate a plausible imitation not of any buildings, but of the process of designing them, in order to create the geometric and topological structure of new buildings (Fig. 28).

Fig. 28 Eastern slope of the city mountain of Pergamon

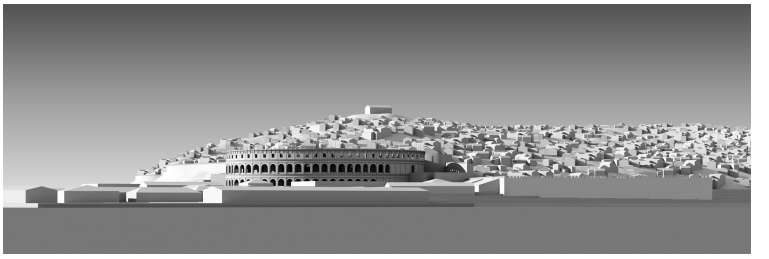

Fig. 29 View from the sea to the Roman amphitheatre of Dyrrachium, Durrës, Albania

The effect that in both cases the abstract geometry seems to lose its abstraction from a great distance and can no longer be distinguished from findings then corresponds to its contribution to the overall representation, because the findings then also no longer develop their own individual appearance and function as part of a larger context, but this then in conjunction with the abstract, uncertain additions. And so the viewing distance as a central variable in photography plays a significant role here as well (Fig. 29).

VIRTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY

The visual rendition of the models, that is the projection of both physical and virtual models, plays such an important role that the authors speak of virtual photography, which should express nothing else than that the entire experience of the discipline of photography cannot be neglected even for the projection of abstract models, that is, that the visual display of virtual models is subject to the same rules and regularities as the photography of physical reality (Fig. 30). Since this paper, as pointed out here and there, is not intended to be a presentation of evidence, the reference to the raison d'être of the discipline of photography ought to suffice here as well, in order to demonstrate plausibly that the absence of the competence of photography in the projection of models generally leads to a decline in the quality of the representations. This is because, like model making, photography is also a design discipline. It, too, has some clearly identifiable rules, but beyond that, it is just as open-ended, incalculable, iterative, and branching as any other formal design discipline.

Fig. 30 Hypothetical ideal church by Würzburg's Prince-Bishop Julius Echter von Mespelbrunn

Before the design in photography, however, there are some points related to human vision that are worth considering in more detail. Since the goal of visualizing hypotheses about architecture is to make them understandable via the image, that is, ultimately to explain them, it is necessary to compensate as much as possible for human vision, which defines visual perception when experiencing architecture in physical reality. Even stereoscopic projection in 3D glasses is not yet capable of actually simulating spatial vision due to its too-small field of view, and if the field of view will in the future presumably encompass the entire range of vision of the eyes, which in the horizontal plane is more than a semicircle, there still remains accommodation, that is, the adjustment of the lens in the eye to the distance of the viewed object (Fig. 31), whereby depth information as part of the interaction with the environment is essentially involved in the construction of the mental image of the natural environment in physical reality, for each individual eye, even without stereoscopy. Nevertheless, our visual experience also includes the interpretation of perspective monoscopic projections, which are then able to compensate for a relevant spatial experience if some basic conditions are met. For this, basic knowledge of descriptive geometry is helpful, as it is also traditionally taught in the discipline of architecture.

Perhaps the most significant property of a perspective projection, for example a photograph, is its unambiguity in terms of spatial classification, namely in terms of orientation and scale. The purpose of such unambiguity is, in a sense, the opposite of optical illusions. While intentional optical illusions such as the illusionistic dome in the Chiesa del Santissimo Nome di Gesù in Rome intentionally invite the viewer to imagine that the space is actually crowned by a dome, here we are concerned with more unintentional illusions that must be avoided. And these relate primarily to the position and size of objects in space. In physical reality, these questions do not arise because the visual impression of space is the integral of a multitude of various visual impressions, created mainly by the movement of the body through space as well as of the head and the eyes while moving (Fig. 32). Additional help with orientation and scaling is provided by details and objects of everyday life, quite profane visual stimuli such as stair

Fig. 31 Plaster cast of the Ludovisi group in front of the hypothetical reconstruction of its original location, the sanctuary of Athena in Pergamon

railings and electrical outlets. How misleading a deviation from the standard can be even in these actually unambiguous indicators can often be experienced in the palace architecture of the Baroque period, where the door handles are at shoulder height. And this is so, although they are only elevated, but nevertheless still in the normal, easily graspable scale. A still picture, on the other hand, is always abrupt; it stands there suddenly without preparation or introduction. All those cognitions, which would be present when proceeding through the space, are missing. The mental model, however, that has been constituted in the imagination while approaching the location, is generally completely consolidated with respect to orientation and scaling. Exactly this has to be compensated in a single image. Some extremely helpful measures for this are easy to implement.

The first aspect, orientation, can be projected in perspective without distortion when the image plane is perpendicular. Then, all perpen-

Fig. 32 Interior of the choir of Cologne Cathedral, 1856 CE

dicular object edges are also depicted perpendicularly in the projection and even further parallel to each other (Fig. 33). Thus, the image simply corresponds to the mental model, no more and no less. So it is not about the parallelism of the walls, but about the mental model inscribing this parallelism into the objects in a spatial experience. The general scale, actually the absolute size of what is perceived, is less clearly to be guaranteed. However, a sufficient measure in most cases is the consistently identical eye level for all perspectives. By perceiving a series of such images, the viewer becomes aware of which object has which size, despite the greatest abstraction of the depicted architecture, since the perspective alignment reveals horizontal spatial edges sometimes as ascending and sometimes as descending lines to the vanishing point as being below or above eye level.

These manageable rules alone, however, do not make for convincing photography. There is much more to it (Shulman, et al., pp. 235–261), as said before, both in photography and in modeling. Achieving a quality here that is not characterized by coincidence or triviality, but reaches a constant level of design, is always an elaborate design process. A lot of experience can increase efficiency, but even with extensive experience, each design question presents its own challenge,

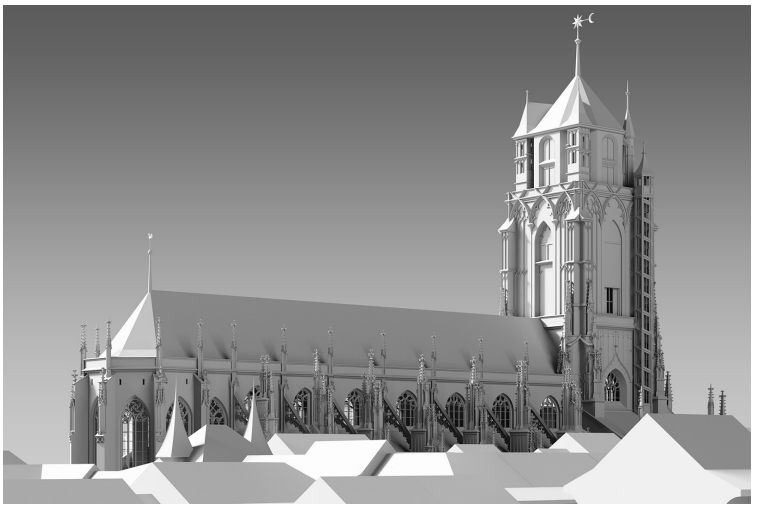

Fig. 33 Bern Minster 1529-1588 CE

which must be met if a high-quality result is to be achieved. Neither can it be achieved by simple recipes, nor can it ever be claimed with certainty that what has been achieved is the absolute final result of the process, the optimum, the perfect solution. Apart from changing circumstances, the human brain is also determined by its internal structure to produce different results as being equivalent under the same preconditions (Kahneman, et al., pp. 399-415), and this particularly applies to design, to which truly objective criteria for evaluation remain unknown. Genuine quality is only unambiguously ascribed by the reception of the future, relevant quality of current creations by the reception in the public and the professional world of the designing disciplines (Fig. 34). Eventually, in the case presented here of a visual language for hypotheses about architecture, it can be measured by its ability to stimulate the imagination of its viewers.

Fig. 34 Abandoned Farm in the Dustbowl, Coldwater District, near Dalhart, Texas, June, by Dorothea Lange, 1938

CASE STUDIES

The method presented here has been developed by the authors in numerous scientific collaborative projects, including the construction phases of the Cologne Cathedral, which were exhibited in the Roman-Germanic Museum in Cologne (Otten, et al., pp. 546–547), cited as a picture quotation among others in books about the city of Cologne, especially in the time of the predecessor buildings of the Cologne Cathedral, presumably because of the particularly pronounced uncertainty (Dietmar and Trier, p. 88). In earlier publications, by contrast, hypotheses were still visualized without including the architectural approach, that is, among other things, by linear extrapolation of the finds (Hauser, pp. 45, 48). Especially in the case of the Cologne Cathedral, which was built on the ground of its predecessor buildings of the early Middle Ages (Ristow, et al.,

pp. 99–100) up to its present Gothic structure (Back, et al., pp. 108–110) with special attention to its execution in terms of the materiality of its building blocks (Kölner Dom and Plehwe-Leisen, et al., p. 79), has been extensively studied, and, on the one hand, according to the cathedral building administration, is a permanent construction site and, at the same time, the literature speaks of its completion (Schumacher, p. 110), even referring to the entire twentieth century as the century of its completion (Borger, et al., pp. 9–16), presumably because with the completion of the west façade, the planning from the 13th century CE had been implemented (Steinmann, pp. 257–260); the architectural view was decisive for several shifts in interpretation, such as the supposed crossing towers on the Hildebold Cathedral or the extension of the 6th-7th-century church (Fig. 35), which is now more probable compared to the new construction (Schock-Werner, et al., pp. 69-74). Interpreting the existing archaeological foundations in a new way alone as an architect resulted in slight but nonetheless significant adaptations, especially to the appearance of the early predecessors of the Cologne Cathedral. The most striking feature is probably the omission of the crossing towers of the Hildebold Cathedral (Fig. 36). But also the extension compared to the new construction of the 7th-8th-century CE church or the stepped floor within the same church was the result of the architectural view (Fig. 37). An example of a polychrome visualization here of art historical hypotheses is the interior of the choir of Cologne Cathedral shortly before the destruction of the partition wall to the later transept. Here it was possible, due to the detailed documentation and the to a large extent preserved interior equipment, to supplement the visualizations with an equally reliable statement on polychromy with the same scientific standards (Klösges and Metternich, p. 150–154). Due to the considerably higher level of documentation, fewer findings were to be expected from the visualization, but still, this first compilation of all the documents, especially the ink drawings of the organ gallery and the choir stalls, led to the first consistent overall model, which resulted in some of the drawings having to be corrected in terms of their measurements (Fig. 32). The work on the Cologne Cathedral has also been published in es-

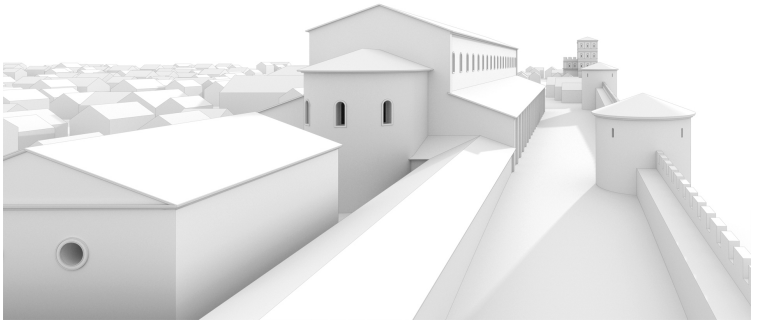

Fig. 35 Cologne Catheral's predecessor of the 7th and 8th centuries CE

Fig. 36 The Hildebold Cathedral, Cologne Catheral's last predecessor

says dealing with theoretical issues relevant to visual language, such as authenticity (Bernhardt, et al., p. 82).

A special case is the construction phase of the Bern Cathedral, because it deals with the visualization of a building project that was never realized due to a change in the building intention (Fig. 38).

Fig. 37 Cologne Catheral's predecessor of the 7th and 8th centuries CE

In the new scientific compendium of the first century of the Bern Cathedral, there are therefore 48 visualizations by the authors in seven contributions by four different contributors (Nicolai and Schweizer, pp. 86, 89, 92, 98, 100,101, 103, 105, 108, 109, 113, 120, 121, 130, 131, 137, 140, 141, 144, 145, 219–228, 314, 329, 339, 341, 348, 433, 437, 439, 441, 564–566, 570, 572). The impact of the visualization here was varied. On the one hand, the construction method in computer-aided design revealed unexpected irregularities. On the west façade, for example, the parapet of the north aisle is several feet higher than the parapet of the south aisle, which when simply looking at the building seems unnoticeable (Fig. 39). The aspiration to spatially define the predecessor church for the first time led to a whole series of different solutions, until eventually the massive foundations were defined as the tower foundations as the final solution, and the predecessor church was thus assigned a stately bell tower (Fig. 40).

Equally polychrome, due, among other things, to the epoch at the beginning of the 17th century CE, it was possible to visualize an ideal church, which is a hypothesis in two ways. The first hypothesis is that the prince-bishop in charge, Julius Echter of Mespelbrunn, developed the ideal of a parish church in his imagination, since his sev-

Fig. 38 Hypothetical original planning of Bern Minster with western gallery

eral hundred realized examples are strikingly similar. The second hypothesis concerns its four main components: nave, choir, tower, and sacristy (Fig. 41). And because its visualization is not so much abstraction as idealization of existing components of different realized churches, it allowed it to be polychrome (Dombrowski, et al., pp. 116, 118, 127–129). Since the ideal church itself is a mere hypothesis, there was no concrete impact on the findings of the realized churches in this project (Fig. 42). What became most obvious, however, were the irregularities in their execution. Even though no reasons could be found for this so far, it is clear from many individual cases how much the ideas deviated from their realization. This is particularly obvious

Fig. 39 Bern Minster around 1505 CE

in the case of the beamed ceiling, which was selected as most typical (Fig. 43). In its idealized form, it can be described in a few words, while its realization shows striking and, above all, incomprehensible irregularities, which could provide impetus for research into the execution practices of the time.

The ancient royal city of Naga in today's Sudan, on the other hand, which was located at the intersection between classical antiquity, ancient Egypt, and the southern African continent, can only be traced in the form of foundation tracks, except for a few towering temples (Fig. 44). Nevertheless, a visualization of the city was possible on the basis of the building structures and slight hints of the construc-

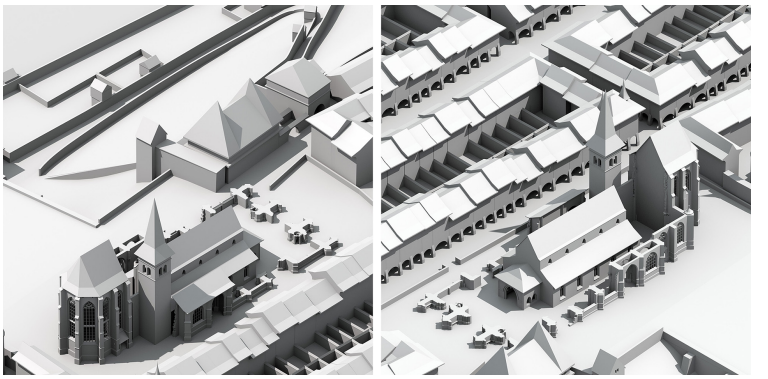

Fig. 40 Bern Minster and its predecessor from 1438 to 1440

tion methods alone, especially due to the great distance of the viewer's standpoint, which led to panorama-like perspectives, extremely horizontal formats in an aspect ratio of one to fourteen (Fig. 45), which could be folded out in the exhibition catalog (Kroeper, et al., pp. 163–175). In the exhibition, the resolution of the images allowed it to act both as a background for the exhibits and to convey very high-resolution details (Fig. 46, a section of Fig. 3). It was the project directors themselves who were surprised at the presence of the secular buildings, which they themselves had defined, despite decades of involvement with the project. A separate set of plans was prepared as a legend for the *vedute* in order to make the numbering of the individual buildings used in the floor plans visible in the elevations as well. Only in this way could the ground plan and the views be comprehensibly brought together; the city appeared too unexpectedly dense after the translation of the verbal hypotheses into their visual counterpart.

Many projects are located in classical antiquity: smaller ones such as the House of the Two Skeletons in Morgantina (Trümper, pp. 405-406), but mainly larger excavation projects like the Palatine in Rome (Fig. 47), which was first presented in a major exhibition at the Pergamon Museum Berlin (Märtin, et al., pp. 12–23), but later also found its way into scientific publications as pure illustrations,

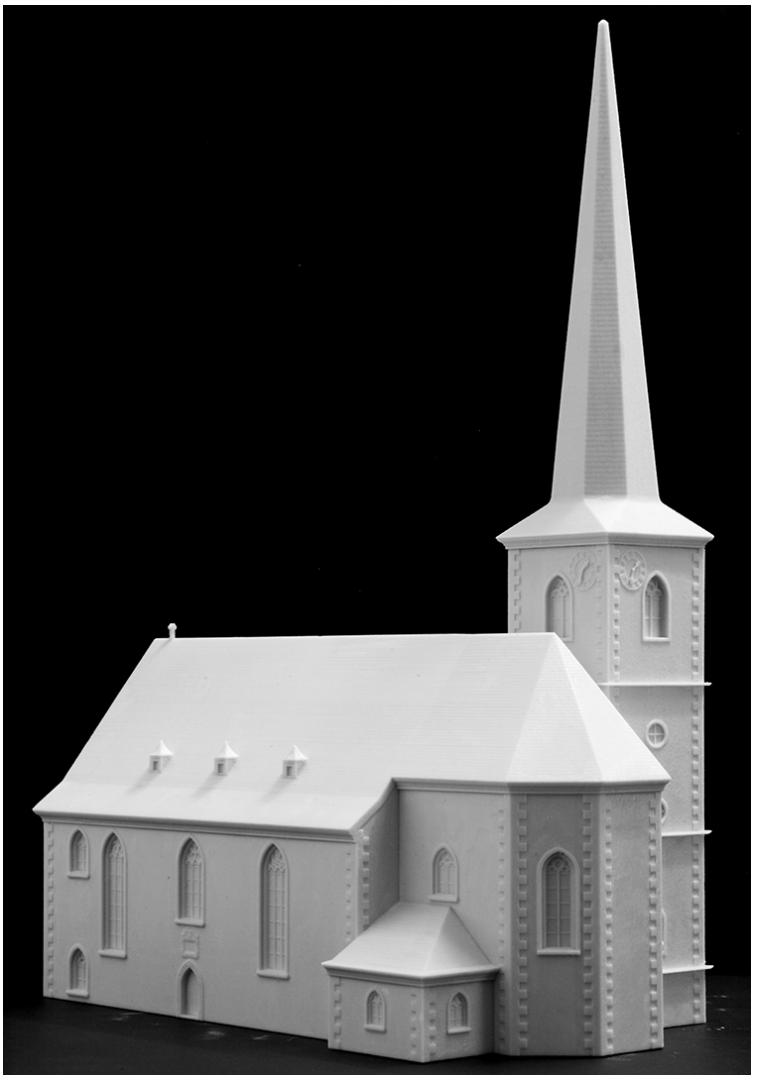

Fig. 41 3D print of a hypothetical ideal church by Julius Echter

in this case even with a supplementary commentary on the visualizations' appearance (Kelly and Hug, vol. 1, pp. 223, 230; vol. 2,

Fig. 42 Hypothetical ideal ensemble of church, rectory, and school by Julius Echter

Fig. 43 West gallery of the hypothetical ideal church by Julius Echter

pp. 33–34, 56–57). Here it was again the photographic view as the primary means of perceiving architecture that brought about a new aspect of the imperial palaces (Fig. 48). Whereas the representations before were mainly limited to the bird's-eye view and the direct opposite of the Imperial Lodge, the search from an architectural point

Fig. 44 Cityscape of the royal city of Naga seen from the inside

Fig. 45 Cityscape of the royal city of Naga seen from the caravan route coming from the north

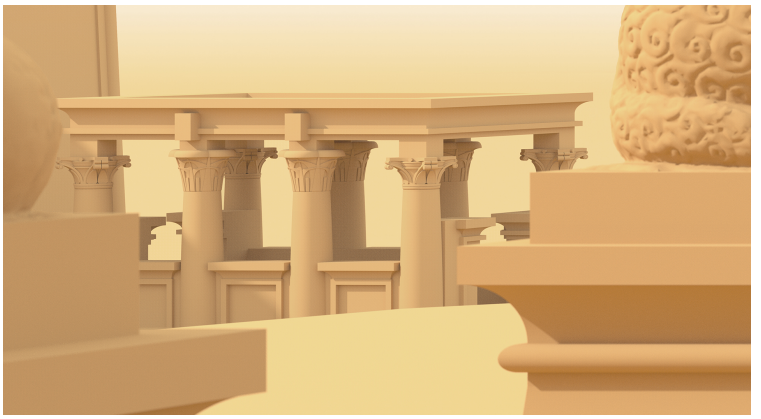

Fig. 46 Section of the view from the temple of Amun in the royal city of Naga

of view led to what later became the most significant perspective from the auditorium towards the Imperial Palaces, namely diagonally across the circus from the covered upper tiers (Fig. 49). This viewpoint unites the characteristic form of the circus with the pres-

Fig. 47 Domus Severiana with water basin on the roof terrace of the Domus Severiana in the time of Emperor Hadrian

ence of the imperial palace as a demonstration of power to the people. How important and expressive the Imperial Palaces building site must have appeared to the people becomes particularly clear from this perspective.

Finally, Pergamon, starting from the first monographic exhibition in 2011 at the Pergamon Museum Berlin (Grüßinger, et al., pp. 68, 69, 73, 77–79, 84–86, 146, 165, 252–253, 261–263, 266,273, 275, 307), whose film projection, on the occasion of an exhibition in 2017 at the Collection of Classical Antiquities of the University of Leipzig (Lang, et al., outer and inner flaps, pp. 9, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 33, 48–54), was supplemented by a speaker's commentary, accounts for the most publications as ongoing research of a major ancient metropolis, including many by the authors who benefit from the large body of existing and potential illustrations (Fig. 50). As a result, many visualizations are produced in this cooperation, which has been ongoing continuously since 2009, due to specific needs, for example on the occasion of an exhibition at the Museum of Antiquities of the University of Freiburg on ancient sculpture (Petersen, Lars, et al., pp. 22, 25, 29, 32). The collection catalog of the Pergamon Museum Berlin

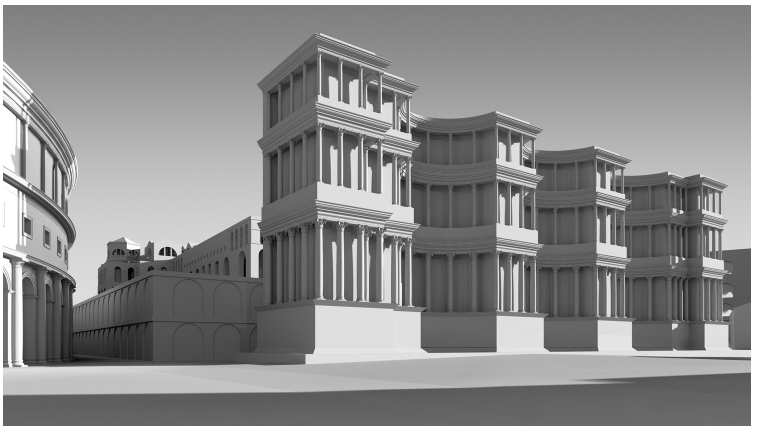

Fig. 48 Septizonium fountain after a drawing by Maerten Jacobsz van Heemskerck in the time of Emperor Maxentius

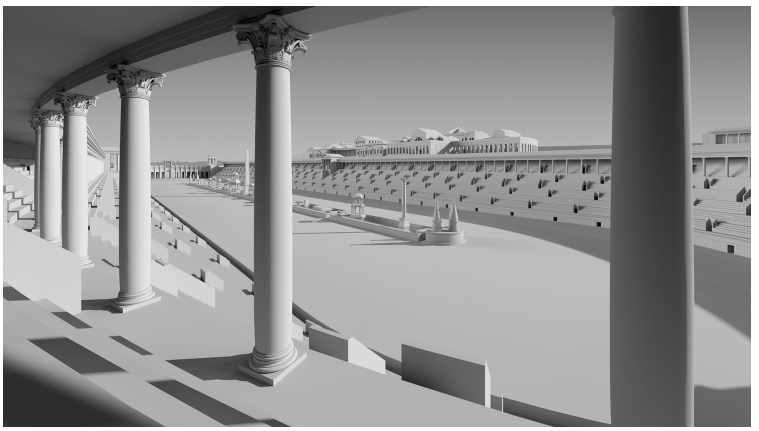

Fig. 49 The palaces of the Palatine seen from the Circus Maximus in the time of Emperor Septimius Severus

(Staatliche Museen zu Berlin), which usually lists exhibits from antiquity, shows its abstract visualization next to a photo of the Great Altar of Pergamon. One of the insights gained from the first com-

plete virtual model of the metropolis resulted from the search for a viewpoint, which could certainly already be taken in antiquity, from which an overview of the most complete possible city skyline could be obtained (Fig. 51). Despite over a hundred years of research, this question had only arisen with the explicit inclusion of an architectural view specialized in visualization. Unlike in other cases, where the objective was to examine whether or not certain sculptures had been visible from certain points in the city, here the focus is purely on visual appreciation. The result is a perspective that does not provide any unexpected insights or answer any unresolved questions. To the contrary, it does nothing more than reveal an urban quality, a subtle variable in the urban planning of Pergamon, the answer to the question of the reason for the large terrace of the Altar of Zeus, not unambiguous or undisputed, but impressive nonetheless. From the point of view of archaeology, it is merely an impulse to investigate in this matter; from the point of view of architecture, it is a clear indication of a comprehensible architectural design intention aimed at generosity and impressiveness (Fig. 52), just as one would like to find in contemporary architecture today.

Numerous other collaborative research projects examine various other aspects of visualization, including the Stabian Baths and Republican Baths in Pompeii, several buildings in the Roman city of Baalbek in present-day Lebanon, the Sasanian summer residence Ktesiphon in present-day Iraq, the Sasanian palace complex Tacht-e Suleiman in present-day Iran, a three-dimensional version of the facade of the square around the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem based on modern measurements and a historical drawing in ink, a medieval square in Lüneburg in Germany, and several studies on the interaction of colours in interiors featuring examples from antiquity to classical modernism.

CONCLUSION

Frequent enquiries for the inclusion of the visualizations in the publications of other people show us that there is indeed a demand for this form of scientifically based and graphically ap-

Fig. 50 The city mountain of the metropolis of Pergamon around 300 CE

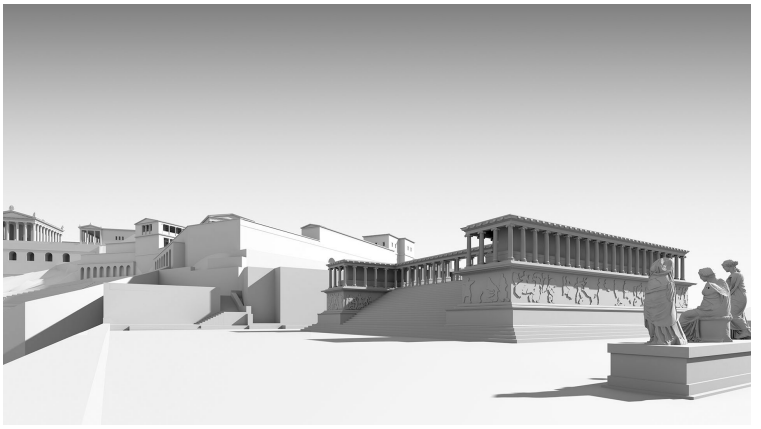

Fig. 51 The skyline of the metropolis of Pergamon as seen from the southwest corner of the Terrace of the Great Altar

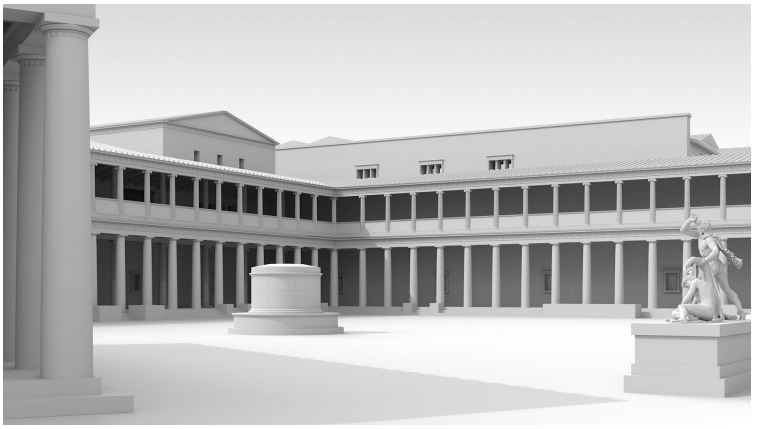

Fig. 52 The sculptures Gruppo Ludovisi and Dying Gaul, preserved only as marble copies, today in Rome, in their original setting in the sanctuary of Athena in Pergamon

pealing visualization. It is not only the sciences themselves that benefit from the vicinity of the visualizations to science, it is also architecture and, via these means of access, in the end also the public that can examine hypothetical spatial structures in a way that would not have been possible even in their originally realized state, namely as a pure idea. Abstraction is not a loss; on the contrary, it is on focusing. To the same extent that materiality and polychromy are left out of the majority of antique projects, expression grows in terms of geometry, form, structure, and spatial composition. It is not without reason that the virtual model of Pergamon, which has been created over the last fifteen years in close collaboration with the excavation in Bargama and the Istanbul department of the German Archaeological Institute, is to be exhibited in the Altar Hall of the Pergamon Museum Berlin after its current renovation as two successors to the historical models and for the first time as tactile models, milled from Corian, as permanent installations. Architectural motifs in the absence of their historical context actually become exemplary models for contemporary designs as well. Timeless concepts ranging from spatial proportion and tectonics to geometrically sophisticated solutions for the transition from sloping to flat surfaces, for example, or lighting

design in general, become all the clearer the more the viewer's attention is drawn to and focused on them. The method of visualizing architectural hypotheses in the humanities presented here is in this way equally an access to the immaterial history of architecture, to the history of ideas of design, the intellectual achievement beyond the realization of the building, in a certain way the access to the idea of architecture itself.

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