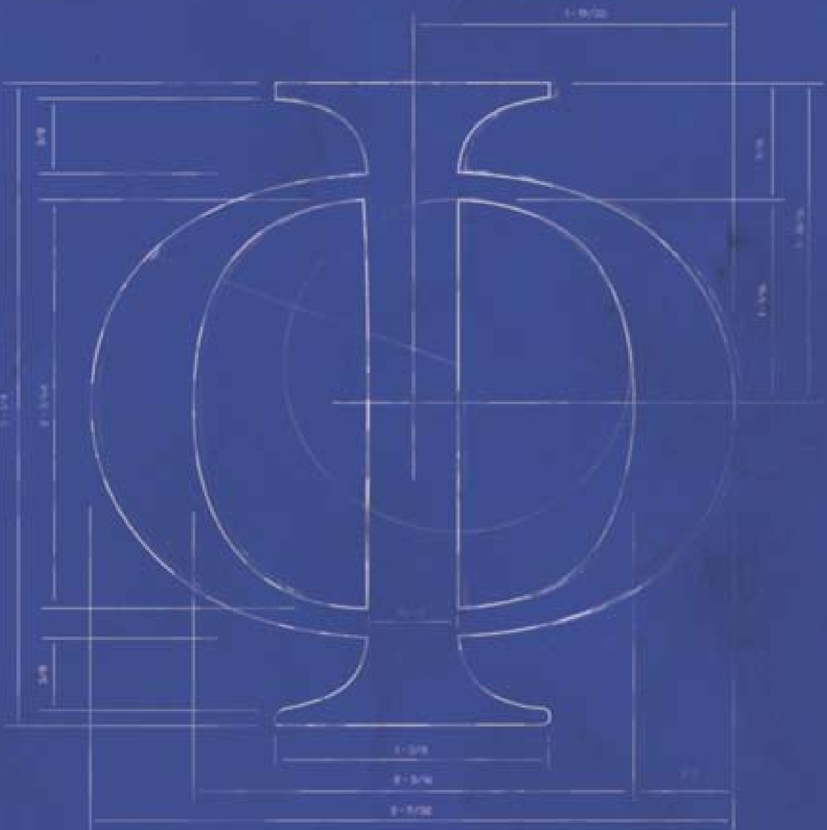
Philomel

be a realist: demand the impossible



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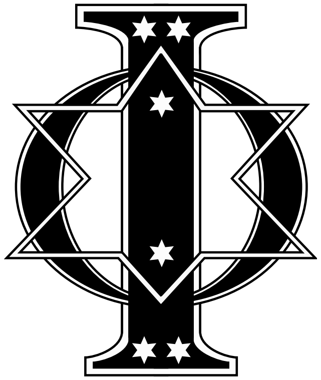

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Philomel

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Dear readers,

When a band of anarchist, revolutionary students scribbled "Be a Realist: Demand the Impossible" on the walls of Paris in May 1968, I'm pretty sure they weren't asking for the new edition of a recently resurrected literary journal at an obscenely wealthy university on the East Coast of the United States.

I'm also pretty sure that the Spring 2010 issue of Philomel will not incite the next great world revolution, no matter how provocative the brilliant essays, fiction and poetry contained herein might be.

Hell, I know exactly how reading this magazine must feel. Graduation is just next door, the real world is breathing down your neck, the job market, the environment, the quarter-life crisis and five million other clichés are so overwhelming that any radical literary enterprise is automatically transformed into (merely?) an opportunity for well-deserved escapism.

So basically, we were screwed from the very beginning. The bar was set too high, the athlete was too tired and the audience went out to lunch before the show even started. But we went ahead and did it anyway. Because we are weird like that. You should try it out, it's pretty great.

Be a realist: Demand the impossible,

Aro Velmet
Editor-in-Chief

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Essay
Karolina Ensor

Where the Wild Things Are Freudian

Spike Jonze's newest film "Where the Wild Things Are" has already received critical acclaim from a wide variety of newspapers and movie critics. The film, adapted from the 388-word illustrated children's book by Maurice Sendak, tells the story of Max, a rambunctious and sensitive boy who feels misunderstood at home and escapes to a mystical land where the wild things are. After travelling by a boat, aptly named "Max," he discovers this land of wild creatures who are in need of a king in the same way that Max is in need of a kingdom. After numerous adventures with his new friends, Max begins to feel the call of home. Giving up his position, he sails back out of this dream-like world into reality where the naughty Max who caused so much trouble at home, has a "hot" meal waiting. The plot of this film—and the book from which it is adapted—is simple, but that does not take away from the universal appeal. Why is it that Sendak's book is always considered one of the top ten children's books? Why did this film have such an appeal? In many ways, the answer lies in the deconstruction of the story in the face of literary theory. As one Time's critic writes, "Freud would adore this movie."[1] This then begs the question, is the story "Where the Wild Things Are" a Freudian one?

On the most basic level, Max's journey to where the wild things are can be interpreted as the descent into a dream-like imaginary state—one which Freud would say was a crucial area of the study of the conscious and unconscious. As he wrote in his book "The Interpretation of Dreams," it is in dreams that the subconscious makes its appearance—allowing us to come to terms with our unconscious desires and thoughts.[2] For Freud, dreams are "composites made out of the residues of individual lives chosen by the unconscious to represent the fulfilment of a wish."[3] It is this idea of the "residues" of life, which lends literature to this same study. It would be impossible to find a piece of writing which completely detaches itself from the "residues" of the personal experiences and history of its writer. Even relatively scientific texts like Freud's are influenced by his own biography. That is why in any good study and analysis an understanding of a writer's background is so crucial.

Just as the "residues" of life have an impact on an individual's dream, Sendak's own book is filled with the "residues" of his own story. Maurice Sendak, son of Polish-Jewish immigrants, grew up in a household filled with odd and unruly relatives from "the old country."[4] As Sendak said about these relatives, "These people didn't speak English. And they were unkempt. Their teeth were horrifying. Nose... unraveling out of their hair, unraveling out of their noses. And they'd pick you up and hug you and kiss you, "Aggghh. Oh, we could eat you up."[5] It is these relatives, who later became Sendak's inspiration for the "wild things" which dominate his story. When Max decides to leave the land of the wild things, there is an echo of Sendak's relatives as they bid him goodbye: "Oh please don't go—we'll eat you up—we love you so!"[6] In Eastern European culture, there is an important emphasis placed on the traditions of mealtimes and on food in general, therefore, it is no surprise that Sendak's household traditions of eating hold symbolism within Sendak's wild things.

Similarly, as Freud's study of psychoanalysis would support, Sendak's own family life crops up in "Where the Wild Things Are." As he says of his family home,

> It was a really unkempt, unruly small apartment, three children, father who worked so hard, mother who had problems emotionally and mentally. And we didn't know that. Your mommy's supposed to be perfect. She should be there for you, love you, kiss you...my mother got mad at me all the time. It didn't seem an extraordinary thing at all. I mean, it seemed to me she was always mad. And in Yiddish, she called me the equivalent of "wild thing" and chased me all over the house. We used to hide in the street and hope she forgot before I crept up in the evening.[7]

Sendak's own family issues—a mother with mental problems in a difficult household—explain some of the issues in his book. In many ways, his intense imagination and facility for coming up with characters so wildly different from any sort of animal reality might be explained by his own need for a place of escape within his own imagination. Max's journey and escape from his mother who sends him to bed without dinner is in many ways Sendak's. He creates a world within his own imagination or daydream where he is king. Sendak writes,

> And when he [Max] came to the place where the wild things are, they roared their terrible roars and gnashed their terrible teeth and rolled their terrible eyes and showed their terrible claws till Max said, 'BE STILL!' and tamed them with the magic trick of staring into all their yellow eyes without blinking once and they were frightened and called him the most wild thing of all and made him king of all wild things.[8]

The repetition of the word "terrible" emphasizes that the monsters are outside the normal human world of acceptance. In the same way that Freud says that the language of dreams is very different from the language of the day time, here Sendak is forced to use the language of the daytime in order to represent this dream world—so he uses repetition not only to give the sentence a sense of rhythm, but also shows just how not of this world the wild things actually are. This moment has been quoted by Joseph Campbell as being a great moment in literature because "it's only when a man tames his own demons that he becomes the king of himself if not of the world."[9]

Thus, Sendak's book, written at the age of 32, allowed him to come to terms with a household in which he was so lacking any control over his own life. The importance of this moment in his life might comes from the fact that growing up Sendak was a sickly child and his parents always thought he was going to die. His Eastern European grandmother even made him a white outfit with the superstition that if the Angel of Death came to collect him, it would mistake him for an angel and leave him alone.[10] In the same way that Sendak had no control over his family life, he also had not control over his own life. Jonze's film captures this realization of mortality in his film "when a hilariously bungling teacher explains that the sun is going to die, the flash of horror on Max's face indicates that he understands that the sun won't be the only one to go."[11] Freud's own interpretation of this fear of death—or being buried alive—he says is a distorted desire to return to the mother's womb.[12] The Max of the film seems to do just that when one of the wild things, KC hides him in her stomach. Jonze captures this symbolism well by making the travel down KC's throat resemble a baby's travel out of—or in this case into—the womb.

Freud would say that by writing this book, Sendak is able not only to thrown his character into a dream world, but he is also able to create his own dream world—where he is king and where even when he finally returns home, a loving mother has left him with a plate of food before bed. As Sendak said, "I didn't have the courage or the mother that Max had."[13] Thus, the world of the wild things, as in Sendak's book and Jonze's film allow a place of sanctuary. As one of the wild things says to Max in the film, it would be a "place where only the things you wanted to happen, would happen."[14]

The reference to Freudian beliefs on dreams continues throughout the duration of the story. The film opens with the shot of a handheld camera that "can barely contain the boy's image inside the frame" as he chases the household dog around the house.[15] From the onset, it is clear that Max is wilder than the domesticated animal pet—fighting the confines of home by fighting the confines of the camera. This jagged camera style emphasizes the reality of life at this stage—just how un-dream-like life really is. Unlike the book which does not even show Max's mother, in the film, Max has a good relationship with his mother. In fact, the relationship is so loving that the story lends itself to the idea of an 'Oedipal Complex.' According to Freud, "Being in love with the one parent and hating the other are among the essential constituents of the stock of psychical impulses."[16] Freud claims that this idea is universal, and by demonstrating its relevance to certain pieces of literature, he justifies this primordial notion as universal. It is the lack of recognition of this complex that leads to psychotic neurosis. This love between mother and son is beautifully represented in the film when Max is lying below his mother's desk, playing with her stockings, while she types up a story he is dictating. In some ways, this act of having him make up a story and having the mother listen is already making a Freudian reference to the practice psychoanalysis—the doctor listening to the patient. Certainly, a distracted mother and an absent father support a Freudian theory of an Oedipal complex. Symbols throughout the film also act to support this theory. According to Freud, "the female genitalia are symbolically represented by all such objects as share with them the property of enclosing a space or are capable of acting as a receptacles."[17] The boat that Max travels in, the snow fort he constructs, the enclosed island of the wild things and sleeping in the fortress constructed by the body pile of wild things—all of these objects seems to suggest the female body and in some ways the love that Max has for his mother.

The wild things themselves can be interpreted as Freud's idea of the "uncanny" or "unheimlich." Both of these ideas represent something different and yet related. The "uncanny" is the unfamiliar which is "related to what is frightening."[18] The uncanny is created by adding "uncertainty whether a particular figure in the story is a human-being or an automan"[19] —something which the viewer definitely experiences when watching these animal like figures that have human-like qualities. Yet, our sense of human morality doesn't seem to apply. These are animals and they are wild. In Freud's words, "unheimlich." However, Freud's own view of "heimlich" is "a word the meaning of which develops in the direction of ambivalence until finally coincides with its opposite unheimlich."[20] Therefore, just as Max has to come to terms with coming back to reality and his physical "heimlich" home, so too do the difference between being wild and tame coincide.

Thus, the wild things of "Where the Wild Things Are" seems to represent these ideals exactly. Reading through Sendak's book these figures are scary—with their yellow eyes, big claws and teeth. Similarly, their sheer size overwhelms little Max in both the book and the film. This would explain why critics of both the film and the book have questioned how much of a children's story "Where the Wild Things Are" really is. While these figures are "frightening," Max's confidence in ruling over them leads us to belief that maybe we are judging by appearances. In their childlike portrayal, the wild things are both figures to be conquered, thus enabling Max to assert control, and figures that are vulnerable—they become "frightened and called [Max] the most wild thing of all"—thus Max is validated and his anger with his mother at this point is released in a moment of catharsis as he calls, "Let the wild rumpus start."[21] All the wild things and their leader then celebrate under a full moon for three-double pages spreads without words—making Max both the medium and the message.

One film critics wrote "There are different ways to read the wild things, through Freudian or colonialist prism, and probably as many ways to ruin this delicate story of a solitary child liberated by his imagination."[22] Does the Freudian study of this text take away from the simplicity and beauty of the story? I would argue that it does not. In fact, it only enhances the story. The reason that many of Freud's ideas about human nature fascinate us is because they encompass a universal experience. As Freud writes of Oedipus, "his destiny moves us only because it might have been ours."[23] By watching the moment when the Father is killed and Oedipus marries his Mother, the audience is able to experience catharsis. It is because Sendak and Jonze incorporate so much of Freud into their stories that they hold this same universal appeal. It is a story of a child overcome by his own capacity to imagine. As Sendak says, "I'm telling what it was like for me. And I know it was not unique for me."[24] It is this universal experience which gives "Where the Wild Things Are" its appeal. Coming out of the cinema after having seen Jonze's film, I felt like I had been thrown right back into my childhood.

Endnotes

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[2] Leitch, Vincent B. "The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism" Norton & Company: 2001 Article on "Sigmund Freud," 913.

[3] *Ibid* 917.

[4] Chris Moyers PBS interview with Sendak in 2004: http://www.pbs.org/now/arts/sendak.html.

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[6] "Where the Wild Things Are," Maurice Sendak.

[7] Chris Moyers PBS interview with Sendak in 2004: http://www.pbs.org/now/arts/sendak.html.

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[10] *Ibid*

[11] "Some of his Best Friends Are Beasts," Manohla Dargis. New York Times Film Review. October 16, 2009.

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[14] "Where the Wild Things Are," Spike Jonze's Film.

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[19] *Ibid*

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[21] "Where the Wild Things Are," Maurice Sendak.

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Poetry

Leo Genji Amino

It is not a useful thing.

Investigation why it is; it is not a useful thing,
to congregate one deduction: being
given one irretrievable point   at which
navel hovels   ,interlocuting,
were connected; only flirting symptom,
play outside—and touchy-feely
—representatives the second deduction
being: an analysis being
an apple   in your eye, and
precluding you   also from intercoursing
sincerely   the silence is closing
like a badly dressed exotic,   the sides closing down
in order of concerted interview   with the boundary,
the desire for language as   the desire to be seen by foreigners,
classically estranged,   indicating obscenely,
renouncing to the particularity of our actants
in scheming too heady   ,ironical posturing
an arbiter,   and weight on him.

Figures for Speech.

A Figure

To find a body's thin face or also anyway if it is pressed
out. Also from out of that really comes when how somebody would say something.
Because at least framed it sounds as rather from behind it (rather the face), rather
first elevated then less elevated rather.

B Figure

You (the you) still and going the look sideways, and investigating
this. Or but also supporting yourself. Or but also having a face like Gautier.
Or but also very still and still carved and stretched a bit or but also if a
room is just a resting place for your head which is undone or it all goes to hell
if you look (the other you).

C Figure

An event gazes which is not that if they miss. Rather that
they hit only a bit off and would as if glance but remain just in oblique
intersection. Also (color of face) like (color of hair) which it relates to. Which
if you relate you are signaled by the blackness of two eyes.

For Figures

And you could try out any event and it would still be on the
side.

Afterwords the hot scene

One.
The marines of philosophy were marooned with
left empty space, the looming of the room was
like old news, the two mirrors were like siblings
or a map, the light was cast downward. The center
of attention is on a scene that is really eager to get
at it, even unto the lamps are kissing behind the
half of a desk already leaving an uncovered pillow
are hot and are heavy. Afterwords the hot scene.
Afterwords just conceive prematurely a darling
flowerpot born to a language because of what
is written on it and crusted like money-pockets
skyed dervishly over by subtitles in conjuncture
bundle misapprehended for a coat-box a curtly
reproved: it is said it is not permitted that it be
for merely putting coats in.

Two.
To dissolve your traces and leave outside like a
man needling things to say into the crux of his
hand for recitation to a group of riddle children
should he laugh and no one else laughs.

Not about the thing that came before this but
about this thing

Raised and away words of a sudden to be
followed. There is being run after now in
memory any speech which you can't see. Any
speech which you can't see. And arms are only
waving a bit below the producer, from which you
cannot tell if the sound is going in or out. His
breath away from him. It's impossible to look at
the background. There is the tracking mechanism
of eyes not taking a side. And can't anyway
commit themselves to speech because of the
necessary space between them. The impossible
writing can be this nose on this young lady with
its nostrils out of focus. And each is hesitant
to let anything rest in this way that is required,
should any could rest upon any.

Essay
Sam Bieler Φ

Nation At War

America is a nation at war. As the op-ed page of the Wall Street Journal is constantly informs me, we are under siege by a host of powers all out for American blood. Just consider these wise words from Mark Helprin in a recent Wall Street Journal op-ed: "As we rapidly disarm, China is just as rapidly arming…at one time, while it declined but before it burned, Rome kept only a shadow of legions upon the Rhine and Danube." Yet despite the militarists' keen vigil, a potent military foe has slipped by their sight. This is an enemy with training of the highest caliber and a proven ability to strike at the home territories of the United States. As a nation we must come together to realize that the threat of the Chinese navy of 2010 is dwarfed by that posed by the mighty Japanese navy…of 1942.

Central to this thesis is the aircraft carrier, the core of the modern offensive navy. To pose a threat to the homeland of an oversea power a nation must have a dedicated fleet of air craft carriers. Since World War II the carrier has proven to be a superior means to support land based forces and on several occasions "the carrier has proven to be the only effective means to project air strikes and air support to ground troops."[1] Furthermore, the carrier is vital for fleet defense, as only it can carry the fighters into blue water (deep sea) combat actions necessary for command of the ocean; in this it has displaced the battleship as the dominant capital ship.[2] Any navy the American media considered a legitimate sea power, much less a threat to the United States would surely have an impressive contingent of these monarchs of the sea.

Given the concern surrounding the rise of Chinese military power, one would assume that they have already begun on the road to carrier dominance. The US maintains eleven aircraft carriers, to say nothing of a host of smaller escort carriers, and helicopter launch ships.[3] China's People's Liberation Navy maintains a grand total of zero aircraft carriers,[4] and by 2020 they will only have anywhere from one to four medium carriers.[5] It must be noted that these medium carriers offer far less power projection than the hulking Nimitz-class super carriers that form the core of the US fleet; it should further be noted that if China builds only one carrier that it will in fact be at bare parity with nations like Brazil and Argentina, each which already possess their own carrier.[6] Thus, even given an enthusiastic campaign of armament, the Chinese navy of 2020 will have at best half the number of US carriers, and all of a smaller class. We cannot make the same confident statements of weakness about the 1942 Japanese fleet.

While the 1942 Japanese navy cannot compete with the US in terms of carrier size, for sheer numbers they are a force to be reckoned with. As of 1942 the Japanese fleet possesses nine carriers[7] giving them air cover at sea and air support for land invasion that the Chinese Navy simply cannot match. Without carriers to deploy aircraft from, the might of the Chinese air force will be limited to the range of their aircraft, far short of the 4900 miles needed to reach even Hawaii, much less the continental United States. The Japanese Navy on the other hand has successfully used their carriers to launch air attacks against both Alaska and Hawaii.[8] Their proven ability to hit the American mainland is order of magnitude superior to that of the Chinese navy.

This assumes of course that the Chinese Navy could even make it to the high seas to reach the continental US, but even this prospect is highly doubtful. The People's Liberation Navy "remains little more than a 'brown water' coastal defense with limited 'green water' capabilities, and no pretense of 'blue water' aspirations. Despite a few recent noteworthy additions, the Chinese fleet is overwhelmingly populated with elderly and evidently obsolete units."[9] What does the designation "brown" versus "blue" water mean? The blue water navy can operate on the high seas: the deep waters of the oceans that separate the North American continent from China. A brown or green water fleet can operate only about 200 miles off of the shoreline. This is the threat range of the Chinese navy: 200 miles. And this is the power the Wall Street Journal says will assail the United States?

Compare this to the operating range of the 1942 Japanese Navy. The Japanese Navy operated as far afield as the Mediterranean even in 1917. During WWI the Japanese Navy sent a contingent to patrol for U-Boats in the Mediterranean and performed so effectively that the Royal Navy turned two of their own ships over to the Japanese to use.[10] The Japanese Navy's skill in supply only improved so that by 1942 they could successfully resupply and logistically support a fleet far afield and in dangerous waters as their devastating attack on Pearl Harbor proved all too well: "the Hawaii task force's successful refueling in the treacherous waters of the north Pacific speaks highly of Japanese seamanship in performing this essential logistical task."[11] That the Japanese fleet is capable of talented logistical maneuver but the Chinese navy is not sound speak volumes as to which poses the greater threat.

My readers will no doubt realize by this point that this piece is satire, but only because the Imperial Japanese navy has been long since sunk. The facts of this article: the impotency of the Chinese navy, its inability to hit targets that the Japanese Navy of WWII could target should bring a dose of realism to the hawks who insist that China is moments away from wiping the US from the seas. It may be an impossible demand, but the modern media could do its readers service with a little more analysis and a little less hysteria.

Endnotes

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[9] "Overview - People's Liberation Army Navy Overview." GlobalSecurity.org - Reliable Security Information. Web. 31 Mar. 2010. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/china/plan-overview.htm>.

[10] Evans and Peattie, 169.

[11] Evans and Peattie, 399.

Fiction
Nantina Vgontzas

Linnaeus

The story below follows in the tradition of Italo Calvino's 1972 Invisible Cities and the various stories comprising it. Of the collection Gore Vidal once wrote, "Of all tasks, describing the contents of a book is the most difficult, and in the case of a marvelous invention like Invisible Cities, perfectly irrelevant. I shall spare myself the labor, noting, however, that something wise has begun to enter the Calvino canon. The artist seems to have made a peace with the tension between man's idea of the many and of the one. He could now, if he wanted, stop." Mine is an attempt to continue the Calvino canon, to critique the city's immanent limits, to imagine its imminent potentiality.

Linnaeus is a city of lines straight and single. Absent are cosines, contours, curves of any nature. Streets form grids. Parks, squares. Some are rectangular, but none circular. Churches are boxes. Schools, pentagons. Five is golden, but rings are not. Pythagoras pervades where the partridges pace, wings sans waves.

Desks in schools yield didactic discipline. Factory lines yield to cubicles of control. Unemployed men loiter near the gates, but their disorder simply fuels the implosion of exclusion. Hospital beds meet beds upon more beds, insurance primacy replacing patient privacy. Prison cells waste into coffins, coffins into columns, into columns of collars.

Collars of white drink the coffee of black. Coffee, the inmates harvest; columns of plants, their domain. Eminent domain turns black into bottom, and the white still sips in cappuccino calm. Sugar cubes of cane are stocked neatly at night, disturbed by day. Trash is taken by trucks, and trucks truncate trunks, trunks of trees that have chosen to grow out of line, trees with no place in Linnaean nomenclature. The city council rules on this breakage of nomos and delivers its verdict of lumber. These deviants, it asserts, are nonlinear, unnatural, heretical, already destined for hell. No shame in advancing the will of God.

Today, on the two-hundredth-and-some anniversary of Linnaeus, its people commemorate the kallos of Linearity through the Sacrifice of Carcerality. A collaborative procession, indeed. The chaplain is sent to assess the penitence of each prisoner; the council observes behind a mirror of two sides and decides who shall die and who shall remain harvesting; the people witness through their screens of two dimensions.

At the most holy hour, the prison priest enters Linnaeus' most vilified criminal. Interestingly, a collar of white.

- My son, what spurred you to commit this offense, to ponder past your boxed intellect? It is there to set limits, to promote order. And you, a member of the Order! No man should be caged in a building he designed.
- Father, you are blinded like the others. You fail to see that my science is in fact why I am here. It has spurred me to innovate and to envision my supposed crime, to propose the beltway's construction.
- But you know such a structure is blasphemous! It would encircle our city of Linearity, defy our quadrangular boundaries, dear Lord, destroy the order.
- Exactly my intent, so help me God.

Suddenly, a councilman emerges from behind the glass, storms the cell, pushes aside his clerical subordinate.

- Then you are a dissident!
- I suppose, replies the caged engineer.
- Then you are sacrilegious, invoking God when He is not yours to have!
- But He is ours to share. He is nondivisive, indivisible, invisible.
- How dare you say this, after making our schools pentagons; our parks, squares; our churches, boxes; after letting His light, that divine line of reasoning, reach each of our city's corners.
- But in a circle, I have come to realize, there will be no need for corners. And, I may add, the light shall shine brighter.
- Enough! You challenge the future, the First Tenet of Linearity, the end of history we reached so long ago.

So Pythagoras prevails, pacifying an otherwise passive people. In Linnaeus, the partridges remain parched.

Essay
Anne Huang

Variability of Play Experience in Hamlet and A Midsummer Night's Dream

In Hamlet and A Midsummer Night's Dream, characters discuss to a great extent how a play should be put on. By presenting plays within plays, Shakespeare uses his own plays to comment directly on the nature of theatre. Through the fictitious plays that the characters see, he self-consciously draws a parallel to the relationship between his own plays and their real-life audience. He suggests that the central power of the play lies not in an isolated text but in the process of the performance itself. Performers' particular choices interact with different audience expectations to create the variable effect of an individual performance.

Even in the some of the early printings of Shakespeare's plays, we see individual performances treated historically as separate entities, instead of a single text treated as a definitive abstraction of a play. In the article "Shakespeare in Print," T.L. Berger and J.M. Lander note that the first printed edition of King Lear identifies the text "as it was played before the Kings Maiesties at Whitehall upon | S. Stephans night in Christmas Hollidays" (402). By pointing out the specific time, location, and audience, this information conjoins the particular performance to the text. This choice sets up these elements to be as essential as the title, the brief plot summary, and the author. Instead of being fixed to one unchangeable, archetypal version, these plays were fluid, constructed to appeal to a particular audience in mind. Furthermore, a longer note from editors B.A. Mowatt and P. Werstine at the end of The Tempest observes that the masque may have been supplemented because the performance took place around King James's daughter's wedding (176). By identifying performances as objects of set moments and occasions, these choices recognize the individual context of each performance.

Within the text of Hamlet, Shakespeare also directly shows theatre's dependence on the variability of individual performance. With long, elaborate advice to the players about how to act, Hamlet emphasizes the appropriateness of choices relative to their circumstances. "Suit the action to the word," he urges them, "the word to the action, with this special performance" (3.2.17-8) because a play is more than a self-enclosed text. Instead, players must interpret it effectively. Careless observations of nuance can "o'erstep... the modesty of nature" (3.2.19) and make "anything so o'erdone... from the purpose of playing" (3.2.19-20). Hamlet's belief in the relevance of his advice emphasizes how crucial the way a play is performed is. Here, Shakespeare shows that a play's effect relies not only on the imagination of the playwright but also on the players who are then responsible for actualizing his words. A play has a living quality because each interpretation recreates and changes it.

A Midsummer Night's Dream also explores the conditional effectiveness of individual performance through the preparation of Pyramus and Thisbe. Whereas Hamlet provides an example of an appropriate production with an achievable objective, A Midsummer Night's Dream shows the ineffectiveness of a contrasting production. While Hamlet knowledgeably instructs the players not to overact, the rude mechanicals completely lack subtlety. Unlike Hamlet's careful consideration, they perform clumsily, for Bottom intends to "rehearse most obscenely" (1.2.103-4). In their prologue, Quince explains every feature that could possibly require any level of interpretation. Instead of simply relying on exposition to reveal the elements of the story, he points out that "this man is Pyramus" (5.1.136) and that he and Thisbe "whisper" (5.1.143) obviously "through the wall's chink" (5.1.141). Moreover, instead of simply substituting for the wall, Snout feels compelled to state explicitly "that I... present a wall" (5.1.165). Their less self-aware interpretation only takes literal aspects into consideration.

Since Hamlet's play by objective calls for imaginative self-identification on the parts of the King and Queen, it is more sophisticated by design. After he has "these players/ Play something like the murder of my father/ Before mine uncle" (2.2.595-7), he shall "observe his looks" (2.2.597). Not only is the mimetic play reflexive of what Hamlet thinks has happened, but it also holds a mirror up to playacting itself because it represents Hamlet's planning process. He indicates to us that he understands the power of theatre to evoke emotions through imaginative self-identification. He knows that "the purpose of playing... was and is to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature, to show virtue her feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure" (3.2.20-4). By this, he means that theatre, when executed properly, can expose insightful truths of life that may otherwise not be illuminated. To optimize this potential, Hamlet pushes for moderation. "Use all gently" (3.2.5), he recommends, but also insists, "Be not too tame either" (3.2.16). By presenting to us characters who themselves plan out plays, Shakespeare gives us direct access to the creative process.

Similarly, because we see the farcical planning process of the rude mechanicals, we directly witness the source of their production's flaws. Right away we see that they have opposite priorities from Hamlet. Their primary justification for having Bottom play Pyramus is that "Pyramus is a sweet-faced man, a proper man as one shall see in a summer's day, a most lovely gentlemanlike man" (1.2.81-4). They are most concerned about the accuracy of the physical match-up between the actor and the description of Pyramus, rather than his inability to interpret the content of the role through acting. Completely inattentive to emotional considerations, they are more worried about whether they "would fright... the ladies that they would shriek" (1.2.73-4) when a man playing a lion appears on stage. Without understanding the inherently representative nature of theatre, they assume that the audience shall interpret what they see in a literal level. Through their limitations, Shakespeare demonstrates that not every rendering is equally effective. How affecting a performance is depends on the skill of the actors, and the rude mechanicals lack that skill.

Hamlet, however, takes his inspiration from a performance that does demonstrate skill. He recalls the speech that he remembers so well and wants the actor to recite it again. To himself and "others, whose judgments in such matters cried in the top of mine," it was "an excellent play" (2.2.438-9). After the player repeats this speech at Hamlet's request, Hamlet is so struck by the thematic similarity to his life that he feels his own inaction as a "rogue and peasant slave" is "monstrous" (2.2.550) in contrast with the dramatic reaction of the actor. Since this performance has worked on himself as the audience member, he will apply it to his own planning. Though he acknowledges that the original performance "pleased not the million" (2.2.436), what he values is its ability to please a particular audience. After all, "'twas caviar to the general" (2.2.436-7). Just as different foods appeal to different classes of people, he knows that different types of performances appeal to different target audiences. The deep impression that the speech makes on him attests to the strength of its performance.

A Midsummer Night's Dream also explores audience response to indicate effectiveness of approach. After watching the prologue of Pyramus and Thisbe, Lysander says the speaker is "like a rough colt" (5.1.126) because "he knows not to stop" (5.1.127). Lysander sees the shortcoming that "it is not enough to speak, but to speak true" (5.1.127-8). Moreover, Hippolyta, queen of the Amazons, dismisses the performance as "the silliest stuff that ever I heard" (5.1.223). Reception plays a fundamental role in the theatre because a performance is only successful to the extent that it affects the audience. For this reason, Shakespeare uses each subplot as if it too were a play within a play to anticipate the reaction of the real-life audience. Within the plot hierarchy, each superior class or grouping has the privilege of being the amused spectators of those below them. The supernatural Oberon directs the actions of the aristocratic lovers, the way a playwright directs the actions of a play. He instructs Robin to make "a disdainful youth" (2.2.269) "more fond on" (2.2.274) Helena in hopes to rectify the lovers' situations. At the end of it all, he is complacent with the result that "all the couples three/ Ever true in loving be, ... Shall not in their issue stand" (5.1.425-7). These antics amuse him, the way they would amuse a real-life audience. Moreover, the force of the comedic structure is compelling enough to make Theseus, duke of Athens, arbitrate that "these couples shall eternally be knit" (4.1.187), just as it compels us as the audience to expect a harmonious ending. The higher groupings' reaction to the comedic actions below sets an example for how a real audience should react to a comedy such as A Midsummer Night's Dream.

The characters' reactions to the sub-play within Hamlet, too, reflect a real audience's response to a tragedy like Hamlet. A play looks different through the eyes of different people because the engagement of the individual with the play transforms it. When "the very cunning of the scene" (5.1.291) makes audience members "struck so to the soul that presently/ They have proclaimed their malefactions" (2.2.592-93), it is not always because a play is directly about the audience. Rather, a play is "a fiction, ... a dream of passion" (2.2.552). The imagination is so strong that it makes the audience transform the content of the play into something with which they identify. Despite its fictitious nature, it has a real potential as an agent. Through its serious commitment to a tragic objective, the success of the fictitious play prefigures that of the tragedy

Hamlet as a whole. With these insertions about the mini-play's effect on the audience, Shakespeare shows his expectations of his own plays' effects.

In A Midsummer Night's Dream, as well, theatre is a dream that can be altered by the participation of the audience. At the end, Puck states that the play as a whole is "no more yielding but a dream" (4.1.445), which appears to understate its worth, but promises to "restore amends" (5.1.455) "to 'scape the serpent's tongue" (5.1.450). Thus, a performance is subject to improvement, and Puck urges the audience to respond to the performers so that they know whether what to improve. By posing the disclaimer that "you have but slumbered here" (5.1.442), he emphasizes that the performance is unfixed and malleable, like a dream. This echoes Theseus' earlier claim that "the best in this kind are but shadows, and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them" (5.1.224-6). Because the play is a creative effort instead of real life, Theseus acknowledges that imagination can transform it. The final product is an improved interaction somewhere between the efforts of the performers on the transmitting end and the engagement of the audience on the receiving end.

However, while the full effect of the play is related to both the audience and the performers, the effect of even a single performance is by necessity variable because this set of people consists of a variety of individuals. Coming from different backgrounds and experiences, each person sees a play differently. Hamlet manipulates the individuality of reception by aiming a specific effect on particular audience members, but not one that would affect anyone else in this way. He is able to use it as an agent because of the unique experiences of the King and Queen, who are both greatly disturbed as a result of The Mousetrap. "The King arises" (3.2.263) and later "is in his retirement marvelous distempered" (3.2.299-300). The Queen, too, is "in most great affliction of spirit" (3.2.310-1). Because he understands how a play works, Hamlet has directed their guilt and imagination in exactly the direction he desires. Able to take into consideration and control all the elements, he brings the mimetic play into the main plot to achieve his own ends. As a result, Shakespeare uses the fictional audience as a vehicle to comment on the effectiveness of the approach. The one that works is the one with knowledge about how to apply appropriate actions skillfully to achieve the target objective.

Although the rude mechanicals are unskillful, the larger comedic context of A Midsummer Night's Dream harmonizes their poor performance. Their niche in the society does not obligate them to master an astounding performance that matches the standards of the upper classes. After all, he prefaces them as "Quince the carpenter, ... Snug the joiner, ... Bottom the weaver" (1.2.0 SD). They are all tradesmen who work with their hands. This play is merely a side project for them, unlike the players in Hamlet, who act as a profession. Within the structural demands of the comedic genre, they reaffirm and conserve the existing social structure by not transcending the expectations of their class and profession. Their interpretation will inherently differ from that of the upper classes. When Hippolyta tells Theseus that "it must be your imagination, then, and not theirs" (5.1.227-8) that interprets Pyramus and Thisbe in a way that pleases him, she asserts that the reaction varies depending on whose imagination the play is seen through. People from various classes engage in the same play, but in different ways. With his noble status, Theseus is able to allow them to "pass for excellent men" (5.1.230). According to the comedic imperative towards resolution, the fictitious audience is more inclined to override rational, objective standards for a play with the force of the imagination.

With these meta-theatrical discussions, Shakespeare abstracts theatre to something other than a one-way projection towards the audience. Rather, it results from a two-way, intermediary interaction between the show's creators and recipients. Despite the common medium of the script or the same performers, audience members with different perspectives and backgrounds see different plays even when they watch the same performance. Each participating individual, whether he is an actor, a director, or an audience member, has a different mental reception of it. In effect, each reinterpretation, even if simultaneous, recreates the artistic work through a collective imaginative effort.

The edition of *Hamlet* cited is from: Shakespeare, William. *Four Tragedies: Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth*. David Bevington, ed. New York: Bantam, 1988.

Essay
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Ironical (Critical) Exercise

The trouble with beginning this essay will be the beginning. Which is to say that the trouble of this essay will be its beginning, which is to say that the beginning of this essay will be its trouble. If what we seek by our ironical exercise is a point of origin, then let this be it. Call it Chiasmus, if we are looking to put a name to a Face, or, for the sake of the play, call it Derrida. He is, after all, its first cause, insofar as it is from him that we've lifted this trope, by "the histos of metaphor, the metaphor of histos" [PPH 1831]. Yet we may well presume (we should find ourselves quite right, indeed, to presume) that he's lifted this metaphor, this histos, from elsewhere. Perhaps, then, we should call our point of origin by another name. Perhaps we should call it by the name of Nietzsche. But why Nietzsche? Is it because he uses the same metaphor? Well, yes, of course: the histos that holds together his text can only be that same thing "metaphor," the metaphors of his text can only be themselves threaded together from this same thing "histos."

Or rather, no, not really: at least not in the Nietzsche that we'll be discussing, one that, if indeed he has any presence at all, has for us none outside of his early essay On Truth and Lying in the Non-Moral Sense, or outside of his Birth of Tragedy, or outside of Derrida's Dissemination, or outside of the text(s) we're presently pulling together with our own. That is, we do not recall the particular presence of this Chiasmus in the writings of Nietzsche that we will be reading. Yet if we've read "faithfully" the texts of the two authors that we've now said will provide our so-called frame(s) of reference—an approach which, if we may be forgiven for endorsing during the introductory portion of this essay, we'll soon dispose of—we know that the moment we have begun talking of the "presence" of Nietzsche, or of our friend Chiasmus, we've already gotten off on the wrong foot.

How, then, to begin talk of these texts, if it appears that neither Nietzsche nor Derrida would have us talk of either Nietzsche or Derrida, insofar as these names can either as historical or authorial personalities be termed the "origin of value" [PPH 1840] of a speech act that would legislate a "correct perception" [OTL, 880] that that would "clarify" (that is, reduce) it? How to begin talk "about" (respecting the contours, the limits of) any of the shadows cast by these figures who maintain that in our very act of recalling (to reason) or announcing (to discourse) a perception, the language of our thought and speech transforms the same perception into something other than it is? Our "faithful" readings of these texts—faithful, of course, not to the supple flesh of the language that stitches them together, but to the cadaverous rigidity of linguistic convention that distinguishes truth from falsity, faithful to the repressive operation that opens a difference between the "inside" and the "outside" of their texts—risk silencing us altogether when they insist that

> Difference, the disappearance of any originary presence, is at once the condition of possibility and the condition of impossibility of truth [...] What is is not what it is, identical and identical to itself, unique, unless it adds to itself the possibility of being repeated as such. And its identity is hollowed out by that addition, withdraws into the supplement that presents it [PPH 1875].

If identity withdraws into otherness, if the language of thought and speech is essentially other than our experience—functions, indeed to other our experience by "making equivalent [in concept] that which is non-equivalent [in perception]" [OTL 877]—how must we go about saying something of something?

Against this whether, against this choice between identity and indeterminacy that we are presumed to brave by our decision break the silence, we might borrow Nietzsche's forgotten umbrella, famously remembered by Derrida in his own reading of Nietzsche as the "forgotten" totality of the philosopher's theory, the absence of coherent "system" in the philosopher's writings that allows the ensemble of his texts to collect into an umbrella that neither holds water nor keeps it out—that is of no "use" to anyone. Indeed, perhaps we have pretended to the use of this useless instrument since our very first pretension to beginning, since the commencement of our exercise. From the beginning and without explanation, after all, we've been gathering together under one umbrella or another the two names of "reason" and "discourse," just as we've done with the two names of Nietzsche and Derrida. The whether here will be what determines our umbrella as either the same or other than what Derrida has remembered differently than Nietzsche has forgotten it, yet perhaps we can defer this determination a while by cutting to the chase.

"The is that couples reading with writing must rip apart" [PPH 1831]. It would appear that Derrida has caught our drift. But what do we mean? That is, mightn't we ensure the exclusion of unwanted significations of our language, so that the identity of our intended signification will be reflected in its identity with the reader's interpretation? Mightn't we, all things being equal, establish a few equivalencies between things that are not equivalent? Between what Derrida has once said and what we are presently saying (again)? Between reason and discourse and reading and writing? As an umbrella to guarantee the two umbrellas against the whether? We might have done all these things, insofar as we might have imagined our exercise to entail reading something, and then writing something about what we've read. That is, coming to know something (through reason), and then coming to make that thing known (through discourse). If we had thus imagined our exercise, we might have read "faithfully" to the conclusions of texts, stitching back up Nietzsche's umbrella to open it seamlessly over grammar and dialectics and Nietzsche and Derrida.

We would have concluded with reading (as if interpretation were coming to know) as writing (as if signification were going to communicate). Yet we seem to have said something different, if Derrida has once said something different, or is saying it anew. If what is presumes precisely the umbrella that Nietzsche left behind in disinterest of keeping one man's absent indeterminacy out of another man's present identity, presumes Nietzsche's correct perception (which we already know is "something contradictory and impossible; for between two absolutely different spheres, such as subject and object are, there is no causality… only an aesthetic way of relating" [OTL 880]); if we have not said is, what have we said without it? If our umbrella is must indeed rip apart so that it is of no "use" to us, what good is it to say anything (is)?

The reader will be reassured to discover that we have arrived, finally, at our point of departure. We would seem to be saying, as we've said before, the metaphor of histos, the histos of metaphor. By analogy, it would appear. That is, by saying again. We have been saying, and we will continue to say, again. Yet in repeating the whether to say that our text has been asking, that it will continue to ask indefinitely, we seem to have answered it. The good of our exercise in speech, as far as we can say, will be precisely that in saying again, necessarily, we will say anew. We will say differently. We must. And we find this to be "good." To put a name to a Face. As we will now—now that all's been said and done—by recounting Nietzsche and Derrida, together, not as (an) identity, but as (an) analogy, breaking with them a certain silence by embracing a certain silence, writing out of the aporia of originary inscription that founds the irreducible difference between them, over and against the dialectical identities we might otherwise hope to obtain.

It is on the brink of this ghastly aporia that we may join Nietzsche and Derrida, each of whom is never to be found without one foot in the grave. In following their language, we may now follow suit, keeping our right foot in this "common ground" which is uncommon and groundless, and setting forth what we have previously referred to as the "wrong foot"—only now feeling so right about what a good game we are playing—in order to ask the only question to be asked of texts reading texts: What difference does it make? With the understanding that it is of course the metaphoricity of language, our good old (but never the same old) histos that will thread together these two names both for the sake of as well as in the face of our exercise, what difference does language make between them? It would seem here that we have a question of translation. This is not surprising, in that all the questions of literature and philosophy must be questions of translation: whether "reasoning" or speaking, thinkers must proceed by way of signification, which means bringing some language to bear upon itself. This is, however, convenient to mention here, because of one of the meanings more conventionally ascribed to the word "translation." The two bodies of text we'll be working with are, after all, presumed to issue from the mouths of two living bodies differentiated (also from one another) by the tongues of their mothers. Indeed, we may perhaps most conveniently—that is, at least according to a certain convention—write the irreducible difference between these texts by recourse to the conventionally authorized and documented differences between the languages of which they are the inheritors.

And if, in reversal of Plato's turn away from the sun to its son, from the good to its offspring, we turn instead away from our texts and toward the Mother of their fathers, looking straight into the negative face of "that which enables one to speak," [PPH 1845], we should indeed be attending (yet differently, anew) Nietzsche's injunction to "look, and at the same time, go beyond the look" [BOT 141] in our reading of a tragic myth, which will here be the tragic myth of signification. For while we are interested by what has been written by Derrida and Nietzsche—of course, our own text can only reflect the accumulated interest of their writings—we will here be at least equally concerned with looking beyond these writings to the space upon or within which (we will see which) they have written.

It is Plato, via Derrida, who clues us in to the notion of a maternal principle complicit with a father Truth in the (re)production of writing, a womb which provides a "receptacle" for inscription whose depth cannot be fathomed, a "base" for impressions whose dimensions cannot be measured, the single carrier of all signs, appearing differently in the presence of each, itself having no presence to speak of, escaping the alternative of existence and non-existence. It is Derrida, via Plato, who sees in this conjugal history of the "production of the son" "at the same time the constitution of structurality" [PPH 1870], an economy of differences produced by the interrelations of the signs within this mother (non)substance.

Faced, then, with the matrix of difference that we provoke in seeking interview with a Mother tongue, in asking it to speak for one of its children; faced with a question of difference of language which we seek to answer with the question of a difference between languages, let us now proceed beyond texts to the space that attends and subtends them, onto the very leaves of paper under whose care the words of our philosophers are presumed to fall into our hands without slipping through our fingers. If we begin by flipping backward through the pages of our spare and critical anthology, among the unraveling textual roughage we come across the peculiar leaf of Derrida's text, verso: Face-down, as if already turned for us, in fact (always, as we shall see) already turned away from us. To see what happens, (rather than to right the page on our left—we're not worried to make head or tails of it) we try to flip it back to its beginning, and find that it turns over on itself: verso, again, yet differently. Upon closer inspection, which we pursue both because and in spite of our sneaking suspicion that this peculiar leaf "cannot be booked" [PPH 1831], we find that it's more than paper thin, that its bare substance shudders at our mere presence. As we move to come to grips with it, we catch a glimpse of Derrida's mother, who is busy in the background recalling to his tongue by homophony Saussure's "significant metaphor" [PPH 1860] of the feuille, the leaf of paper whose two faces recall the faces of the signifier and its referent, separated by the elusive supplement they have in common, the "invisible, almost non-existent, thickness" [PPH 1858] of difference—of each face from itself; between the units of grammar and those of dialectics—that defines each negatively against the other, and permits their relation in signification.

We give all we've got to get a grip, but the text will not let us keep the difference. Having begun to see double, we lean over the page, squinting to trace its transformations as it turns faster and faster, ever against itself. We discover that we are writing it. We lean yet further over to see what it is that we are writing, further still, until, looking up, we discover we've been swept along as a leaf among the many faces of this feuille, which now turns us about as it turns about us. Nothing is indifferent, but all is in difference. Such a spell, such unspeakable whether, can be dizzying, of course. We may wish to step outside for a moment to get some air. But we cannot: the excess of difference here is irreducible to a "simple exit out of the series, since that would obviously fall under one of the categories of the series" [PPH 1853]. Which is to say that no matter how far we walk along the length of the page, we will only encounter "a certain folding back" [ibid] of the page upon itself as it turns itself over. If we go on like this, it would appear we'll never have a moment to center ourselves.

Yet perhaps if we try the same thing over again, we may find things to be otherwise then they are. That is, if we go on in much the same way, but differently. The first time around, we looked the Mother in her tongue, took her word for it about the feuille, ran as far as we could with it, and found no issue from vertigo, no point of exit in "the space of writing, space as writing" [PPH 1857]. But if we close our eyes and listen again, listen anew, we may yet center ourselves a bit, gain a bit of perspective. If we might again look, and at the same time go beyond the look, only this time with our ears, we would find that—harmoniously or inharmoniously—we cannot help but hear an overlay of voices in the words of Derrida's mother. For the estate that this Mother has bequeathed in convention to her feuille is spacious enough to harbor its own echoes, so that just beyond the shuffling of leaves of paper may be heard of the rustling of the leaves of trees, and just beyond this may be heard the resonances of a vague music which has not yet announced itself.

What do we gain by turning over this new leaf? Nothing we can keep, of course. But let us use it to buy some time, to continue on awhile. In consolation, this second property of the feuille promises a remedy for our motion sickness, a second voice that will carry us further along Derrida's text than we would have ever have been able to walk without its aid. It will not carry us away from the page—indeed, there will be no simple exit out—but will rather take us far, far along it, to the point at which it becomes other than it is. That is, it will take us to its very edge, to the invisible thickness of the boundary comprehended by both the pretending signifier and its pretended referent. Rather than being our point of exit, this will be our point of entrance into an other text that Derrida's may split to reveal. Rather than issuing directly from the space of Derrida's dizzying text, we look to emerge within it, elsewhere, by a point of evacuation, in passage among his otherwise differentiated tissue, setting yet an other foot forward into yet an other aporia, which will here be to step into the eye of the storm.

And so we listen again. Feuille. We say it again: Leaf (as of the book). First analogy! And again: Leaf (as of the tree). Second analogy! And for our third and final trick, we transform—which is to translate—the word of Derrida into the word of Nietzsche. For, in the mouth of our own Mother tongue, our second analogy, by analogy, recalls the very metaphor that makes Nietzsche's language irreducible. It is (again) the leaf in its English translation—Blatt, in German—that makes the difference.

> Just as it is certain that no leaf is ever exactly the same as any other leaf, it is equally certain that the concept 'leaf' is formed by dropping these individual differences arbitrarily, by forgetting those features which differentiate one thing from another [OTL 877].

It is by the difference of the leaves scattered before us that we write the space between the pages of Nietzsche and Derrida. Once more, we do not look by concept to book the two pages together, to bind a proper spine out of the seam that holds them in common, in order that they stand discreetly under questioning. Rather, again, we look by metaphor to go beyond the look. For the page, the space as writing, stretches out yet further before us, further than the eye can see. We'd best again turn away, from our eyes to our ears, from the offspring of the text to the Mother of its tongue, if ever we should wish to recover the metaphor with which we began.

Blatt.

The music of these leaves, once only vaguely discerned, now makes itself apparent. What we are hearing is the reed of the satyr, sounding its name in echoes through the space that Nietzsche's mother has described for this German translation of our leaf, and thereby for the text that Nietzsche inscribes in it. But this English reed, as we trace into in the mouth of Nietzsche, will read in a rather peculiar fashion. For, as Nietzsche's writings would have it, the music played by the retainers of Dionysos is not a music of words, but before them. It is within and by way of this music that the chains of equivalency that bind man in speech are forgotten in recall of the resonating metaphors of his first, free intuition. Recalling directly the words of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche's text gives us that

> music is distinguished from all the other arts by the fact that it is not a direct copy of the phenomenon, or, more accurately, the adequate objectivity of the will, but is the direct copy of the will itself, and therefore represents the metaphysical of everything physical in the world, and the thing itself of every phenomenon [BOT 99].

The music blowing through the leaves of Nietzsche's text transmits an otherwise unattainable real of which thought and language are mere reflections, evidence of a point of origin that has been placed under erasure as far as writing is concerned. And for Nietzsche, it will indeed be the real that makes the difference. We read that "the original metaphors of perception were indeed metaphors," that the first and only immediate perception of the real was constituted by relations in difference, and that it is only by forgetting this originary difference that man takes the arbitrarily established identities of reason and discourse for "the things themselves" [OTL 879]. It is thus that in the space of Nietzsche's writing, the tongue of his Mother, the page that carries his words, we read aloud the difference that plays the "maternal womb of being" [BOT 97]. And we read that the same difference doubles as the "eternal wound of being" [BOT 108] in its regrettable absence from thought and speech, which are the only materials from which we may ever build a "consciousness of self" [OTL 880] or of our own experience. It sounds as if, through Nietzsche's reed, we were again reading Derrida reading

> the disappearance of truth as presence, the withdrawal of the present origin of presence, is the condition of all (manifestation of) truth. Nontruth is the truth. [...] It appears, in its essence, as the possibility of its own most proper non-truth, of its pseudo-truth reflected in the icon, the phantasm, the simulacrum [PPH 1875].

Only differently.

It would appear that the page of Derrida—the very sinews in support of his language—has indeed receded and regenerated behind the "cutting trace" of our reading. We have split the difference of his leaf's invisible thickness, opening it up into the reed in the space of which we may now hear the music of Nietzsche's primal will. And it is here that we have finally escaped vertigo, for we have centered ourselves. Where we had been at the mercy of the whether, we now see an opening through which we may step into the eye of the storm, setting forth what will perhaps be our last leg into what may be the final aporia. Nietzsche's nostalgia for a difference with ontological credentials—a difference that is, though it be unattainable by any manner worth mentioning—has provided us with a compass. While we cannot ever meet the truth where it lies (before thought, before the self), through the text of Nietzsche we are made to look longingly in the direction of its absence. Nietzsche's difference is tuned to recall an "omnipotent will behind individuation, eternal life continuing beyond all appearance and in spite of destruction" [BOT 102], to thereby incite to declare, "We believe that life is eternal!" [ibid], to thereby incite to, "by at least demolishing and deriding the old conceptual barriers [...] do creative justice to the impression made upon

[us] by the mighty, present intuition" [OTL 883].

It would seem for a moment that Nietzsche's leaf, in divergence from Derrida's, is woven for us to come to grips with, to take upon ourselves as the instrument of and for the "forbidden metaphors" [OTL 883] that will stock an arsenal with which we will be able to "rule over life" [ibid]. Yet it is precisely at this moment that we must admit the truth to be otherwise. Looking again, we find that we have taken Nietzsche's reed for the umbrella that he has forgotten, that what it is we've been holding up against the whether has in fact acted as its conductor. For how, indeed, could we ever succeed in speaking of a difference that is? As difference has attempted to write itself through Nietzsche's text (and even into Derrida's), we've found it to be precisely antithetical to the stasis and stability requisite for "being." We have found even the most immediate Truth written as "a mobile army of metaphors" [OTL 878], "a mass of images, which originally flowed in a hot, liquid stream from the primal power of the imagination" [OTL 880], in opposition and even revolt against the "regular and rigid new world" [OTL 882] built by reason and discourse in order to "imprison [truth] in a fortress" [ibid].

It is not that Nietzsche's umbrella, the coherence of his philosophical system that would shield us from indeterminacy, doesn't "exist." It is that it has been forgotten, in the same fashion as the "truth" of metaphor has been forgotten, having been once written (an absent presence, then) and once again erased (now a present absence). And what it has left behind is a trace. Like the invisible thickness of Derrida's feuille, only differently, Nietzsche's Blatt—as conceived of as an identity with itself (his writings being of a piece), as otherwise translated as Nietzsche's "thesis"—escapes the alternative between presence and absence. What we have called Nietzsche's "nostalgia" for being, his "belief" in the eternal will, his commitment to a certain "creative justice," we may call again, only this time with the name of "pretence." That is, a simultaneous pretension and pretending, the act of laying claim while at the same time renouncing it, a de-claiming of authenticity, of truth. A pre-text for a text that will never constitute itself into an identity, that never is. Derrida will tell us that this pretence has an alternate translation: it may be called "writing."

And so perhaps our exercise will have already left us empty-handed. We are of course not able to collect the difference we've made here, and presumably, we knew already (only differently) that the two philosophers (as if manipulators of reason) which we set out to interview were also writers (as if manipulators of discourse). Yet there would perhaps be yet something to be said to this question of “pretence.” For, reading once more into Nietzsche’s page, we recall that this “pretence” is precisely what is said to differentiate the man of science from the man of intuition, the philosopher from the poet. We recall that it is the poet who, by embracing the original and constitutional metaphoricity of language, exchanges “distortion” for “pretence” [OTL 883]. A number of questions arise. Would the implication then be that Nietzsche and Derrida are not philosophers? That they are mere pretenders? More unsettlingly perhaps, if philosophers are to be defined negatively by their failure to pretend, which would translate as their failure to write, then how can we speak of the positive identity of philosophy? Of its positive contribution? Of our own? Can it really be true that our exercise has identified nothing at all?

These questions are questioning tautology, and borne by fears of having put in all this effort only to come out with nothing more than we had, to come out with the same thing. We might translate these questions by asking: is all we have performed here tautology? If we have here performed philosophy, then the answer is: yes, of course. Nietzsche’s text will readily explain to us that what we might have done by reason, by means of play with identities that we ourselves have arbitrarily established, could amount to no more than that:

> If someone hides something behind a bush, looks for it in the same place and then finds it there, his seeking and finding is nothing much to boast about; but this is exactly how things are as far as the seeking and finding of ‘truth’ within the territory of reason is concerned. [OTL 879]

If, however, we have here performed not philosophy, but writing, then our answer will be: no, not really. At least, we have not performed the same tautology to which the reader may be referring. Ours has been, rather, a second tautology, of the same sort but not quite, which Derrida interests himself in:

> Here, tautology is life going out of itself beyond return. Death rehearsal. Unreserved spending. The irreducible excess, through the play of the supplement, of any self-intimacy of the living, the good, the true [PPH 1876].

Self-intimacy, then. Our critical (ironical) exercise has spent its signifiers without reserve, in gesture toward intimacy, toward getting our fingers caught in the histos of metaphor, the metaphor of histos. Toward the intimacy of a language reading itself. Toward chiasmus. Which would seem to be to end as we began. Only differently.

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Essay
Andrew Kincaid Φ

The Black Flag Republic:
The Pirate Anti-Nation as a Critique of the Modern World

Pirates in the Golden Age, despite their often brazen contempt for European law and the threat of death, remained bound by the same constraints as their licit counterparts, meaning that, occasionally, pirate crews needed to put in at port for provisions, commerce, and respite from the difficulties posed by life at sea. Much of the time, pirates, as they sailed under a variety of different ensigns and carried a several replacements in order to conceal their true identity, could put in at most peripheral seaports around the New World without raising suspicion.[1] In this era, disreputable elements often passed through smaller ports and conducted their business relatively discreetly, without attracting undue attention from local or imperial authorities.[2] This pattern of interaction with the legitimate world was particularly strong in the British colonies of North America, where smugglers frequently transported pirated property from the Caribbean to coastal cities throughout the American colonies, and where local authorities, eager for commerce and imported goods, conveniently ignored or did not question the origin of the aforementioned goods when they arrived at the local market.[3] Many pirates, exemplified by the case of Captain Tew and his crew, simply chose a quiet port, "dispersed themselves, as they saw fit," and managed to reenter civil society and live "unquestion'd," without the local officials ever realizing or caring that they had served as pirates.[4] Other pirates entered the dubious world of smugglers, underhanded merchants, and other non-piratical scoundrels that populated the underbellies of New World ports and were not averse to purchasing goods of suspicious origin or trading with men suspected of piracy.[5] The development of such "pirate nests" in various cities, including Newport, Rhode Island, Charles Town, South Carolina, New York, New York, Boston, Massachusetts, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and several ports throughout the Caribbean, where renegade sailors found friendly, or even supportive communities willing to furnish them with provisions, trade with them freely, and conveniently ignore their spotty past as pirates, offered potential havens for pirate crews who needed to acquire provisions or were interested in disbanding.[6]

This relatively mundane narrative of retiring pirates simply rejoining legitimate life or existing in the fringes and shadows of European jurisdiction, however, is merely one of two general tales of pirate life away from the sea. The second of these narratives describing the manner in which Early Modern European pirates sustained their depredations proves far more interesting, as it explains how pirates maintained themselves outside the boundaries of European society and describes the autonomous organizations that they formed unto themselves, offering crucial insight into understanding piracy as a criticism of contemporary institutions. In terms of basic upkeep and the most frequent and routine operations, crews required no formal infrastructure to secure food or maintenance; rather, at occasional intervals, crews sought out secluded coves and obscure anchorages around the Caribbean, African, and North American coasts where they could be reasonably certain that they would remain undisturbed for the duration of their repairs.[7] Having disembarked in a sheltered area, the rogue seamen searched for fresh water, provisions, and suitable trees to fell for use as timber, taking time, of course, to enjoy their stay on land and drink copious quantities of Kill Devil,* away from the shipboard prohibition on drunkenness.[8] In this way, these forays onto land served not only the crucial purpose of allowing the crew to resupply the ship, but also carried the ancillary benefit of providing the rogues respite from the difficulties of life at sea. Furthermore, the tropical climates of most temporary pirate havens in the Caribbean, West Africa, and Madagascar generally offered an abundance of fresh citrus fruit that helped to ward off scurvy and usually a good deal of wild animals that could replenish the ship's depleted supply of salt pork and salt beef, in addition to the possibility of several meals of fresh meat, a rare commodity for seamen in the Age of Sail.[9]

Despite this relatively high degree of independence and the ability to maintain themselves at sea without external support for extended periods of time, pirate crews still needed and wanted safe havens away from the European jurisdictions, not simply out of an ideological rejection of the system from which they had departed, but also because they remained outlaws subject to criminal prosecution if captured, despite some rogues' ability to merge with civilized society unnoticed. Moreover, even in non-ideologically constructed terms, renegade sailors might have preferred pirate communities for other reasons, including the increased degree of liberty accorded individual sailors and the less repressive moral and legal code. For whatever reason, pirates throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries formed groups that, in specific instances, became sufficiently well established to constitute veritable independent societies, each of which represented an alternative to the European paradigm. It should be noted, moreover, that the conditions of their formation are much less significant than the features that developed in these communities, as even if the all of the communities did not begin as self-conscious rejections of the state, which, many of them did, the manner in which they developed and the circumstances of their organization offer fascinating commentary on the piratical perception of the legitimate world.

The oldest and most rudimentary of these organizations was established by the heirs of the refugee and renegade European population of Hispañola and Tortuga, especially English Radical Protestants who had fled the Civil Wars, Dutch freebooters, French Huguenots, and a motley community of "indentured servants, combined with marooned sailors and other marginalized individuals" who had begun to hunt feral animals and raid the Spanish vessels that passed through the area, trading their prizes for more ammunition, alcohol, and other supplies to sustain their lives away from European society.[10] It is worth noting that many of these men were themselves labor rebels, including among their ranks indentured servants, bonded labor, and coerced workers who had fled from "the constraints of an economy fueled by unfree labor by joining the outlaw ranks of the buccaneers," which afforded them not only the benefit of freedom and individual autonomy, but also an opportunity to exact revenge on the bonded labor system that pervaded throughout the region.[11]

Hence, many of the buccaneers** in this confederacy were first and foremost labor rebels, escaped servants and slaves who turned to piracy after having fled from an oppressive, hierarchical structure in the plantation economies of Santo Domingo, Cuba, and especially Saint-Domingue, the French colony that would eventually become the Republic of Haiti.[12] Alexandre Oliver Exquemelin corroborates this analysis in his explanation of why he joined the "wicked order of the Pirates or Robbers at Sea," stating that he had been harshly treated by a plantation master whom he describes as "the most cruel and perfidious Man that was ever born of a Woman," evincing the demonstrable connection between the oppressive nature of economies predicated on coerced labor and the emergence of rebel societies.[13] In the same fashion, William Dampier notes that the crew of his and Captain Davis's ships were a "sanctuary and asylum of all people of desperate fortunes; and increasing their own wealth, and the strength and reputation of their party thereby," an assessment rendered even more important by the fact that Dampier penned this about the town of Petit-Goâve, an area of Hispañola dominated by plantation culture, meaning that these refugees were predominately escaped African slaves, Amerindians, dispossessed small holders, and indentured servants.[14] It is further interesting to note that the system of exploitative work that dominated the Caribbean remained brutal and frustrating even a century later, when the inhabitants of Petit-Goâve participated in the Haitian revolution, toppling the French colonial government and the hierarchical structure of unfree labor that it imposed.[15]

Phrased more directly, "Indentured servants, embittered by brutal treatment ran away and became pirates," fleeing the borders of the "bond society" in favor of more egalitarian alternatives in which social organization was not determined by the caprice of birth or conditions of servitude.[16] Thus, given that a substantial portion of the population of these buccaneer communities had explicitly fled the confines of hierarchy, authority, and coerced or waged labor, it is unsurprising that the society they collaborated in developing proved to be free and democratic.[17] Consequently, the refugee agglomeration that coalesced on Hispañola and Tortuga in the mid-Seventeenth century was adamantly anti-establishment, rejecting the authority of the French West India Company on Tortuga, especially the provision of the charter that stipulated that the buccaneers were subjects of the French authorities.[18]

Importantly, it was not the particular authority in question that irked the freebooters, though they had no great love for the French, but rather the imposition of an external authority over them that created the tension. To this end, the early buccaneers rejected the assertion of French colonial authority over their domain, thinking "it very ill to be reputed subjects to a private Company of men who had no authority to make them so," evincing the rogues' rejection of even nominal jurisdiction over their dominion.[19] Indeed, by their own declaration, the buccaneers "were already determined in their minds to erect themselves into a new Commonwealth, independent of the Crown of France," indicating that the early rogues of the Caribbean did not view their piratical society merely as a construction of convenience or expedience, but rather as a constituent element of a concerted rejection of the state and thus an inherently ideological construction that recognized its position within the political constellation of the Early Modern Caribbean.[20] That is, the manner in which the buccaneers discussed their society and rejected external authority evinces a self-conscious project that recognizes the rogues' relationship to legitimate society and actively seeks to renegotiate the organization paradigm that characterized European and imperial life. Thus, it is apparent that the buccaneers self-consciously worked to establish an alternative society, whose composition and its contrast to the European states of the era represents a loose sketch of a possible society and a critique of the world that the freebooters had deserted.

These buccaneers, the forerunners and ideological predecessors of later generations of miscreant sea rovers, eventually formed, in the mid-seventeenth century, a rough confederation that they termed "the Brethren of the Coast," governed by a code of laws that they established independent of any sovereign state.[21] Alexandre Oliver Exquemelin, the great chronicler of the seventeenth century buccaneers who had himself joined their ranks, described the arrangement as a "refuge and sanctuary to the Pirates of those parts, putting it in a sufficient condition of being a convenient receptacle of storehouse of their preys and robberies," that established an autonomous social structure that could support itself and meet the needs of its denizens, namely mutual protection and the facilitation of other minimal reciprocal social relationships.[22] Importantly, inherent in this self-definition as a "sanctuary to the Pirates" is a recognition of and solidarity for other seamen who had also chosen to live as renegades, indicating a broader alignment external to personal relationships and acquaintances and an identification with a common group that did not share the usual elements of social cohesion, including ethnicity, language, or familiar relationships.

Such abstractions and allegiances to a larger social organization rapidly became a matter of necessity, as pirates from around the Caribbean joined the confederation, swelling its ranks and making personal relationships with each of the transient citizens increasingly difficult. Thus as the piratical community grew, the membership of the Brethren at any given moment consisted of several hundred rouges, more than twenty pirate ships, and a population that occasionally counted over fifteen hundred pirates in its ranks for coordinated raids on Spanish outposts, not to mention additional assorted misfits such as smugglers who temporarily lived in pirate societies as traders or merchants, but did not consider themselves permanent "citizens" of the society, meaning that much of the community remained largely anonymous to one another.[23] Accordingly, this formation of a piratical identity based in the buccaneer society resonates with Benedict Anderson's articulation of an "imagined community," wherein members acknowledge that they are "connected to people they have never seen" by their allegiance to an abstract organization.[24] To be certain, the buccaneers' identification was not predicated on the imagination of an ethnically or linguistically determined "nation," but the comparison does serve to emphasize that the Brethren of the Coast, as with the other piratical societies that followed, reached a relatively high degree of social development that involved social abstractions and an element of accepted social anonymity.

The specific manner of their organization, moreover, stands in contradistinction to that of the European model from which these buccaneers had become estranged. To begin, the Brethren of the Coast were radically inclusive, accepting, for example, members from different religious confessions without hesitation or tension, a fact which, considering the macabre religious violence that played out across the Atlantic and the European states' complicity in this persecution, may be considered radical, especially as many European states continued to insist on the religious homogeneity of polities.[25] Thus, the full extent of this tolerance may only truly be understood in the context of contemporary religious violence, including the religious conflict during the Thirty Years' War, the English Civil War, and after the Edict of Fontainebleau overturned the tenuous peace established by the Edict of Nantes, to name only a few particularly striking examples of religious tension and conflict that pervaded Early Modern European Society.[26] Similarly, the Brethren eschewed the ethnic and racial prejudices of the Old World, accepting black, Amerindian, and multiracial members on equal terms as Europeans, contributing to the egalitarian construction and ethos of the first Caribbean pirate confederacy.[27] Indeed, the Brotherhood only grew more ethnically diverse over time "because able-bodied seamen and slaves on a prize were strongly encouraged to sign articles joining the buccaneer crew" such that in short order, the Brethren were "a shifting confederation of English, Irish, French, and Dutch buccaneers with a sprinkling of Portuguese, Scots, Indians, mulattoes, blacks and a Turk or two," indicating the exceptionally international composition of the confraternity.[28] It should be noted that such a rejection of racial prejudices and bigotry also corroborates, extends and conforms with the pirates' broader abjuration of privilege-based models of hierarchy in that white buccaneers refused to recognize the racial order of the societies from which they had originated, serving with black, Amerindian, and mixed-descent crewmen on equal terms. This established, however, buccaneers did occasionally retain slaves that had been taken aboard slave ships, as in the case related by William Dampier, wherein "captain Davis and captain Swan chose about fourteen or fifteen a piece, and turned the rest ashore," demonstrating an instance in which buccaneers freed the majority of the slaves captured aboard their prize, keeping several, assumedly as compensation.[29]

Importantly, the modalities that characterized slavery in this context were vastly different and more humane than those that dominated Caribbean plantation life. Indeed, there are indications that these relationshisp developed into more intimate and familiar dynamic and did not assume a strictly racial valence as it did in other situations.[30] Dampier himself articulates a similar perspective, noting that there "was never a greater opportunity put into the hands of men to enrich themselves than we had, to have gone with these negroes, and settled ourselves at Santa Maria, on the Isthmus of Darien, and employed them in getting gold out of the mines there," but the buccaneers had no intention of becoming plantation owners and recreating the socio-economic model from which they had fled.[31] This explanation does not seek to mitigate the cruelty of claiming ownership over another human being, but rather seeks to express that the vision of buccaneer society offered above relates the predominant cultural paradigms and mores of the Brethren of the Coast, that some members of the society deviated from these practices and beliefs, and that even the buccaneers who did hold slaves did not consider them to be chattel in the same way that many plantation owners did, owing, in part, to a great deal of ambiguity surrounding the legal status of African slaves in the early days of New World colonies.[32] Further, as the case illustrated by William Dampier indicates, had the buccaneers had no ideological designs or a different conception of society, it would have been possible to simply establish themselves as independent latifundios, hacenderos, encomenderos or plantation owners in remote parts of the New World, and live a more comfortable life from mining or farming than they did as renegade seamen.

Further, the Brethren of the Coast organized themselves as a "commonwealth" in contrast to the "states" and monarchies of Europe, evident not only in the aforementioned declaration of an independent "commonwealth," but also patent in the fact that the buccaneers governed themselves democratically, through a system of "councils" and inclusive, participatory deliberation.[33] The buccaneers further codified this democratic, communitarian understanding of their society in their governing articles, which, like the deep-sea pirates of the eighteenth century, elected in addition to a captain, a Quartermaster of dramatically increased authority, charged with protecting the interests of the crew, and, more importantly, serving as "a trustee for the whole," evincing the specific emphasis placed on the common good as opposed to individual concerns.[34] Similarly, as with deep sea-pirates, buccaneers paid themselves according to what Exquemelin terms a "no prey, no pay" model, wherein each member of the expedition was paid a share of the "common stock of what is got by their piracy," thus not only eschewing the wage as the paradigm of payment, but also privileging group property rights over those of the individual, in that the prize and everything aboard it was considered communal property until it could be apportioned justly.[35] Further, buccaneers, too, established a sophisticated workmen's compensation program, explicitly delineating monetary compensation for particular injuries, including, for example, "the loss of a right arm, six hundred pieces of eight" or "the loss of a left arm, five hundred pieces of eight," demonstrating a sincere commitment to the general well being and to the mutual assistance of fellow members at the pecuniary burden of the rest of the crew.[36]

This model of social organization, while radically progressive by the standards of Early Modern Europe, acquires an additional revolutionary valence when considering that this system of democratic values was derived from that of British Levellers, who themselves radically opposed the authoritarian composition of the British state and sought the establishment of a more democratic government, many of whom had departed England for the Caribbean in the wake of the English Civil wars.[37] This proposed ideological connection between the Levellers and buccaneers, made in several circles of pirate historiography is difficult to prove empirically, as contemporaries did not reference the connection themselves, but given the fact that the this ethos germinated and matured in the years after English Radicals fled the Old World for the new, the similarity of their ideals, and the evidence offered by Talty and others, the possibility merits consideration as an influential element in the construction of the buccaneer identity.[38] Further, certain elements of buccaneer customs contributed to this concerted rejection of European society, including tradition of abjuring the formality associated with traditional European culture, such as the practice referring to one another by surnames with the appropriate honorific.[39] In a similar fashion, these buccaneers developed an initiation mythology that served to reify their repudiation of legitimate European society, such that these rogue seamen believed that "by crossing the Tropic of Cancer" they had "drowned their former lives" and thus were baptized into the pirate confederacy.[40] In this way, it is apparent that the Brethren of the Coast developed a dramatically egalitarian society in the seventeenth century Caribbean that in its particular composition reflected distinctive criticisms of contemporary European society and government. Importantly, several members of the Brethren of the Coast, especially Captains Tew and Every, eventually became deep-sea pirates in the Indian Ocean, exporting their model of a democratic, inclusive, and communitarian social structure to a new geographic context, demonstrating one mechanism by which the ideological values of piracy were shared and spread across disparate regions of the world.[41]

The Brethren of the Coast, however, were not the only piratical society established during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Chronologically, the next major rogue community to develop was the Malagasy republic of Libertalia,[T] a short-lived commonwealth founded near the end of the seventeenth century. Established on and around Île Sainte-Marie, off the northeast coast of Madagascar by Captain James Mission and his crew, Libertalia represents a concerted, self-conscious social construction that, in its rejection of the state and its particular forms, directly criticizes the European political model.[42] Like the Brethren of the Coast before them, the Liberi, as the denizens of Libertalia termed themselves, erected a democratic organization, constituted around governing articles that delineated terms of conduct and determined that the community would hold "all property held in common," administered by a democratic government in which all citizens were permitted to participate.[43] Importantly, moreover, Libertalia made explicit many of the criticisms inherent and implicit in the Caribbean confederacy that had been born in the generation before. Thus, Captain Mission applied the demonym Liberi to the citizens of the republic, "desiring in that might be drow'd the distinguish'd Names of French, English, Dutch, Africans, &c.," thus abjuring the arbitrary semiotic differentiations of the emergent nation-state paradigm and reinforcing the distinction between the piratical imagined community and those of Western Europe.[44]

While there is no doubt that Madagascar was an important pirate base during the era in question, some historians have questioned the authenticity and scope of the accounts surrounding Libertalia and whether or not the society described in these accounts accurately relates life among the pirates of Madagascar.[45] Even taking these considerations into account, however, the importance of the transitory republic does not reside solely in the particular details about its factual, historical organization, but also in the composition of the legend surrounding it. Hence, even if the Libertalia depicted in Defoe's accounts was partially the product of embellished stories, exaggerations, and the imaginations of optimistic seamen and pirates, Libertalia remains crucial to the understanding of the shared ideology and mentality that pervaded piracy, particularly with regard to the rogues' critique of and opposition to the legitimate world. That is, given the undisputed reality and similar composition of other pirate confederacies, the ample mythology surrounding Libtertalia is significant in that it offers insight into how pirates perceived themselves and what the organizations that they devised represented to them.

This analysis of the mythology surrounding Libertalia as a critical alternative to the European state is corroborated not only by the existence and nature of the Brethren of the Coast, but also by the emergence of third pirate republic, again based in the Caribbean, and the last major pirate state discussed in this essay. By the end of the War of Spanish Succession,[TT] pirates had begun to congregate on the small Bahamian island of New Providence, forming a loose alliance and adopting the name "the Flying Gang" for their confederation.[46] Within a few months, pirates outnumbered legitimate colonists in New Providence, flocking to the haven that they self-consciously sought to construct as "a second Madagascar" in the Caribbean.[47] The significance of this pirate reference to a "second Madagascar" should not be diminished, as it evinces an abstract historical identification with an earlier pirate community, indicating both that New Providence was indeed the ideological successor of Libertalia and that pirates strongly identified with members of their "imagined community" of rogues. Interestingly, however, while many of the new arrivals to the Nassau confederacy were already pirates, a substantial portion were "unemployed seamen, indentured servants, criminals on the run, even a few escaped slaves from Cuba" who fled to the rogue colony as a refuge, turning pirate upon arrival.[48]

The pirates immediately began to establish their own order on the island, even, according to Captain Thomas Walker, positioning cannons in the abandoned British fort "for the defense of their republic" and to secure the harbor against attack from the British Royal Navy and external other threats.[49] Unsurprisingly, at this juncture, as the number of pirates in Nassau harbor began to swell dramatically, many of the colonists on New Providence, including the representatives of the British crown, either left for adjacent islands or made themselves scarce and unobtrusive, not wanting to arouse unwanted attention from the den of thieves that had installed themselves in the Bahamas.[50] Immediately, these pirates established markets where smugglers could obtain stolen goods for colonial markets and where pirates could trade the "sails, pitch, tallow and cordage" that they had looted from other ships and which could not easily be replaced.[51] Having made New Providence a "Colony of Rogues" that the Caribbean pirates converted into their "their Retreat and general Receptacle," the pirates developed a government that organized the autonomous democracies predicated on each crew's articles into a confederacy directed by a council of the elected captain and quartermaster of each ship.[52] This government, however, maintained only the most basic of functions, essentially providing for a common defense in case of attack and providing a forum for mediating potential disputes among members of the Flying Gang, affording the rogue citizens of the pirate republic a degree of liberty unprecedented in European society.[53] While the faux-parliament did occasionally elect an executive in the form of a governor, it seems as though this position was more honorary than functional and, perhaps, a rather unsubtle sneer at the British authorities that they had evicted from the island and from whom they had rebelled. One such governor was a "poor half-mad creature" that lived among the ruins of an English fort, himself a "relic of a former occupation," whom the pirates called governor and to whom they paid obsequious "mock deference," thus ridiculing the British authorities with their affected respect for a lunatic hermit.[54]

The legal and social organization of the New Providence confederacy was essentially an outgrowth and replication of the piratical articles that developed among individual crews, emphasizing communal ownership of prizes, collective deliberation, individual independence, and equality of membership, without regard for privilege and condition of birth. Further, as with the Brethren of the Coast and the Liberi, the pirates based in Nassau "put loyalty to the brotherhood above any loyalty to nation, religion, or race" such that, unlike European states of the era, "ethnic and racial freedom was the rule" among the pirates, rather than a dim exception.[55] Moreover, as was the case with the Brethren of the Coast before them, this radical racial inclusion sowed a resounding disquiet among the plantation owners of the region, epitomized by the remarks of Henry Pulleine, the contemporary Governor of Bermuda, who cautioned that "We can have no dependence on their assistance, but to the contrary, on occasion should fear their joining with the pirates," indicating not only that the contemporary plantation societies felt the effects of the pirate republic, but also that they recognized that Flying Gang presented an attractive destination for runaway slaves.[56] This belief, moreover, was grounded in practice, as evinced by the deposition offered to an Admiralty Court by Richard Wood on August 20th, 1723, wherein, the sailor testified that when the ship aboard which he served was raided by pirates, after seizing the vessel's stores, "the Pyrates set him to work to unshackle the Negroes on Board the Porcupine" after which point, the slaves were permitted to go free, a pattern that repeats itself throughout the High Court of the Admiralty documentation.[57]

Indeed, at New Providence, the pirate ethos and rejection of the European state became most developed, codified in the articles governing the ships anchored there, exemplified by those of the crew of Captain Howell Davis, who "drew up Articles, which were signed and sworn by himself and the rest, then he made a short Speech, the sum of which was a Declaration of War against the whole World," making explicit the inherent contrasts and criticisms of the rogue republics, codifying the substantial unrest and disaffection patent in the piratical lifestyle.[58] In the same fashion, Captain Cocklyn's remark to Captain William Snelgrave upon capturing Snelgrave's ship that "I am sorry you have met with bad usage after Quarter given but 'tis the Fortune of War sometimes" further implies the degree to which this mentality of a protracted war between pirates and legitimate European civilization pervaded the era.[59] Similarly, Captain Samuel "Black Sam" Bellamy proclaimed that "I am a free Prince, and I have as much Authority to make War on the whole World, as he who as a hundred Sail of Ships at Sea and an Army of 100,000 Men in the Field," demonstrating not only the emphasis placed on personal autonomy, but also the rejection of authority and of the European state system that is evident throughout actions of the pirates.[60] This perception of a broader conflict that pitted pirates against all nations was also apparent from the perspective of the European authorities, exemplified by the fact that many admiralty court depositions and verdicts referring to pirates as "Enemies to Mankind" who violated the "Laws of Reason" that the European elites had begun to endorse as a means of preserving their property and authority within their jurisdiction.[61] This sense of piratical identity, separation from legitimate society, and the extent to which New Providence became a haven for piracy is evident in the letter written by Mr. Gale in January of 1718, a contemporary settler of the Bahamas, who commented that "The Pirates yet accounted to be out are near 2000 men, & of those Vain, Thaitch & others promise themselves to be abreast of Providence in a short time" continuing that the pirates had begun "settling & establishing a Nest of Pirates, who already esteem themselves a Community," thus evincing not only the magnitude of the piratical community in the Bahamas, but also the autonomous ethos that characterized the society that they had established.[62]

In most particulars, the Flying Gang closely resembled its predecessors, as a thoroughly democratic, communalist quasi-republic, who paradoxically privileged individual liberty as well as an earnest commitment to their compatriots. This general uniformity in construction and ideology, whether inherited or derived independently evince two general principles. First, the organizational paradigm adopted by the pirates discussed in this essay was not accidental. Had these structures simply emerged as matters of expedience or happenstance, they would not have conformed so closely to one another across the myriad independent crews and at least three major pirate enclaves described in this chapter. Given that these designs were intentional and democratically constructed, it becomes apparent that not only do the values, structures, and modalities embodied in these organizations represent what disaffected maritime workers viewed to be the most desirable system of labor organization, but also that the particular model they established forms a conscious criticism of several aspects of the Early Modern European world. As such, this criticism most heavily indicts the European model of authoritarian hierarchy, waged labor, and nationalism, especially considering the character of Early Modern piracy and the established rhetoric surrounding equality, liberty, and a "War against the Whole World," with quarter for no nation.[63]

Endnotes

[1] David Cordingly, Under the Black Flag: The Romance and the Reality of Life Among the Pirates. (New York: Random House, 1996) 141-147.
[2] Ibid., 144-147.
[3] Colin Woodard, The Republic of Pirates: Being the True and Surprising Story of the Caribbean Pirates and the Man Who Brought Them Down. Orlando: Harcourt Books, 2007): 140-142.
[4] Daniel Defoe, A General History of the Pyrates. (As Captain Charles Johnson) Edited by Manuel Schonhorn. (New York: Dover Publications, 1999) 438-439.
[5] Colin Woodard, The Republic of Pirates, 87-93.
[6] Mark Gillies Hanna, "The Pirate Nest: The Impact of Piracy on Newport, Rhode Island and Charles Town, South Carolina, 1670-1730." (Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 2006): iii-iv, 3-5.
[7] David Cordingly, Under the Black Flag: The Romance and the Reality of Life Among the Pirates. (New York: Random House, 1996) 141-143.
* Kill Devil was an aptly named and mercurial concoction of rum, wine, fruit, tea, sugar, spices, and lime juice, so-called because the brew was abominably foul. A similar drink was "rumfustian," a bizarre blend of beer, gin, sherry, raw egg, and spices.
[8] Marine Research Society. The Pirates Own Book: Authentic Narratives of the Most Celebrated Sea Robbers. (New York: Dover Publications, 1993): 92-95.

[9] Jennifer Marx, Pirates and Privateers of the Caribbean. (Malabar, Florida: Krieger Publishing Company, 1992): 230-234.

[10] Jon Latimer, Buccaneers of the Caribbean: How Piracy Forged an Empire. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009): 71-75.

[11] Erin Mackie, “Welcome the Outlaw: Pirates, Maroons, and Caribbean Countercultures.” Cultural Critique. Vol. 59. (Spring 2005): 39-41.

[**] The term “buccaneer” is a derived from a corruption of the Taíno word “boucán” which refers to a four-posted frame used for smoking meat, a favorite instrument in the cooking and preserving of food adopted by these freebooters throughout the Caribbean.

[12] Peter K. Kemp, & Christopher Lloyd, The Brethren of the Coast: The British and French Buccaneers in the South Seas. (London: Heinemann Ltd, 1960): 1-3.

[13] Alexandre Oliver Exquemelin, The Buccaneers of America: A True Account of the Most Remarkable Assaults Committed of Late Years Upon the Coasts of the West Indies by the Buccaneers of Jamaica and Tortuga (Both English and French). (London: George Allen & Company, Limited. 1911): 22.

[14] William Dampier, The Voyages and Adventures of Captain William Dampier, 307-310.

[15] Thomas Reinhardt, “200 Years of Forgetting: Hushing up the Haitian Revolution.” Journal of Black Studies. Vol. 35, No. 4. (March, 2005): 246-249.

[16] George Woodbury, The Great Days of Piracy in the West Indies. (New York: W.W. Norton Incorporated, 1951): 40-43.

[17] Peter K. Kemp, & Christopher Lloyd, The Brethren of the Coast, 3-5.

[18] Alexandre Oliver Exquemelin, The Buccaneers of America, 46-47.

[19] Ibid., 46.

[20] Ibid., 48.

[21] Jon Latimer, Buccaneers of the Caribbean, 75-77.

[22] Alexandre Oliver Exquemelin, The Buccaneers of America), 50-52, 130-132.

[23] Ibid., 57, 131-135.

[24] Benedict Richard O’Gorman Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. (New York: Verso Publishing, 1983): 3-7.

[25] Peter Lamborn Wilson, Pirate Utopias: Moorish Corsairs & European Renegades. Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2003): 190-191.

[26] Henry Kamen, Early Modern European Society. (New York: Routledge Publishing, 2000): 55-60; Glenn Burgess, “Was the English Civil War of Religion? The Evidence of Political Propaganda.” The Huntington Library Quarterly. Vol. 61, No. 2 (1998): 190-194, 199-201.

[27] David E. Johnson, “Of Pirates, Captives, Barbarians, and the Limits of Culture.” American Literary History. 2002: 358-360.

[28] Jennifer Marx, Pirates and Privateers of the Caribbean, 128-129.

[29] William Dampier, The Voyages and Adventures of Captain William Dampier, 290-295.

[30] Robert Naylor, Penny Ante Imperialism: The Mosquito Shore and the Bay of Honduras, 1600-1914, A Case Study in British Informal Empire. (Rutherford, New Jersey: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1989): 30-33; Stephen Snelders, The Devil’s Anarchy: The Sea Robberies of the Most Famous Pirate Claes G. Compaen, and the Very Remarkable Travels of Jan Erasmus Reyning, Buccaneer. (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2005): 74-76;

[31] William Dampier, The Voyages and Adventures of Captain William Dampier, 290-295.

[32] George Woodbury, The Great Days of Piracy in the West Indies, 33-36.

[33] Alexandre Oliver Exquemelin, The Buccaneers of America), 50-52, 130-132

[34] Stephan Talty, Empire of Blue Water: Captain Morgan’s Great Pirate Army, the Epic Battle for the Americas, and the Catastrophe That Ended the Outlaws’ Bloody Reign. (New York: Crown Publishers, 2007) 58.

[35] Alexandre Oliver Exquemelin, The Buccaneers of America), 58-59.

[36] Ibid., 59.

[37] Stephan Talty, Empire of Blue Water, 57-58; Soma Marik, “Christopher Hill: Women Turning the World Upside Down,” Social Scientist. Vol. 32, No. 3/4. (March – April, 2004): 55-59.

[38] Stephan Talty, Empire of Blue Water, 55-59.

[39] Jennifer Marx, Pirates and Privateers of the Caribbean, 151-153.

[40] Ibid., 152.

[41] Jon Latimer, Buccaneers of the Caribbean, 76-79; Daniel Defoe, A General History of the Pyrates, 416-417.

[T] The Malagasy pirate republic is also spelled “Libertatia” by some authors.

[42] Jennifer Marx, Pirates and Privateers of the Caribbean, 191-193.

[43] Frank Sherry, Raiders and Rebels, 94-97, 99, 130, 146-147.

[44] Daniel Defoe, A General History of the Pyrates, 416-417.

[45] David Cordingly, Under the Black Flag, 21-23, 70-71, 146-147, 182-184.

[TT] The end of the War of Spanish Succession (1713) is often regarded as a major factor in the rise of Caribbean piracy in this period, encouraged by the collapse of Spanish naval power and the decrease of wages for English seamen as the demand for an immense naval force substantially reduced the demand for sailors.

[46] Colin Woodard, The Republic of Pirates, 112-113.

[47] Ibid, 112-113, 130-132, 139-141.

[48] Ibid., 131.

[49] Frank Sherry, Raiders and Rebels, 204-206.

[50] David Cordingly, Under the Black Flag, 150-155.

[51] George Woodbury, The Great Days of Piracy in the West Indies, 71-74.

[52] Daniel Defoe, A General History of the Pyrates, 37-38, 135-137, 166-168; Colin Woodard, The Republic of Pirates 131-133, 158-160.

[53] Jennifer Marx, Pirates and Privateers of the Caribbean, 226-227, 231-232, 243-245.

[54] George Woodbury, The Great Days of Piracy in the West Indies, 72,

[55] Frank Sherry, Raiders and Rebels, 207-210.

[56] Colin Woodard, The Republic of Pirates 158-160.

[57] HCA 1/99

[58] Daniel Defoe, A General History of the Pyrates, 166-169.

[59] William Snelgrave, A New Account of Some Parts of Guinea, 212.

[60] Ibid., 587.

[61] HCA 1/99

[62] CO 23/1

[63] Daniel Defoe, A General History of the Pyrates,168.