

ISSN 1994-1250

VIRTUALITIES

Journal of Virtual Realities, Interactive Dramas, and Literary Constructs

**A Multi-Discipline Peer-Reviewed Journal of
Virtual Reality, Roleplaying, Fiction,
Scenario-Based Theatre-Style Interactive Drama
Freeform Live Action Roleplaying Games**

**Volume Eight, Issue One
February 2015**

Society of Interactive Dram

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Editorial Policy

The Virtualities Journal of Virtual Realities, Interactive Dramas, and Literary Constructs is an international journal dedicated to the publication of critical discussion and scenarios related to Virtual Reality, Interactive Drama, Interactive Fiction, Scenario-Based Theatre-Style Interactive Drama Freeform Live Action Roleplaying Games and welcomes contributions in all areas of the study, design, and creation of stand-alone scenario-based LARPS as well as Scenario-Based Learning related to interactive dramas of this type. Review articles of books related to interactive drama and informal book announcements are also welcome. Critical pieces on scenarios or convention events are welcome. Stand-alone scenarios are encouraged for submission with designer notes and running commentary. Submissions are peer-reviewed. Contributions may be submitted from all countries and are accepted all year round. The language of publication is English. There are no restrictions on regular submission; however, manuscripts simultaneously submitted to other publications cannot be accepted without express notice and permissions for simultaneous publication. Submissions by regular mail and electronic mail are both accepted.

Submission Evaluation

Submissions to the Virtualities Journal of Virtual Realities, Interactive Dramas, and Literary Constructs are put through a process of blind peer review evaluated within a system of Accept or Un-Accept model. There are no conditional acceptances for pieces submitted to this journal. Submissions are evaluated by respected academics with specialties in fields related to the nature of the submission.

Distribution and Community

The Journal of Virtual Realities, Interactive Dramas, and Literary Constructs is published online at <http://www.interactivedramas.info/journal.htm> and in press format using pdf distribution media. The journal is normally published regularly as an ongoing concern with submissions considered as they are received. You may find the current issue and past issues archived at <http://www.interactivedramas.info/journal.htm> on the world wide web. The journal is associated with the scenario archive at <http://www.interactivedramas.info>. The online discussion forum associated with the journal and the scenario archive/workshop is at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/InteractiveDramatist>. This forum includes online workshop for interactive dramatists to post draft versions of scenarios for community comments as well as for them to share their material with other directors to run in different venues.

USE OF MOBILE PHONE AS AN AID TO REFEREEING AND PLAYING - A CASE STUDY

Peter Coffey

The problem is familiar to all organisers. How can one get a referee to where they're needed? It is proposed that the use of mobile phone communications is invaluable in running a "Conspiracy Theory" style LARP, that is, a LARP where all the players are to greater or lesser extent in conflict with each other and are all trying to achieve mutually exclusive objectives and there is, by design, no obvious "winner" under the initial conditions of the game.

BACKGROUND

A problem of many LARP's is communication. This is better known as the "There's never a ref around when you need one!" problem.

A number of solutions have been tried these include:

- 1) Getting the players to stick together in one "party".

- 2) Having a very high ref : player ratio
- 3) The use of walkie talkies.
- 4) Eliminating the need for a referee by use of “rules-less” or “self-refing” systems

None of these solutions are perfect. If you have more than 5 or so players, inevitably some are going to want to do different things at different times. Unless you massively increase the number of qualified referees available to run your game, you are going to be hard pressed to make sure that your refs are all in the right place at the right time. Walkie talkies are obtrusive and proper discipline and use is hard to manage, it has been observed that some players twitch and ready themselves when the distinctive “channel open” sound is heard as it is usually a prelude to an attack. Obviously eliminating the need for a referee is the best solution but that does preclude having more sophisticated abilities (which may require knowledge outside of the briefing sheets, a time freeze, or other “special” powers). Also, the loss of a referee does make arbitration more a matter of a “shouting match” if unforeseen situations arise, e.g. an “irresistible force” meeting an “immovable object” thus the referee who is believed to be an “impartial observer” can help resolve or clarify such rules related matters.

EXPERIMENTAL

Whilst brainstorming about the best way to run a “Conspiracy Theory” (CT) style, player versus player (PVP), minimal to none Non-Player Character (NPC), one off LARP event for new players, a variety of novel approaches were suggested.

- 1) The use of IM (Instant Messaging) to get decisions from the ref team.
- 2) The use of mobile phones to contact the referee.

The use of IM, when tested on a campus network was rejected for

a variety of reasons, these included the time taken to “log on” to the network, the problems with finding a reliable “chat” client (the virtual ICQ applet was under consideration at this time) and the limitations of, and time taken to convey information in written form were such that this method was rejected.

The use of mobile phones was indicated because most of the player base was believed to carry a mobile phone and because verbal communication would enable quick decisions to be made or a location to be given so that a referee could be summoned.

A further decision was made to allow the players to “opt in” to a telephone “circle”, i.e. they could share their number with their pre-generated character’s circle of contacts. This was adopted by the referees as a good way to allow different groups to start in different places and to have “infiltrators” amongst the groups, e.g. Al, Betty and Tom are part of the police who wish to crack down on illegal activity on campus. Unbeknownst to Al and Betty, Tom is an Illuminati minion and receives a phone call to misdirect “his” group’s attention.

HAZARDS

Please note: if you do wish to follow this model, it is wise to make it very clear how the information is going to be secured, disseminated and that you obtain informed consent from your player base that that is how you are going to use their details. As a relatively “closed” game involving university students in the same society, privacy wasn’t the issue that it might have been with a more disparate group.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The experiment was largely successful. Players were able to coordinate their actions across the playing area in a fashion that was reported to be popular and referees were able to get to where they were

Peter Coffey

needed quickly and efficiently. The only downsides with this approach were: the obvious expense that could be incurred to the players if they didn't have "free" minutes with their phones and the fact that referees were sometimes in conversation with someone else on a phone or otherwise unavailable.

Broadly the experiment was considered successful from the player feedback received and a further two subsequent games proved the resilience of the model. A further advantage discovered was that it let players act in secret using "ref dependent" powers without having to emerge from where they were to summon a referee, allowing for greater immersion.

PETER COFFEY

Peter Coffey studied Chemistry and Clean Chemical Technology at York University from 1998-2004 and then moved on to gain a qualification in teaching English as a foreign language. I've been larping since 1998 at the local level and since 1999 at the national level. I've also been a co-conspirator in the organisation of several one off "Con" larps for York University Science Fiction and Fantasy Society and I've been credited with proof-reading the EOS rules, a new and upcoming system in the UK. Currently I'm involved in the Maelstrom campaign from Profound Decisions and am looking to broaden my experience of non-fantasy settings.

A DRAMA REFLECTIONS OF THE SITUATION EXISTING IN THE SOCIETY

Venkata Ramana Murty Balaga

The absurd drama, as a genre, is distinguished from others due to its language and theme rather than by any other single quality. ‘Absurd drama’ has certain characteristics like the usage of typical language. A characteristic feature of a dialogue sequence in an absurd drama is in its incongruous relationship between what is said and what is implied. This form of drama was studied by many investigators, but studies based on Absurd theme with existential touch are rare.

The absurd drama is referred to and contrasted with different other forms of drama, mainly to bring out a clear distinction among them. Its significance and nature are also discussed in respect of contemporary drama.

Marjorie Boulton defined thus: “A true play is three dimensional; it is literature that walks and talks before our eyes”¹. So drama is enacted on stage, where a story is narrated by means of dialogue and action with accompanying gestures, costumes and scenery as in real life. This is different from an improvised dramatic performance, in which a story is unfolded by means of dialogue. But an improvised version, the

mime drama was famous in Paris in the 19th century, was a crowd puller. This type of drama without costume or scenery, as in real life, seems to be the representative of realistic drama. As Mrs. Cohn puts it, his “drama is concentrated down to man acting”².

In Greek, ‘theatre’ means a place where one goes to see something, the triumphal entry of the emperors and their sport. None of these activities can be regarded as drama, but the dividing line between them and drama is very fluid. The circus where the clowns perform acrobatic feats together with little farcical scenes; the puppet theatre and shadow plays, where the actors are mere drawings; the abstract ballets, cartoon films, and mimes are also considered as drama. Hence, it is obvious that drama is something that one goes to see, when presented and organized as something to be seen.

The drama is studied through each of its elements - action, direction and staging. The stage drama is stronger than opera and other forms of drama. The stage drama and media are bound to go together in the process of dramatic communication.

The drama is an imitation of the real world. The dramatic performance contains an element of reality. A wide range of entertainment is presented in the dramas. The art of theatre is concerned almost exclusively with live performance in which the action is precisely planned to create coherent and significant sense of drama.

The audience tends to subordinate the separate identities to that of the crowd. The audience power of independent, rational thought instead of unexpected reserves of passion has come into play.

The audience is helpless with mirth by jests that would leave them unmoored and they are alone in the serious human pursuits and these situations have become part of entertainment in the drama.

The very nature of art form of drama is to provide enjoyment. This

art form specifically contributes to the sum total of man's tools of expression, conceptualization, thought and action. In fact, this art form conveys more than the meaning of the actual words that are spoken. The nature of a character is instantly conveyed by the physique, costume and make-up of the actor. The other visual elements in drama are the setting and the environment of the sets in which the action takes place, and the lighting and the grouping of the characters on the stage.

It is evident that the drama compels the spectator to analyze, what he sees on the stage, in exactly the same way as it makes him feel while encountering similar situations in his personal life.

Drama can operate on several levels through discursive literature, the novel, the short story and the epic poem. It is the most concrete form in which art can recreate human situations and human relationships. The drama is the mirror of nature and presents man's situation in a touchy way that has become attractive to an existentialist like Sartre.

The contrasted reality with a play is that, what happens in reality is irreversible, while in a play it is possible to start again from the beginning. Play is the stimulation of reality and it is a frivolous pastime. In fact it emphasizes the immense importance of play activity for the wellbeing and development of man and to gauge the gravity of human predicament under different situations. Drama also forms one of the most potent instruments to instruct the members of a society about the different social roles they have to play in their lives.

Farce is another form that describes the anxieties of people about possible lapses in behavior to which they may be exposed through temptations of various kinds like suicidal tendencies, preference for loneliness etc. The abstraction of a remote thought has become a common human reality and is presented through the thought processes, expressions and actions of characters. For example, even though there is no significance, the think-tank tries to workout plans of action for various future contingencies, as epidemics or nuclear wars, treating

them in terms of likely future events. These events are translated into dramatic form, as concrete imponderable situations resulting from psychological reactions.

The serious drama starting from the Greek tragedies to Samuel Beckett's works is concerned with the psychic condition of man. An attempt was made to theorize this condition in concrete terms. The dramatic form is the only means to show the concrete implications of abstract philosophical thought. Drama also requires plausibility, but it must be conveyed not by a narration but by actors' ability to make the audience believe in their speech, movement, thoughts and feelings. This depends on the preconceptions of the audience and the impressions that can be made on their minds.

The social problems of the last hundred years were not only aired but reflected in the works of playwrights like Ibsen, Bernard Shaw and Brecht. Many profound philosophical problems are also referred in the plays of Strindberg, Pirandello, Camus, Sartre and Beckett, but only arbitrarily.

It is obvious that philosophical problems do find a place in the theatre. Greek Theatre with its literary emphasis has provided the Western Theatre, with a sense of continuity in stories, themes and format styles. The plays are regularly revived with discernable references to specific modern concerns. It also provides an objective way for testing human behavior.

The collective experience is an important element of the impact of drama on live theatre. The respective audience can produce a concentration of thought and emotion that leads them into spiritual insight and such an experience is akin to religious feeling. It is a collaborative art, and hence the theatre depends upon the response of the audience.

Usually in response to a stage performance, some sort of a collective reaction, a consensus will often develop in an audience. A

specific response was seen against the mysterious character of Nora in Ibsen's "*A Doll's House*". In a stage performance of the character Nora in this drama, her action was objected by the audience. The audience compelled her to change her attitude towards her husband and to rethink and reformulate her attitude towards marriage.

A ritual is also employed in drama that enhanced the consciousness of the audience. The ritual has the elements of music, dance, poetry and action. A renewal of strength in the individual results in preparing him to face the world. The manifestation of drama through clarification, communication, enlightenment and illumination is a part of the ritual drama.

The development of culture in a society is a process of constant progression. In this process the drama has developed into a spoken version, a ballet, an opera or a musical comedy. Changes in a nation's mood will be noticeably visible through drama as potent reflections of political change. This helps individuals in orienting their thoughts and better prepared to face the world.

The play can be interpreted by the actor's personality provided by the author. Every play prescribes its own style, though it is influenced by the traditions of theatre and the physical conditions of performance. Style of the play controls the gesture, movement, tone, speech and reflexes of the stage characters.

Drama in its verse form has failed to portray life with pettiness. But the intensity of emotion is expressed by the rich language and rhythmic flow of poetry. A drama written in a verse form may not be able to produce the true way of life of the people but refers to the distant past and the country's civilization.

The language used in verse drama is often instinctively repetitive and ridiculous. Sometimes it is like a mock verse as in satires and parodies. But the language of drama is necessarily action, despite the immense diversity of drama as a cultural activity. But a traditionally

well made play provides the frame work for the drama. It forms the reference for the relationship of characters and their previous history becomes the main theme of the play. The contemporary drama makes fewer commitments of this kind. The sophistication of dramatic aspects and the levels of uncertainty introduced in the drama. Here the audience no longer questions the fundamental issues as in a conventional drama.

The dramatic forms are associated with both music and poetry apart from the spatial unity in rhythmic diversity and the unity of pace and tone in a wide variety of visual changes on the stage. The dramatic patterns such as rising to climax, subsiding and ascending are gradually intensified and gradually toned down on the other hand in traditional drama the action is near to reality, the location and the scene. And its representation is precisely identified and the stage is made to confirm the illusion of the characters in a play.

Mainly the form and structure of a drama depend on articulation and are joined as two distinct elements. If these two elements are not properly inserted the drama becomes stale and routine. Here, the clarity of structure has become the 'sign posting' of 'the course of action' which is important for the structuring of drama. The variations of these two elements result in lessening of monotony and dangerous source of boredom.

It is quite obvious that the drama is affiliated to action, dialogue, design and music to raise the emotions among the audience. Of course one must be conscious of the fact that the reaction depends on the instinct of the audience. The dramatic work depends on multitude of elements and contributes to the total pattern of the drama though each element is interdependent. The unanswerable stock questions on life and experience are expressed by the imperceptible gestures and in the simplest phrase turned into a sublime poetic utterance. This is the true miracle of drama and poetry.

The power of involvement and perception of audience is elevated

by the proper structuring of drama. Their emotions can be made to reach the level of consciousness to be highly responsive, more observant, and able to discern the underlying unity and pattern of human existence. Hence this helps the spectators to introspect and understand the mysterious effects of drama. So, it can be evidently seen that the dramatic experience is more powerful among all artistic experiences available in literature.

On the other hand the Infield style of presentation of drama reflects the attitude to life in the classical Greek Age. The different subjects related to philosophical issues and existential problems coexisted with high degree of historical consciousness in the contemporary drama. Greek drama emphasized the interaction between the chorus and protagonist in the plays.

In a general sense the language of drama ranges between two great extremes. One is intensely theatrical and ritualistic while the other is an almost exact reproduction of real life which is commonly associated with motion pictures and television dramas.

In the mid 19th Century the dramatists reacted against the poetic drama. Ibsen started writing romantic comedies, epic verse dramas and later started treating social subjects as prose.

But the thearticle artifice is rejected by Naturalism which is initiated by Émile Zola. Zola explains his view on Naturalism through his novel, *Thérèse Raquin*, “was to "study temperaments and not characters”³ and he compares the novel to a scientific study. Because of this detached and scientific approach, *Thérèse Raquin* is considered an example of Naturalism. It is a faithful record of a case study of the human behavior, namely scientific analysis of life. So the dramatization of the novel, *Thérèse Raquin*, is the first consciously written Naturalist Drama.

Subsequently the term socialist realism was widely used and Naturalism is contradicted by the soviet circles. Drama is elevated by

the stage production. Realism and Naturalism have led to confusion and controversy in western countries. The great Play Wright Brecht's writings are incomprehensible without an awareness of the realism and formalism. He gave insights into real world as he referred poetic and anti-illusionist means in his dramas.

Ibsen practiced naturalism to capture the whole gamut of human experience as it is the basic impulse behind the Naturalistic movement in the contemporary drama. To deal with concrete issues rather than sentiments, naturalism has tended to transform into a style and the ideas and objects have become symbols. It is quite evident that naturalism has merged with symbolism. A new generation of writers has dealt with themes about the real contemporary society. The action and dialogue appeared to sound like every day behavior and speech of the people.

Strindberg and Frank Wedekind are also 'naturalist dramatists' and both believe that an individual could experience the world as his internal world. Wedekind has experienced the world as a grotesque place and he tended towards savage creatures and dramas.

Other significant aspect and one of the major movements in the drama is expressionism which was coined at the beginning of the 20th century to describe a style of painting. It reacted violently against the late 19th century 'naturalism' and 'impressionism'. These two movements were applied and represented to the theatre to protest against the then existing social order. Initially it was concerned with spirit, later with matter and typically sought to get the essence of the subject by grossly distorting outward appearance. Bertolt Brecht rejected Naturalism and Idealism of the expressionist but interestingly pursued the epic theatre.

Brecht in contradiction to the Marxist ideology postulates each epoch as having different social conditions. His epic theatre is unromantic that did not pretend that events of the play were happening and made it clear that the actors were merely demonstrating the social

conditions. His theatre is anti-illusionist.

Brecht's characters were thought by many observers as an existing representative of a class in the society. The character is shown as effacement to the point of dehumanization of life in the contemporary society. Brecht has presented the circumstances that motivated the beginning of an event and emphasized the need for creative activity that helps the audience in defining actors' behavior and individual characters.

Brecht's most significant contribution to drama is the alienation effect. His actor has never been transformed on stage into a character; and was just portrayed. But by abandoning the total transformation, the actor can speak his part in a quotation.

Further, Kitchen sink drama is another term coined to describe a British cultural movement which developed in the late 1950s and early 1960s in theatre, art, novels, film and television plays. The 'heroes' of these dramas are usually described as angry young men. It used a style of social realism which often depicted the domestic situations of working class. The dramas using this style are often set in poorer industrial areas in the North of England, and used the slang heard in those regions. The film "*It Always Rains on Sunday*" is a precursor of the genre, and the John Osborne's play "*Look Back in Anger*" is said to be the first one using this idiom.

This cultural movement was rooted in the ideals of social realism depicting working class activities. It is an artistic movement expressed in the visual and other realist arts. Many artists who contributed to social realism were painters with socialist views. The critic David Sylvester wrote an article in 1954 about trends in recent English art, calling his article "The Kitchen Sink" in reference to Bratby's picture. Sylvester argued that there was "a new interest among young painters in domestic scenes, with emphasis on the banality of life".⁴

The post-war mood of disillusionment and skepticism was expressed by the play wrights in Paris. They shared a belief that human life was without meaning and purpose and that valid communication was no longer possible. They felt the human condition had sunk to a state of ‘absurdity’ the term coined by French existentialist Albert Camus. These Absurd dramatists are responsible for creating a world of uncertainty that tends towards the lyrical mode.

During the same period the French dramatist Antonin Artaud who wrote very little in dramatic form himself, is of immense importance as a theoretician of the new anti-literary theatre and coined it “Theatre of cruelty” for his conception of “a theatre designed to shock its audience into a full awareness of the horror of human condition”⁵ which had an impeccable influence on the contemporary theatre since the World War-II. “The Theatre of Cruelty” is based on the extreme development of gesture and sensory responses by the actors who can communicate with the audience at a profound psychological level than is possible through words.

The surrealist theatre is based on ritual and fantasy and launches an attack on the audiences’ subconscious mind in an attempt to release deep rooted fears and anxieties and make them regard themselves and their natures without the shield of civilization. In order to shock the audience and evoke necessary response, the extremes of human nature often mad and perversion are graphically portrayed on the stage. It is an anti-literary revolt and minimizes literary significance by laying more emphasis on screams, inarticulate cries and symbolic gestures.

In a similar sense Artaud also thought that theatre is associated with physical domain of the actor. For every feeling and mental action there is a corresponding breadth that is appropriate to it. He presented the characters as live self - contradicting people with their passions, unrelated utterances and actions on the stage.

These dramatists are of the opinion that characters and action are unable to comprehend the world, in the traditional drama. The

audience needed an elaborate critical vocabulary to experience the emotions at the performance. But here, the absence of language is powerful and the action of unforgettable characters is equally powerful. The words are trivial but the action has tremendous impact. These authors have employed the forms of tragicomedy to convey the vision of an exhausted civilization and a chaotic world, to the audience.

The creation of interest and suspense are the components of the dramatic construction. There must be a constant variation in pace and rhythm, and break in monotony to pull the attention to reduce boredom and somnolence to the audience. In the drama “*waiting for Godot*” the characters are reassured themselves that nothing ever happens and there is nothing to create suspense. Interesting stories and episodes in the play have generated interest and suspense in the audience.

The Absurd form of drama is written and played at the stage with a specific purpose. Harold Pinter developed a style of dialogue and plot in his plays. He had greatly enjoyed and admired the Absurd plays. The author has analyzed the elements of the plays of Beckett, Ionesco and Adamov and Genet, Pinter had in some common features, such as the absence of a full exposition and extensive use of dream like images and created similar absurd situations in his plays.

The absurd play is used to conceive poetic images which gradually unfold and disclose the deep meaning. But in conventional realistic play the main emphasis is given to plot and character. In Brechtian epic play the demonstration of human behavior is stressed. In the absurd plays the effects of image and metaphor are significantly conveyed, apart from the presentation of contemporary critical vocabulary.

In absurd drama the tragedy provides no relief. The tragedy associates with the catharsis and the psychological behavior of man. The experience of tragedy, when shared with another man with deep compassion, has gained profound and lasting impression on human nature and predicament. The world produces an emotion akin to a

religious feeling that has been touched by something beyond and outside our mundane every day experience which gains insight into the sublime cathartic effect of tragedy.

On the other hand the comic view of man is an incongruous mixture of bodily instinct and rational intellect, which is ironic. Comedies give insights not into the ultimate experience of human life but to the lightest emotion associated with them. The comic insights had never affected the manner and the ways of the society in spite of the minor weaknesses in the behavior of contemporary man.

The works of Samuel Beckett, Ionesco and Pirandello belong to the same mixed genre. As Corrigan pointed out “their characters suffer from the intellectual dilemmas resulting in mental and emotional distress of the most anguished kind”⁶. The comic stage had to offer farce in the late 19th century. Serious subjects were not dealt by the dramatic clichés of Victorian melodrama. But the stereotyped themes were made the subjects, which was evident from their inner emptiness. The characters dwell amid ambiguities and equivocations. Beckett and Pirandello’s characters suffer from intellectual dilemmas resulting in mental and emotional distress of the most anguished kind. But their suffering is communicated in a satiric form.

The drama of 19th and 20th century attempted by G.B. Shaw and Brecht, illuminated human weakness and felt divine if the human tragedy is limited. Drama has wide appeal where all the arts representing life are discussed and it is a way of seeing it. It is quite obvious in the words of Samuel Johnson ‘there is no limit to the modes of composition open to the dramatists’.

Therefore a play tells its tale by the imitation of human behavior. The remoteness or nearness of that behavior to the real life of the audience can be affected by awesomeness and laughter with detached superiority at clownish antics. The characters in alienation are important in widening or closing the aesthetic gap between the stage and the audience as the dramatist is able to control their feelings.

As John Wayne says, the difference between Victorian and Elizabethan theatre is like a difference between consumer and participative art. This difference has resulted from the physical relationship, which determined the kind of communication open to the playwright to play a major role through his dramas.

The arena of the stage belongs to the excitement of the circus. This was the basis for all early forms of theatre, when more narrative forms of action appeared in drama and the actors control the attention of the audience by facing them. Another theatrical form is Proscenium that existed in the late 19th century. In this form of theatre, the actors are withdrawn into the scenes and the stage is artificially illuminated. This was a new development of spectacle and illusion in Western Theatre.

In a drama static characters are meaningfully symbolic on a stage as in painting. No character emerges without action and no play exists without situation. The situation is never detached from the character though it may be possible to do so after experiencing the play.

The latest trend in theatre is the role played by the avant-garde school in focusing the ordinary life. The modern dramatists are more conscious about the tension between illusion and reality and the fact and fiction in theatrical experience. The ritualistic drama is written in verse, which assumed that the actors expressed in an incantatory speech in the dramas. The rhythmic delivery of words enhances the mood of the theatre to the level of religious theatre like that of Eliot and the plays are written in prose which is rare and essentially associated with comedy.

The Theatre is affected by an illusion which is the perfect presentation of the image of a human being's position in the world. The comic writers believed in the conception that behind every social being lurks an animal being.

In the contemporary literature it was believed that drama acted as an instrument in bringing out social and political change. Both drama and theatre have wide connotation and extend to the cinema and electronic mass media, the two powerful instruments for the freedom of expression.

The drama is associated with knowledge, perception, thought and insight into the society. It never makes an overstatement but carries on its own mechanism and has its own verification within it.

A playwright imagines a situation and characters that come to the complexity and ambivalences of the real world. Ibsen has contributed greatly to social and political changes in the society. But Brecht has refused to make his message too explicit because he knew by instinct and consciously the problem he wanted to present the audience. He wanted to make them think themselves rather than drumming the message into their heads.

The contemporary themes dealt with topics and themes by clever reference or allegory to audience. The social impact was evident on the contemporary drama and at the same time theatre is also successful in bringing into open the burning events of the contemporary society.

It is a misconception that the art of theatre has to be discussed solely in terms of intellectual content of the script and various theatrical experiences for bringing in a purposeful harmony. The various aspects of humanity are evaluated in different contexts which have become focal points in theatrical representation of the plays. Renaissance drama has been emphasized on the individuality of each character.

Theatre was restricted to philosophy in setting, in the 17th century. Man was presented just not as a creature, but posterity was shown to have given him the unique importance in the universe.

From 17th to 19th century the theatrical characters were from lower

classes and appeared as servants and dependents in the comedy. Rustics were ridiculous and their simplicity was endearing or pathetic.

By the middle of the 19th century middle class people had become an aristocratic entertainment in the theatre. After world war, theatre has made efforts to create interest in a wider section of society. By that time the audience had lost the interest in going to theatre as Television was becoming a powerful medium of drama as well as entertainment. Eventually theatres become a powerful medium for only those people who were prepared to energetically collaborate in the creation of drama as an art form.

During the late middle age the popular enterprises were found at royal courts and the house holds of the nobility where they act, sing and play music at festivities. The medieval theatre stems directly from the rituals of the masses and theatre has become a visible reflection of the invisible world. Once the theatre moved outside the church, the production of the plays has been done in the vernacular.

The morality plays which had appeared in the theatre reflect the darker world view of people that had experienced recurrent plagues and had begun to regard human destiny as ‘worm’s meat’ where the Skelton figure of death was a potent emblem to the sermons. Morality plays were dramatized through allegory and portrayed the span of human life into abstract terms. Elizabethan theatre was resonant as the high seriousness of the morality plays. The playwrights were prohibited from dramatizing religious issues and they confined to history, mythology and illusion in order to speak nothing about the contemporary society. Notwithstanding its great diversity of style, form, themes and functions, the theatre is based on doubt and questioning and had its roots in a basic need to give the meaning and working of the universe.

The term Expressionism was coined at the beginning of the 20th century which was a reaction against naturalism and impressionism in the late 19th century. This was a protest against the existing social order.

The essence of the subject by grossly distorting outward appearance or external reality is thoroughly shown in the contemporary theatre.

Brecht's earliest work was influenced by German Expressionism. His works were preoccupied with Marxism where man and society could be intellectually analyzed and discussed. Apart from entertainment, Brecht believed that theatre should be strongly didactic, capable of provoking social change and appeal to the spectator's reason and not to the spectators' feeling.

The early Irish Theatre was not a reaction against the existing form of theatre; rather it was a nationalist movement to establish an indigenous theatre in the early 20th century. Independent of European fashion sentimental and imitative plays dominated the Irish stage.

British theatre has paid more attention to the anti-realistic movement as characterized as an experimental theatre in the rest of Europe.

Theatre has started to rebuild the cultural fabric of civilization after the devastation of World War- II and captured the attention of the public and became new in the society.

The 20th century theatre came into existence from a vigorous reaction against Realism and theatre has seized upon anything that came to hand in an effort to express the contradictions of the new age which is inspired by machines and technology. The oriental theatre took up Cubism, Dadaism, the psycho analysis of Freud and the shock of the world war which resulted and spawned widespread disillusionment and alienation.

The characters were seen and interpreted as lonely helpless images in industrial society and devoured by the tyrannized mechanical devices or enmeshed in the tentacles of the machine.

In this context the works of Samuel Beckett bear testimony to the then societal conditions of the period. Samuel Barclay Beckett, an Irish writer, dramatist and poet, was born on 13th April, 1906 and died on 22nd December, 1989. His work offered a grim outlook about human culture and gradually developed minimalistic attitude which is reflected in his works. Many of the modernists consider Samuel Beckett as an inspiration to many writers. Even though Martin Esslin was the father of “Theatre of the Absurd”, Beckett was considered as one of the key exponents of this concept. Beckett was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1969.

During the later part of his life, Beckett lived in a small house, secluded in the Marne valley, near Paris. His total dedication to his art extended to his complete avoidance of all personal publicity and public appearances. In 1969, he received the Nobel Prize for Literature. He accepted the award but declined the trip to Stockholm to avoid the public speech at the Nobel ceremonies. Beckett’s theatre represents the spoken word which altered more dramatically than the written. The illusion of reality of an actor is continually destroyed by the presence of the audience in the theatre. He avoided the proof of non-reality and was concerned with that constituent reality which was his obsession with theatrical art.

Absurd theme is an inner current and an implacable thought. To understand Beckett’s plays better, the existential writings are also referred to this study. The term ‘Absurd’ which was once shunned, had become a metaphor for tendencies in literature and theatre. It kindled new dimensions of thought and philosophy and involved more of ‘showing’ than ‘telling’. The theatre of the absurd, was then called ‘the new theatrical virus’ which spread its wings even over the women’s theatre. Its anti-conventional mode had a significant influence on the theatre, where the traditions of dialogue, action, emotions and acting styles were flouted. Theatre has come a long way from the times of Second World War, which through the loss of hope and faith,

culminated in the philosophy of the absurd.

The theatre of the Absurd was much in common with some of the fundamental ideas of existential philosophy of Heidegger, Sartre and Camus in its emphasis on the basic absurdity of the human condition, on the bankruptcy of all closed systems of thought that claim to provide a total explanation of reality. The immediate consequence of the existential concepts such as temporality isolation, anxiety, choice, dread and death is that all these existential experiences find their culmination in the theatre of the absurd. Absurd theatre, term applied to a group of dramatists in the 1950s who did not regard themselves as a school but who all seemed to share certain attitudes towards the predicament of man in the universe, essentially those summarized by Albert Camus in his essay *The Myth of Sisyphus*. This diagnosis humanity's plight as purposelessness in an existence out of harmony with its surroundings.

The existential situation is associated with materialization and incarnation in the existence of man, which fills the gap between man and the world. It seeks that the basic truth of human existence is to be realized by man.

The Absurd drama expresses the hopelessness of life of man and the need to refuse without renouncing it. It further investigates the happiness and the intellect of the man. The value and the purpose of man in existence becomes an important aspect.

The metaphysical distancing of world and object, thought and reality, essence and existence are figured in the Absurd drama. The action and a sense of freedom and passion have become spring board for the feeling of absurdity of man in existence.

The dramatic structure and the subject matter are influenced by the Absurd vision in this Drama. It abandoned the rules of drama which caused the effect on the arrangements of the incidents rather than developing the action linearly. It is shown that its circularity situations

are often resolved and generalized. The characters in this drama are void and cut off from the rest of the world. Time in flexible and dramatic forms had disappeared from Theatrical scenario in the contemporary drama.

Absurd drama is timeless, universal and philosophical in the contemporary drama and is the substitution of inner landscape for the outer world. This form of drama locks fantasy and fact in the plays. A free attitude towards time, that can expand or contract according to subjective requirements of a fluid environment, projects the individual mental condition.

The drama has enumerated situations which are associated with the life of man, death and isolation. It communicates intimately to the intuition of human situation of his own sense of being and individual vision of the world.

The drama deals with black humor and the subject of despair. In spite of despair, man wishes to survive in the incomprehensible world. The world is very hard to understand. The inability of understanding the world makes man tend towards philosophical thinking and nothingness in life.

To express absurdity in philosophical story and also expressed conclusively the artistic language of the theatre. The author would like to bring out the life situations of the stage characters of the plays. The human predicament is referred to as realistic in the absurd drama. The metaphysics of boredom is represented through the plays.

The Theatre of the Absurd is a reaction of the disappearance of religion from the contemporary life. The drama has given an attempt to restore the significance of myth and ritual in the age. Man will become aware of the ultimate reality and his condition in the life through this form of drama. By imitating against the loss of cosmic wonder and primeval anguish, the man slowly slips down into the absurdity. Absurd drama provides condition where the man meets with

incomprehension and rejection of the world. The other aspect of the drama is the distrust of language as a means of communication. It was constituted on the onslaught of the language showing it as unreliable and insufficient to communicate with the people.

The bounds of logic and language are shattered to enclose walls of human condition in this drama. The individual identity is defined by language. The loss of language brings them towards a unity in the drama. It opens up gripes of the infinite. It offers full freedom, brings one into content with the essences of life and becomes a source of comedy.

The form of drama abstracts scenic effects which have been taken over and modified from the popular theatre arts: mime, ballet, acrobatics, conjuring and music. It emphasizes on the importance of objects and visual experience. In this form of drama the role of language is relatively secondary and owes a debt to European pre-war surrealism. It is contrasted with ritual like mythological and allegorical vision which is closely related to the world of dreams.

The form of drama is one of the most exciting and creative movements in the modern theatre. The Absurd term is applied to the realistic drama which has absurd audiences and critics for the past three decades. Martin Esslin brings out an existentialist point of view of the outside world to the audience. It forces them to consider the meaning of their existence in a world where they appear to be not in order or meaning that they are not closer to a realistic representation of life. The evolution of Absurdist drama from Samuel Beckett to Tom Stoppard brings a new focus to absurdities, the role of philosophy and metaphor in theatrical drama.

Absurd drama has been much used and abused. There is no organized movement, and school of artists to claim under this form of drama. A good number of playwrights who have been classed and concerned, seek to express no more and no less than their own personal vision of the world. The critical concepts and conventions

arose from new modes of expression. When the plays of Ionesco, Beckett, Genet and Adam first appeared on the stage, they puzzled and outraged the critics and audiences. These plays flouted all the standards, by which, drama has been judged as a well made play by many dramatists and appeared to be provocative to people.

A well made play is expected to present characters that are well-observed and convincingly motivated. Absurd plays often contain hardly any recognizable human beings and preset unmotivated actions. A well made play is to entertain by the witty and logically built up dialogue and in Absurd plays dialogue seems to have degenerated into meaningless babble.

A well made play is expected to have a beginning, a middle and ending. Absurd plays often start at an arbitrary point and seem to end just as arbitrarily. By all the traditional standards of critical appreciation of the drama, the plays do not deserve the name of drama.

The Absurd dramatists exercise a fascination of their own vision in the theatre. At first this fascination was merely of the audience who flocked to see Beckett's, "*Waiting for Godot*" or Ionesco's, "*The Bald PrimaDonna*". These works manifested the success of unconventional works of the dramatists. The traditional drama is different in objective and the use of these dramas has created and applied a different convention to drama.

This form of drama is as senseless to condition as an abstract painting, because it lacks recognizable subject matter. In "*Waiting for Godot*", Beckett did not intend to tell the story and did not want the audience to go home satisfied that they knew the solution to the problem posed in the play. They would, with perfect justification express their personal vision of the world. As artists, they feel an irrepressible urge to do so. By bringing out the similarities of approach in the works, analyzing their method and artistic effect they fully provide the conventional meaning. The similarities are raised from the common factors in the experience of the concerned writers. These

common factors spring from the spiritual climate of our age and also the common background of artistic influences, a similarity of roots, a shared tradition.

Many theatre historians and critics like Alfred Jarry's 'Ubu Roi' appeared as the earliest example of Theatre of the Absurd. This form of drama has its origin in the works of Shakespeare and particularly through the influence of the *Commedia dell'Arte*. The movement of Absurdism has emerged in France after World War-II, as the rebellion against the traditional values and beliefs of western culture and literature. It began with the existentialist writers like, Sartre and Camus and eventually included other writers such as Ionesco, Joyce, Beckett, Genet, Edward Albee and Pinter to name of few.

The drama consisting of a series of free floating images helps the audience to interpret a play. The focus was on the incomprehensibility of the world or to rationalize or irrationalize the disorderly world. Language acts as a barrier to communication, which in turn isolates the individual and his speech will be almost futile. It creates an atmosphere where isolated clown like characters will be blundering their way through life. The characters do not know what else to do repeatedly. They stay together because they are afraid to be alone in the incomprehensible world. It is not nihilistic despite its negativity.

Martin Esslin has recognized that there is no explanation for all the mysteries of the world. The previous systems have been oversimplified and therefore there was no appearance of despair causing the simplified system itself to provide an answer.

The Absurd movement has realized that man should live without any final truth. He has changed according to the situation and readjusted himself to live with less exulted aims to be a humble, receptive and less exposed to violent disappointment in crisis of conscious. Therefore the better adjusted people live in closer accord with reality.

The drama not only depresses the audience but also makes an attempt to bring them closer to reality and help them to understand their own meaning in life. The author's intention is to show that one should perceive his existence as he feels that nothing is more real than nothing. Theatre of the Absurd is understood as a kind of intellectual short hand for a complex pattern of similarities in approach, method and convention, of shared philosophical and artistic premises, whether conscious or subconscious, and influences from a common store of tradition. This form of drama helps to gain insight into a work of art. It is not a binding classification of all embracing or exclusive. A play may contain some elements that can best be understood in the light of such a form of drama and other elements of a play which can be understood in the light of different conventions. The latest writers of the Absurd Theatre openly and consciously reject this style and writes in a different realistic convention. The latest plays of this kind are both realistic and socially commuted which contain and elucidate some aspects of the theatre of the Absurd. It is throwing light on works of previous epochs. For instance Jan Knot has written a brilliant study of King Lear in the light of Beckett's Endgame.

Beckett and Ionesco both showed us man as a prey of the world of objects. Ionesco gives us a clear image and its pattern is famous in Ionesco's play *The chairs*: the old couple assemble chairs on stage for guests who exist only in their imagination, and the multiplication of chairs finally separates the two characters from one another, forcing them to opposite ends of the stage, from which they will throw themselves out of their respective windows. This is concrete and violent representation of man conquered by the proliferation of the objects he has created, of man overwhelmed and alienated by things. The author has exaggerated the image and placing it at the heart of his action. The image of the human being always deceived in his dreams and ideals, nevertheless perseveres in his illusions and utopias.

Ionesco has put a dream situation on to the stage and in the dream the rules of realistic theatre no longer apply. Dreams do not develop logically and they develop by association. Dreams do not

communicate ideas, they communicate images. The growing corpse is considered as the poetic imagery which is ambiguous and carries a multitude of meanings and is futile.

The plays lack movement, but the situation of the play remains static. The movement unfolds the poetic image. The image is ambiguous and complex which is more intricate and intriguing to reveal it. That is why the play "*Waiting for Godot*" generates suspense and dramatic tension in spite of being a play in which literally nothing happens as it was designed to show that nothing can ever happen in human life. But in the traditional play the action goes from point A to B, an action that consists of the gradual unfolding of a complex pattern.

In Arrabal's main preoccupation is with the Absurdity of ethical and moral rules through his play '*The Two Executioners*', he depicted "the dilemma of several contradictory moral loss that exposes the absurdity of the system of values that accommodates them all"⁷ one realizes at the end of the play that the theme is the exploration of complex image of the relationship between mother and son. The absurd dramatist's emphasis shifted from traditional forms of images. The images are complex and lack final resolution in the plays. The absurd dramas, earlier, were concerned with expressing a sense of wonder of incomprehension. It is concerned at times of despair, with lack of cohesion and meaning which one could find in the world. The Absurd dramatists do not eschew the defined motivations, acceptable solutions and settlement of conflict in the plays. They have no faith in the existence of rational and well ordered universe. The well made plays are seen as conditioned by comforting reliefs, values and ethical system in full working condition.

There are a number of important analogues between Beckett's autistic preference and Nietzsche's philosophy of art. Nietzsche explains that through Dionysian art, we "are to perceive how all that comes into being must be ready for sorrowful end; we are compelled to look into the terrors of individual existence"⁸.

A sense of disillusionment and a collapse of previously held firm beliefs are characteristic features of our times. The social and spiritual reasons for sense of loss of meaning are manifold and waning of religious faith had started with the Enlightenment since Nietzsche spoke of the death of God. The breakdown of the liberal faith is an inevitable social progress in the wake of the First World War.

The illusion about the radical social revolution as perceived by Marx and Stalin had turned the Soviet Union into a state of total tyranny. The relapse into barbarism, mass murder, and genocide in the course of Hitler's brief rule over Europe resulted during the Second World War. After the war the spiritual emptiness is spread in the prosperous and affluent societies of Western Europe and United States of America. Previously held certainties have dissolved. The firmest hope and optimism have dissolved. Man sees himself faced with a universe that is both frightening and illogical in the absurdity of life. All assurances of hope and explanation of ultimate meaning have suddenly been unmasked as senseless illusions. At once the comforting, familiar scene would turn into one of nightmare and horror. With the loss of communication one should be compelled to view the world with the eyes of total outsiders as succession of frightening images.

A sense of loss of meaning leads to a questioning of the recognized instrument for the communication of the meaning of language. Consequently the Theatre of the Absurd is concerned with critique of language and an attack on fossilized forms of language which have become devoid of meaning. The language is merely used to fill the emptiness between the actors. Being a noble instrument of genuine communication, language has become a kind of ballast filling empty space in the universe that seems to have been drained of meaning. The pompous and laborious attempts at explanation of philosophy may appear as empty chatter. Beckett parodies and mocks the language of philosophy and science in Lucky's famous speech. 'Theatre of the Absurd' actually coincides with the highest degree of realism. The Absurd drama has become the most realistic comment on accurate

production of reality.

In its critique of language, the Theatre of the Absurd reflects the preoccupation of contemporary philosophy and efforts to disentangle language as a genuine instrument for logic and the discovery of reality from the grammatical conventions of the past. It has been confused with genuine logical relationships. This form of drama emphasizes on the basic absurdity of the human condition and the bankruptcy of all closed systems of thought with claims to provide a total explanations of reality. The Theatre of Absurd has much in common with existential philosophy of Heidegger, Sartre and Camus.

Camus, who has coined the concept of the Absurd, says that dramatists of the Absurd are not trying to translate contemporary philosophy into drama. It is merely that philosophers and dramatists respond to some cultural and spiritual situation and reflect the same preoccupations. The Absurd for Camus, is an absence of correspondence between the mind's need for unity and the chaos of the world the mind experiences and the obvious response is either suicide or, in the opposite direction, a leap of faith, as Cruikshank points out Camus's Absurdity spells "Three different meanings such as the whole tragic paradox of the human condition and anguish which, as the source of lucidity and an attitude of revolt that somehow requires us to use 'absurd' against 'absurd'⁹.

Many critics tend to represent it as a revolutionary novelty in the contemporary drama. In fact the 'Theatre of the Absurd' can best be understood as a new combination of an ancient, even archaic, tradition of literature and drama. It is surprising and shocking because of the unusual nature of the combination and the increased emphasis on an aspect of drama which is present in all the plays.

The ancient traditions combined in the Theatre of the Absurd are like the tradition of miming and clowning that goes back to the mimes of Greece and Rome, "*The commedia dell'arte*" of Renaissance Italy and such popular forms of theatre as the Pantomime or the music hall

in Britain. This form of drama is allegorical and symbolic as we find it in medieval morality plays. The ancient tradition of ritual drama is the very origins of the theatre where religion and drama were still one.

Jean Genet one of the masters of the Theatre of the Absurd regards his plays as an attempt to recapture the ritual element in the mass which is seen as a poetic image of an archetypal event brought to life through a sequence of symbolic actions.

The history of the movement culminates in the works of Beckett, Ionesco and Genet. A form of drama concerned with dream like imagery and the failure of language was found as in silent cinema.

Another acknowledged influence is that of the Dadaists, the Surrealists and Parisian Avant-garde that derives pro writers like Alfred Jarry who produced the first modern example of the Theatre of the Absurd. It is a savage farce in which monstrous puppets castigate the greed and emptiness of bourgeois society through a series of grotesque stage images.

Brecht's earliest plays bear the marks of Dadaists influence and can be regarded as early examples of the Theatre of the Absurd. 'In the jungle of the cities' presents the audience with a totally unmotivated struggle and series of poetic images of man fighting a senseless battle with himself. Art and dramatic form are of immense importance in the theatre of cruelty. The conception of this form of the theatre is designed to shock the audience into a full awareness of the horror of the human condition.

The Theatre of the Absurd is a post-war phenomenon. This form of drama is in the experience of the outcast that one's image of the world is seen from the outside. One may be exiled from his country or society and moves in a world of drained meaning in pursuit of objectives which he cannot comprehend.

The evanescence of man and the mastery of human personality and

identity with time are Beckett's main themes, while Genet's chief concern was with the falseness of human pretensions in society. It is contrasted between appearance and reality which itself must remain for ever elusive.

In '*The Maids*' the servant is bound, in a mixture of hatred and erotic dependence, to his mistress. In 'The Balcony' the society is symbolized in the image of a brothel, providing its customers with the illusion of power. In 'The Blacks', the under dog acting-out his hatred for his appraiser is an endless ritual of mock murder.

Jean Tardier and Boris Vian are French dramatists of the Absurd. Tardier is an experimenter who has systematically explored the possibilities of a theatre that can divorce itself from discursive speech to the point where language becomes mere musical sound.

Vian's play, "*The Empire Builders*" which shows man fleeing from death and loneliness in the image of a family moving into smaller flats on a higher and higher floors of mysterious building.

Behind the Iron Curtain, socialist realism is the official creed in the theatre. A strong surrealist influence was present in Samuel Beckett's plays.

There are three playwrights, represented Persian exiles one among them. Ionesco is the most fertile and original of the dramatists of the Absurd. The critique of language and the haunting presence of death are his central themes in the plays. Ionesco's first full length play's endings contains one of his most telling images. It is also characteristic in its alteration between states of depression and euphoria in his works.

Arthur Adamov's development from the extreme to the other is a fascinating, Artistic and Psychological, case history, in which "Professor Taranne" occupies a key position. Adamov's characters are

unable to face the reality of the outside world. The characters reflected anxiety and apprehension on the stage.

Fernando Arrabal is an admirer of Beckett but sees his own in the Surrealist tradition of Spain. His main pre-occupation is with the absurdity of ethical and moral rules. His characters look at the world with the incomprehension of a child that cannot understand the logic of conventional morality. The situations in his plays have several moral laws in contradiction and express the absurdity of the system of values.

Edward Albee is one of the few American exponents of the Theatre of the Absurd. He shares with Genet the sense of loneliness in an alien world. His poetic image is emptiness and sterility in the complex rituals of the dramas. The work "*The Zoo Story*" is a clinically accurate study of schizophrenia, an image of man's loneliness and expresses inability to make contact. Further on the ritual and symbolic level, it is an act of ritualistic, self-immolation that has curious parallels with Christ's atonement. The Absurd plays, in general present a disillusioned, harsh and stark picture of the world. They are nevertheless essentially realistic, in the sense that they never shirk the realities of the human mind with its despair, fear and loneliness in an alien and hostile universe.

It is worthwhile to concentrate on Samuel Beckett, an exponent of Absurd Theme. The presence of internal monologues is one of the features of Beckett's absurd drama. The term monologue refers to a character in which one puts oneself inside a character and follows one's thoughts as they occur and speaks out even in the absence of other characters. It is a dramatic form as much as a narrative one. The first performance of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot's* is a perfect example of manifestation of style. The audience did not know whether to cry or laugh at this stage performance. Racine concentrates on the most sublime characters in a tragedy. A play can be interpreted by the art of acting and the external elements are emphasized when acting is recognized as Ruby Cohn says "a creative art which leads to a search

for deeper resources that stimulate the actors' imagination and sensitivity of the stage characters". Beckett's works on absurd theme are reflections of the situation existing in the contemporary period and also had profound influence on the society.

Actually Beckett belongs to a literary tradition, including Proust and Joyce, in which art and artist are the subjects of art: "It was the mind of Europe before the mind of Beckett that turned literature toward a more and more intricate self-conscious, confronting a Joyce or Proust with an intellectual landscape whose most mysterious feature is himself performing the act of writing"¹⁰.

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**THE DANCE OF LIFE
ACCOMPANIED BY
THE MUSIC OF DEATH IN
YASMINA REZA'S
PLAYS AND NOVELS**

Catalina Florina Floresca

Enesco said about Bach:
the soul of my soul. I said,
'Can you name a simple
text that has been the soul
of your soul?' No, words
can't reach that high. And
the soul does not read
(Reza, *Hammerklavier*
51)

In the 20th-century music has contributed substantially to the development of all artistic creations. Paul Verlaine's aphoristic remark la musique avant tout les choses that established the

preeminence of music before all arts is by now know well-known. Furthermore, as Simon Shaw-Miller points out, “Music is dynamic and thus better able to reflect the changing temperament of the feelings” (55). For the French writer Yasmina Reza, born into a family with artistic affinities and a gifted pianist herself, music has always been extremely important. Her writings are constructed like fugues which, by definition, are compositions whose major themes are repeated successively. Likewise, Reza’s themes are repeated throughout her writings; she brings into focus the sense as well as the non-sense of artistic creations, the human relationships with an emphasis on their alterations and discontinuities, and, finally and most importantly, the inexorable passing of time with its motifs: aging, the transformations of the (dying) body, and death. Moreover, in Reza’s works there is a mixture of mundane as well as an insatiable desire to transcend existence via art, music, and literature.

Unlike language which encodes in its morphology, syntax, and lexicon a nation’s culture and idiosyncrasies, music has the capacity to transcend these specifics through its rhythm, and thus address the universal. Could we conceive literary works from a musical perspective? Could we thus make them appeal to a wider audience? Or, on the contrary, literary works cannot go beyond the limitations of the languages in which they have been written? These are three main questions that I address in my essay by showing Reza’s endeavors to construct her works from a musical perspective; she describes her writing style as following:

*J’écris comme une musique...C’est le rythme qui est pour moi une chose essentielle. [...] Je considère la musique supérieure à l’écriture. Parce qu’elle est incommentable, c’est ça, l’avantage de la musique. La manière dont j’écris est très musicale, de plus en plus. J’écris à l’oreille. (qtd. in Hellerstein 951) **

* I write like music...Rhythm is essential for me. [...] I believe music is superior to writing. Because it cannot be commented, that’s the advantage of music. My style of writing becomes more and more musical. I write by ear.

In addition, “music [m]ay be meaningful because it refers to things outside itself, evoking associations and connotations relative to the world of ideas, sentiments, and physical objects. Such meanings are often less precise than those arising in linguistic communication” (Meyer 6). Like a fugue which is a contrapuntal work, our lives are similarly (de-)constructed and sensed; namely, one sensation evokes another sensation which evokes a third one and so on and so forth until we implode into being. In addition to designing her works qua fugue, Reza has the capacity to transmit her ideas with an economy of words, and thus lets us interject and fill in the blanks our reactions/interpretations. Put differently, in Reza’s works there are many gaps and suppressed words; consequently, she leaves us with the feeling that the act of reading could be as rapidly and efficiently performed as playing a glissando on a harp, where both activities function as a reminder of our transient time and ephemeral existence.

The theme of time in art and literature has immemorial roots. Nonetheless, it is worth briefly reviewing that there is linear time (or chronometric), psychological time (or subjective), and finally timeless time (or eternal). This stated, how could we understand time in literary works? According to Christiane Blot-Labarrère, “*le Temps de la grande lyrique ne ressemble pas au Temps calendaire. À la métrique des horloges, il substitue la prévalence d’une durée tout intérieure*” (274).[†] Furthermore, although in a different context, Géza Szamosi writes:

In our society, we have adjusted our life to a particular symbolic time we call ‘metric time’ which is determined, structured, and measured by the numbers on our clocks. In industrial societies, metric time dominates all thinking about time so strongly that when our own subjective ‘experience’ of time, the ‘time we feel,’ contradicts the metric time, we call the time of our own sensations an illusion. (92)

[†] The Time of the great lyric does not resemble metric time. Instead of the chronometry of clocks, the lyric time adds the preeminence of a completely interior duration.

Reza believes that the psychological and timeless times are much more meaningful for us than the chronometric time. In her works she proposes an interesting, yet disturbing approach to the theme of becoming. Her characters are afraid of becoming and, consequently, of the passing of time because they know (and are not pleased with their finding) that death awaits for them at the end of their journey of self-discovery. As Reza writes in her autobiographical novel, *Hammerklavier*, “I cannot resign myself to fitting in time. Nothing ever happens when the time is ripe [...]. God, let me go a little further and savor this day, I who cannot wait” (125). Almost all her characters have already spent a considerable portion of their lives, and now with death lurking on their threshold they would like to wind back their existence, in order to find--if possible--its meaning(s). In Reza’s own words:

J’écris avec mes angoisses.... Dont quelles sont mes angoisses? Le temps qui passe, le vieillissement sous tout ses formes y compris physique. “A struggle for life,” ça ne m’intéresse pas. Moi, ce qui m’intéresse c’est l’être métaphysique. L’homme social m’indiffère complètement. [...] Donc, prendre des gens qui ont 50, 60 ans, avec déjà une partie de leur ambition derrière eux ..., qui sont face à des questions plus profondes, plus vitales. (qtd. in Hellerstein 953) †

It is precisely this category of people on whose existence I center my analysis. As Alex of Reza’s *Conversations after a Burial* recollects one (of many) instance(s) of his literally temps perdu, “I was sitting in the Peugeot, in the back, you [Élisa] were in the front, Nathan was driving [...] We put on a cassette. You [Élisa] turned

† I write accompanied by my anxieties... So which are my anxieties? The time that passes, the aging through all its manifestations, including physical. “A struggle for life” does not interest me. Me, I am interested in the metaphysical dimension of being. The social human being is completely indifferent to me. Therefore, consider individuals who are 50 or 60 years old, with an already good portion of their ambition behind them, who are confronted with more profound and vital questions.

around and you asked me if it was too loud and I said, ‘No, no, no... do not change anything, whatever you do, do not change a thing.’ You did not change a thing [...] and I was emptied, weightless, trusting, protected” (74). In the act of remembering, we “play” backwards the “tape-recorded” life with the painful acceptance of our constantly moving forward (in time). We are the magnified or partly forgotten pains as filtered by the hourglass of time, we are the quintessential sum of our uttered words which have lasted longer than our feelings. To wind back (and to be *wounded* by) the spent time is a harsh and aching trick for us. In addition to our inconsistent rewinding and recovering of our passed time and lived space, the death of our beloved brings into focus our timeless time, amassing altered memories, blurred images, inconsistent and too fragmented recollections, and partly ach(iev)ed desires.

We are in becoming, yet, with the more and more approaching of middle and old age, we feel the immobile mercilessly installed in us, the ossification of our bodies, and the painstakingly fear of approaching--even if only at the level of discourse--the theme of dying. As the main character of *Desolation* bitterly points out, “[e]very day the world shrivels me a little and today it’s the world that’s shriveling inside me” (44). I believe that man is ultimately a lone creature. Having answered the Sphinx’ riddle, having walked on four feet in the morning of his life, on two in his afternoon, man prepares his final walk on three feet in the crepuscule of his life--a walk which will also make man touch death. As Jan Kott remarks, “[y]ou as yourself die, but the world also dies with you. I die in something that is not only me. I die in the world. Because the world dies along with me. [...] There can be no talk of death as relief. There is fear of nonbeing” (127).

Before death takes sway over our lives, there are other significant moments that signal its approaching. The 55-year old Suzanne of *La Traversée de l’hiver* remarks, “*Avner me plaît. Mais je ne sais plus comment séduire un homme. Il me se semble qu’avec l’âge j’ai oublié les ruses, les simple manières de la féminité, c’est comme si, mon Dieu, comme si je revenais à l’âge de la fillette, pataude et gauche, et*

ignorante” (140) §. We may argue that one loses the ruses and practices of seduction comparatively the same way one becomes less and less in control over one’s body. About her grandmother whose death is impending, Reza writes, “Today we celebrate her

ninety-fifth birthday. I remember her eightieth. Then, she could still see, make jokes, and trot around. Then, she was one of us. One of us others, the living, proudly becoming. [...] Since her senses have been abandoning her one by one, so have we” (*Hammerklavier*, 54). Here the author underlines not only the consequences of the senescent, dying body, but also the differences between perceiving and sensing, and in between them the loneliness each and every one of us undergoes through life. In her book, *To Be Two* Luce Irigaray points out:

Perceiving is part of becoming together; sensation, instead, loses the other, even the world: it takes pleasure in them but without remaining with them, and thus forms an atemporal being, or rather, a being for whom time unfolds only beginning from intensity of experience, above all, of suffering. The subject remains alone with the history of his affections, of his sensations, a history which he remembers, recounts, and repeats. (45)

We perceive the other as otherness whose existence we may be aware of only at the level of discourse. As Martha of *The Unexpected Man* affirms, “We keep on talking about other people, because we’re made up of other people.” (51) We are “made-up of other people” only inasmuch as we have “encoded” them into our linguistic system. And while the body grows old and enervated, the mind tries to stay alive by learning and accumulating data, information, and ideas. In *Hammerklavier* Reza writes, “The world is ‘uncountable,’ filled up with things, and books, and books about things, the world accumulates

§ I like Avner. But I do not know anymore how to seduce a man. It seems to me that with the passing of time, I have forgotten the tricks, the basics of womanhood; oh my God, it is like returning to the teenage, helpless and clumsy, and ignorant.

and books accumulate what the world accumulates and seeing on one's table books and more books of photographs, about art and books about other books and getting ready in one's turn to fit the world onto a page, that vile accumulation of babbling, to add to the heap one's own echo" (59). What seems to be an annoying and disturbing repetition of the verb "to accumulate" and the noun "accumulation" is in fact a sincere approach to the act of both writing and especially speaking that we experience on a regular basis in our lives.

Moreover, during the writing process, one isolates oneself so much that writing by oneself subtly parallels the process of dying by oneself. Roland Barthes in his book *Image, Music, Text* affirms:

As soon as a fact is *narrated* no longer with a view to acting directly on reality but intransitively, that is to say, finally outside of any function other than that of the very practice of the symbol itself, this disconnection occurs, the voice loses its origin, the author enters into his own death, writing begins. (142)

Balint, the history professor of Reza's *La Traversée de l'hiver*, says reproachfully to the other characters of the play, "*Lorsque j'ai pris la décision de m'isoler à la montagne pour terminer cet essai, je pensais que la montagne serait la lieu idéal pour écrire. [...] Vous m'avez démoli ce programme [...] Vous m'avez contaminé—et j'ai perdu tout enthousiasme pour ce que j'écris*" (133) **. Could we infer that this happens because the people who are at the same mountain resort as Balint are "commoners," unsophisticated beings? Or is it simply because others' presence interferes with the solitude tacitly imposed on thinkers by the writing "laws"? Put differently, here Reza addresses not only the impossibility of knowing the other, but also the desire to fictitiously create the other during moments of sheer loneliness: "If you were there, I would not write" (*Hammerklavier* 97). Admittedly,

** When I decided to isolate myself at this mountain resort in order to finish my essay, I thought it would be the ideal place to write. [...] You have ruined it for me [...] You have overwhelmed me—and I have lost my enthusiasm for what I was writing.

the writing process implies the absence of the other, but en même temps it is also a compensation for the other:

Linguistically, the author is never more than the instance writing, just as *I* is nothing other than the instance saying *I*: language knows a 'subject,' not a 'person,' and this subject, empty, outside of the very enunciation which defines it, suffices to make language 'hold together.' (Barthes 145)

No matter how much we (think we) love someone, that someone could never fulfill our needs completely, and--as it is suggested by Reza--in order to compensate for this lack, we start writing, creating the ideal someone. By so doing, we forget that words are contextual, flexuous, and tricky; that they are never carnal, pulsating, and sensuous; that they most likely have double entendre, and hence could be misleading. As the main character of Reza's *Desolation* admits, "It is impossible to put words to your feelings because every phrase already belongs to another time and everything you find to say is empty and out of date and a lie" (73). However, if we choose writing someone, and thereupon inventing someone, over living with someone, then the process of writing becomes a vanity project, as well as a futile and trivial activity. Avner of *La Traversée de l'hiver* reminds Balint about the egotism of his scriptural projects: "*Vous voulez vous confondre avec votre écriture, vous n'admettez pas qu'elle puisse être une activité banale... Je ne sais pas après tout, peut-être que je ne peux pas vous comprendre, on ne peut pas comprendre quelq'un.*" (134) †† Put differently, is there between human beings an unbridgeable gap, an unresolved and unbalanced equation between the feminine and the masculine, between animus and anima, between the thinking mind and the sensuous body; do we live sheathed within our despairs, pains, and agonies? In a different context, Luce Irigaray writes, "To leave the other to be, not to possess him in any way, to contemplate him as an irreducible presence, to relish him as an inappropriate good, to see him,

†† You would like to be identified with your writing, you do not like to admit it could be a mere activity... Actually I don't know, perhaps I cannot understand you, no one can understand anyone.

to listen to him, to touch him, knowing that what I perceive is not mine” (46). It seems to me that we live today too far away from Plato’s *Symposium* as long as we do not have the energy to search passionately for our ideal half that could make us whole, and with whom to leisurely spend time; instead, we accept someone whom we have found most likely by accident.

In *The Unexpected Man*, Reza pushes to the extreme the role of dramatic dialogue. She admits that in this play, “*la situation est tellement absurde, tout ce monologue intérieur est une chose bizarre*” †† (qtd. in Hellerstein 948). Martha wants to say something to the man who sits in front of her, but this man is her favorite writer. How could she approach her idol? On the other hand, Mr. Parsky seems to make some vague assumptions about the woman with whom he shares a train compartment, thus treating Martha as a potential character, concocting inside his mind a possible way to transform this woman and this moment in time into a fictitious piece. He is also reluctant to start a dialogue because he contemplates the possibility of ending his writing career. He says to himself, aside, “How can your complete works, your contribution added to the world? How can your complete works be anything more than a mishmash of approximations, of constantly shifting boundaries?” (3).

The two characters interact with each other only at the very end of the play. The dialogue between them is quite absurd, if not inept. Nonetheless, these lines of dialogues are suggestive of how we interact with people whom we meet in life haphazardly.

THE MAN. How would you account for the need to invent or dream up other lives? Isn’t enough quite simply to exist, what do you think?

THE WOMAN. I do not know what you mean by quite simply to exist. There is no such thing as quite simply (63).

†† The situation is ridiculously absurd, all this interior monologue is awkward.

The theme of awkward encounters and relationships is also developed in Reza's *Life x 3*. Describing the structure of the play, the author writes, "*Je propose trois versions d'une scène identique. Donc, vraiment si le public ne travaille pas avec moi, c'est*

fichu" §§ (qtd. in Hellerstein 946). One of the most relevant aspects of this play is the importance we put on appearances. Having forgotten the exact day of the Finidoris' visit, Sonia--the hostess--oscillates whether or not to change her nightgown into more suitable social apparel, while Inès would like to go home and change her laddered stocking. The evening is neither pleasant nor relaxing in part because Sonia and Henri--caught by surprise--have not prepared themselves into their role as host/ess. Consequently, now they improvise politeness, pretending to be happy with their friends' visit. Another unpleasant moment in the play is generated by Henri who has not published anything for three years, and hopes Hubert will help him. But this does not happen; therefore, in "Life x 1" we acknowledge Henri's collapse. In "Life x 2" Inès gets drunk, and we witness the troubled, unhappy marriage she has been having with Hubert. And, finally, in "Life x 3" we find out Henri will publish his article, and everything seems to end happily.

Throughout the play the characters try to discuss more profound topics, but they are too concerned and consumed by their uneventful, mundane lives. One of the few moments of genuine questioning of life is when Hubert rhetorically asks himself and the others: "How can we grasp the world *as it is*? How can we close the gap between reality and representation, between object and word? [...] Our life is full of regrets for an integrated world, nostalgia for some lost wholeness, nostalgia which is accentuated by the fragmentation of the world brought about by modern life" (55). As Dan Mellamphy asserts, "The fragment never ends: *frangere* is 'the incapacity to end.' The fragment

§§ I propose three versions to an identical scene. Then, in all honesty, if the audience does not cooperate, my effort is useless.

comes as a return, the eternal return of the unfinished, of the incomplete” (86). There is something irreducible in both things and beings, something which is beyond our capacity of translating perceptions and feelings into words.

In a different context, Albert Camus notes that “[d]eep feelings always mean more than they are conscious of saying. A man remains forever unknown to us” (8). If the other remains forever unknown to us, then what is the purpose of human bonding? After fifteen years of friendship, the three characters of Reza’s *Art* find themselves traversing a huge impasse. The conflict seems to start with Serge buying a painting, about which Marc says, “It is a canvas about five foot by four: white. The background is white and if you screw your eyes, you can make out some fine white diagonal lines” (1). To his other friend, Yvan, Marc says, “Don’t you understand what this means? [...] Don’t you see that suddenly, in some grotesque way, Serge fancies himself as a ‘collector’?” (9) Marc seems to be bothered not so much with the painting per se, as he is with the idea that his friend “fancies to be a collector.” On the other hand, trying to justify his new acquisition, Serge says to Yvan, “Why don’t you admit that Marc is atrophying? If he hasn’t already atrophied” (15). If this is true, then what is the purpose of art? Should we agree with Reza’s sarcastic point of view as it is expressed in *Hammerklavier*: “The human affectations we call art and culture [...] have helped to pass through time” (65)? Has art stopped to soothe and enchant us? In Reza’s *Art*, the climax occurs when, trying to release the tension that was initiated by the buying of the white on white painting, Serge--unknowingly to Marc--offers him a washable felt-tip with which to draw his frustrations (*on* the painting). According to the author’s indications, “Marc leans towards the painting under Yvan’s horrified gaze, he draws the felt-tip along one of the diagonal stars. Serge remains impassive” (60). Undeniably, this is the cathartic moment of the play that allows Marc to release his inner tension and repulsion toward a painting he cannot understand and appreciate. Unfortunately, this moment does not resume their other conflicts. Reza admits, “*même s’ils sont réconciliés,*

a mon avis, l'amitié est très altérée" *** (qtd. in Hellerstein 952). In his book, *Music and Negative Emotion*, Jerrold Levinson asserts:

From a cathartic perspective, negative emotional response to music [and I would like to add art in general] is desirable because it conduces to mental health, improving the listener's [or the reader's/perceiver's] future self by administering momentarily painful doses of emotional medicine in the present. [...] Cathartic benefits, however, seem too indirect and prudential to the whole or even the largest part of why we crave the experience of negative emotion from music [as well as in other arts]. (323)

The immediate question to ask is, what has happened to the benefits of the cathartic doctrine? If now art adds another discomfort to the sum of already experienced discomforts, if we cannot purge our feelings of terror and fear anymore (as Aristotle proclaimed in the *Poetics*), then what is it that remains in the end? Is life indeed a journey, but only a punitive and meaningless one? Should we accept the inconsistent moments of our lives *without questioning* them, just as we have tacitly agreed that between a sign's signifier and signified there is no logical connection, but an arbitrary one? In the end, are we left only with feelings of melancholy and nostalgia as the main character of Reza's *Desolation* seems to confirm, "I am incurably nostalgic for empty villages, empty roads, empty sounds. I am happy to go back in winter where I came from" (120)? While "[i]n Zen teachings the empty space contained the pregnant possibility of everything," for Westerners this state of emptiness is not exactly bliss. Unfortunately, we do not equate this emptiness with the potential of giving birth to something else, but with death and annihilation. (Shlain 160)

There seems to be a "virus" deeply lodged in us that does not allow us to relax and enjoy life at its minimum benefits. While music and painting have refined themselves over the centuries, in some instances becoming almost translucent, language has undergone a different transformation. I develop this argument through the main

*** Even though they are reconciled, at my suggestion, their friendship is considerably altered.

character of Reza's *Desolation* because he appears to have a forcefully observant point of view. As he says,

When music takes possession of you, when music fills your life, will you please tell me what's the point of words, even nice words, what's the point of stories, what's the use of all that imitating life on paper that people are so wild about, and that shows the effort went into it and the dexterity, and gives you so little sense of inevitability? Your sister told me I'd be less dense if I read. Word for word. (50)

I think that human beings are inevitably and possibly irreparably caught in the throes and inconsistencies of their using of language. On the other hand, "[l]ife never does more than imitate the book, and the book itself is only a tissue of signs, an imitation that is lost, infinitely deferred" (Barthes 147). Do we think life is a text whose meanings are constantly deferred? Does here, in the deferral of life's meanings, reside the superiority of music over language?

Reza does not provide an explicit answer to these questions. However, she does suggest that life is an incomplete, bitter-sweet perfumed journey. As Avner of *La Traversée de l'hiver* helps me conclude this essay, "*J'ai toujours regardé les choses comme si je les traversais*"^{†††} (197). More often than not, being too deeply immersed in our worries we disregard one of the fundamental, wordless aspects of our lives, i.e., rhythm about which Gilles Deleuze writes "[i]s diastolic-systolic: the world that makes me by closing itself down on me, the self that opens itself to the world, and opens up the world," and I add opens up the world to us to its *raw* dimensions (qtd. in Nancy 23).

NOTE

The translations provided in this essay are not exclusively ad litteram; since the audience is not familiar with Reza's works, I have decided to

^{†††} I have always contemplated things as if I was crossing them.

adapt my translations, thus, hopefully, giving my audience a better view of the larger context from where they have been taken. Thanks!

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TOM STOPPARD'S ARCADIA ORDERLY DISORDER

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ENLIGHTENMENT AND ROMANTICISM

Stoppard's *Arcadia* juxtaposes the dimensions of time and timelessness, intuition and logic, heart and mind in a way that paradoxically induces in the characters and audience a transpersonal, transrational experience of freedom even from within the boundaries of time. The structure of the play takes us beyond the limits of time by dramatically juxtaposing two historical periods—1809-12 and the present—while also integrating two aspects of physics, Isaac Newton's theory of a "universal system of mathematical reason and order divinely created and administered" (Audi 1995, 530), and Chaos theory, which as James Gleick says, "cuts away at the tenets of Newton's physics" (1988, 6). The term chaos is misleading, however; as the science writer David Porusch says, the "proper name is 'deterministic chaos'" (1990, 438), which conveys the both/and paradigm that interrelates the two concepts in a nonhierarchical manner. With its title alluding to the imaginary "Arcadia" of Virgil, who idealized the life of shepherds and shepherdesses, the play also

makes several references to the Latin line, “Et in Arcadia ego.” Critics have suggested that this ambiguous line refers not only to the notion that “I too am in Arcadia,” referring to the aristocratic Coverly family, but also to a painting by Nicolas Poussin in the Louvre (1638-9). This painting has a line inscribed on a tomb which implies that death also resides in Arcadia: “I too lived in Arcadia once,” or, “Even in Arcadia, I am here” (*Arcadia* 1993, 18; Hunter 2000, 156). In addition to its literal meaning of dropping the body, death also symbolizes the transcendence of sensory perception or the conscious content of the mind. This transcendence suggests the transformation to a higher stage of development through the notion of Thanatos and Eros. With both time frames set in a room facing the garden of Sidley Park, a country estate in Derbyshire, the play begins as Sidley Park itself undergoes a transformation. Lady Croom’s husband Lord Croom, the head of Sidley Park and the Coverly family, has against her will employed Richard Noakes to redesign the landscape from a geometrically styled eighteenth-century Enlightenment garden to a Romantic wilderness in the Gothic style of untamed nature with ruins, hermitage and artificial crags representing the unpredictability of Eros.

In the 1809-12 setting, the lead female character, the thirteen-year-old genius Thomasina Coverly, represents Romanticism in her scientific outlook and growing affection for her tutor Septimus Hodge; in the contemporary setting, on the other hand, the leading female character, Hannah Jarvis, a bestselling author doing research on the Coverly estate, represents a neoclassical attitude based on Newtonian physics and a denial of feelings. The duality set up by the opposition between classical and Gothic landscapes, Enlightenment and Romanticism, reason and feeling, rationality and nonrationality, Newtonian determinism and the chaos of Eros ultimately leads the characters and audience to a taste of unity as embodied by love. Clarifying this dichotomy, John Fleming writes that “Deterministic chaos deals with systems of unpredictable determinism, but the uncertainty does not result in pure randomness but rather in complex patterns. [. . .] Deterministic chaos is only part of the science that informs *Arcadia*. Other concepts include entropy and the Second

Law of Thermodynamics, the irreversibility of time, iterated algorithms, fractals, scaling, and population biology” (2001, 193-94). Although this science points to the increasing disorder in the universe, Stoppard highlights those aspects of deterministic chaos that reveal an underlying order found not only in random events but also in the nature of higher consciousness. Like Ionesco's *Rhinoceros* and Pinter's *The Birthday Party*, Stoppard's *Arcadia* takes the awareness of characters and spectators toward a void of conceptions through an intimation that presents the unified field of consciousness as the source of all duality. As Septimus says toward the end of the play, “When we have found all the mysteries and lost all the meaning, we will be all alone, on an empty shore” (1993, 126)—suggesting the wholeness of a unity amidst diversity.

In the 1809-12 scenes, Septimus educates Thomasina on the mid-eighteenth-century Enlightenment, the Age of Reason, which focuses on regular “Classical” forms derived from Newtonian physics. Thomasina, who asks “Is God a Newtonian?” (1993, 6), challenges the notion that Newton has sorted out the mystery of the universe. She questions his explanation of the rules by which God has allegedly created an orderly universe based on a regular and reversible order. In scene one, Thomasina pokes holes in Newtonian science when she discovers that once having stirred jam into her pudding, “You cannot stir things apart” (6). In scene three, she complains to Septimus that the way he teaches geometry confines it to simple forms that are limited and predictable rather than something like an apple leaf, which alludes both to the Eros of Eden (Romanticism) and to Newton's discovery of gravity (Enlightenment). Septimus responds that Newton “has mastery of equations which lead into infinities where we cannot follow,” but Thomasina rejects this idea: “What a faint-heart! We must look outward from the middle of the maze. We will start with something simple. (*She picks up the apple leaf.*) I will plot this leaf and deduce its equations. You will be famous for being my tutor when Lord Byron is dead and forgotten” (49). The apple also refers to free will as associated with romantic Eros, a major component of unpredictability in the play.

Her ideas are supported by her modern relative in the present, Valentine Coverly. A post-graduate student at Oxford, Valentine argues that chaos, or randomness and disorder, cannot be excluded from but rather complements the order of the universe. Randomness, moreover, relates to the second law of thermodynamics, which as Valentine explains shows that the orderly system is gradually running down through entropy. Throughout the play, therefore, Thomasina challenges the assumptions of the Enlightenment through Romanticism in her pursuit of nonrationality and the study of irregular landscapes of nature in the wild. Hannah, on the other hand, attempts to deny emotions and rejects Romanticism. In scene two, she says, “The whole Romantic sham, Bernard! It’s what happened to the Enlightenment, isn’t it? A century of intellectual rigour turned in on itself. A mind in chaos suspected of genius. In a setting of cheap thrills and false emotion. [. . .] The decline of thinking into feeling” (36-37). As *Arcadia* progresses, these two scientific positions lead characters and audience toward a condition of unity, suggested by Septimus in the lines quoted above: “When we have found all the mysteries and lost all the meaning, we will be alone, on an empty shore” (126). Fleming notes that Stoppard constructs *Arcadia* through a “nonlinear bouncing between time periods [that] suggests disorder, yet lurking underneath is a tightly ordered dramatic structure” (2001, 195). He also notes that the term fractal means “self-similar,” as in the “Self-similarity of dialogue, situations, characters, props, costumes, and musical accompaniment” across the scenes covering two historical periods (*ibid.*). As we shall see, Stoppard dramatizes how the mind undergoes a transformation through which the discovery of the mystery of life does not lead to meaning or rationality, but rather toward the transcendence of meaning in the source of thought where we can taste the boundless unity of nonpluralistic consciousness. To be alone as Septimus says, therefore, suggests undergoing a transformation beyond the Romanticism/Enlightenment, reason/emotion duality toward the unified experience of pure consciousness as opposed to the multiplicity of the mind’s conscious content—the qualia or qualities of

phenomenal experience. As Fleming puts it, “All this similarity across scales is significant because in dynamic systems it signifies that some quality is preserved while everything else changes” (196). In Gleick’s words, “Some regularity lay beneath the turbulent surface” (1988, 172).

This transformation in *Arcadia* occurs in part through an oscillation between Eros and Thanatos. These opposites are represented in *Arcadia* by the emotional attachment encouraged by Romanticism and the inevitability of change, as exemplified in Thomasina’s untimely demise by fire on the eve of her 17th birthday. In literature, however, death or Thanatos as mentioned earlier also symbolizes a turning inward of sentience from the physical world toward self-reflexiveness, which leads ultimately to the void of conceptions. In breaking attachments to the familiar world, the individual undergoes a transformation to a higher stage of development. This process gradually leads to a greater sense of the unity of opposites that characterizes sacred experience. Ken Wilber describes this development in terms of wisdom traditions that entail the Great Chain of Being and the corresponding belief in epistemological pluralism. He quotes Houston Smith, who says that “‘Reality is graded, and with it, cognition.’ That is, there are levels of both being and knowing. If we picture the Great Chain as composed of four levels (body, mind, soul, and spirit), there are four correlative modes of knowing (sensory, mental, archetypal, and mystical), which I usually shorten to the three eyes of knowing: the eye of flesh (empiricism), the eye of mind (rationalism), and the eye of contemplation (mysticism)” (1998a, 35). The eye of contemplation, as *Arcadia* illustrates, subsumes both empiricism and rationalism while simultaneously transcending both. As Fleming observes, “Whenever the characters try to fix and understand reality—whether it be through the use of language, the use of narratives designed to control and explain their experiences, or the study of science—they discover that life is not so easily confined and defined” (2001, 196-97). This difficulty applies especially for knowledge-about and knowledge-by-acquaintance.

Trained in Newton's physics, Thomasina foresees that to predict the future through a geometry that explains regular shapes would preclude irregular shapes, thereby presaging through her genius what today is called fractal geometry. Newtonian physics, then, excludes free will as well as the irregular forms associated with the vagaries of emotion that Septimus refers to as "the attraction that Newton left out" (97). As the play suggests, Newtonian science as a way of knowing on its own in the absence of chaos cuts out the bonding power of the human heart that facilitates the move toward the unity of sacred experience. As Chris Clarke says, "Below the rulers of the power/knowledge hierarchy there persisted what Foucault termed 'subjugated ways of knowing,' including the practical and spiritual knowing of women, until quite recently handed down orally and unrecorded in the histories written by men. The knowledge hierarchy was identified as a patriarchy [. . .] This was the most malevolent of all hierarchies" (2005, 5). While Septimus begins by upholding the hierarchy of patriarchal knowledge (not to mention behavior) and favors objectivity, impersonal logic and scientific evidence, Thomasina rebels against this repressive authority and favors being, subjectivity, emotion and associative ways of knowing that lead to knowledge-by-identity. In the end, Stoppard metaphorically suggests that both positions contribute toward an understanding of truth, for similarities inevitably lie beneath external differences.

PREDICTABILITY VS FREE WILL

Stoppard's *Arcadia* dramatizes how the opposition between Newtonian determinism and the chaos theory intuited by Thomasina over a hundred years before its scientific formulation produces a swing of awareness from the known to the unknown, from the concrete predictability of all events to the mystery of spontaneous activity that leads all bodies to generate heat. According to the second law of thermodynamics intuited by Thomasina, the world is moving from order to increasing disorder. An orderly paradise as represented by the

universe before the big bang transforms into a disorderly world, or as Paul Davies says, runs “down towards a state of thermodynamic equilibrium and maximum disorder, after which nothing further of interest will happen. Physicists call this depressing prospect ‘the heat death’” (1983, 199). Metaphorically speaking, however, heat death also implies a phenomenological state of unity. As Davies says regarding the second law of thermodynamics,

In its widest sense this law states that every day the universe becomes more and more disordered. There is a sort of gradual but inexorable descent into chaos. Examples of the second law are found everywhere: buildings fall down, people grow old, mountains and shorelines are eroded, natural resources are depleted.

If all natural activity produces more disorder (measured in some appropriate way) then the world must change *irreversibly*, for to restore the universe to yesterday’s condition would mean somehow reducing the disorder to its previous level, which contradicts the second law. Yet at first sight there might seem to be many counter-examples of this law. New buildings are erected. New structures grow. Isn’t every new-born baby an example of order out of disorder?

In these cases you have to be sure you are looking at the total system, not merely the subject of interest. [. . .] Physicists have invented a mathematical quantity called entropy to quantify disorder, and many careful experiments verify that the total entropy in a system never decreases. (1983, 10; original emphasis).

Thomasina leaves clues both on thermodynamics and chaos theory in her lesson book and primer, which Septimus reads. After Thomasina’s death, Septimus goes mad not only from the remorse of losing her but also from trying to reconcile the two laws, Newtonian

physics and chaos, by showing how the running down of the world could reverse itself. Valentine's argument against reversal includes the example of a ball falling through the air, and the play itself suggests the irreversibility of death in the case of Thomasina, reduced to ashes by fire. As Davies suggests, however, one way this reversal may occur within a local context is through the concentration of energy through love, even though this emotion may also result in the entropy of body heat. Another reversal suggested by the play, which is partially induced by the unity of love, involves sacred experience. Through emotional attraction, the characters and audience arguably transcend the chaos of thought into the void of conceptions, a field of perfect orderliness.

Scene one opens with Thomasina asking Septimus for a definition of carnal embrace. At first he tries to evade the question by jesting, "Carnal embrace is the practice of throwing one's arms around a side of beef" (2), but finally gives her a graphic description in the context of an explanation of Fermat's theorem. As revealed later, Mr. Noakes, the landscape gardener, saw Septimus in the gazebo in carnal embrace with Mrs. Chater. Thomasina then turns her attention from a discussion of God and Fermat to the irreversibility of the jam stirred into her rice pudding. The chaos of the rice pudding and jam parallels that of Septimus and Mrs. Chater as illustrated by the arrival of her husband, who with his wife are guests of Lady Croom's brother, Captain Brice. Septimus placates Ezra Chater by falsely praising his poetry and claiming that he told Mrs. Chater of its merit before their carnal embrace. Hearing this, Mr. Chater, subjugated by patriarchal logi, gloats, "There is nothing that woman would not do for me! Now you have an insight to her character. Yes, by God, she is a wife to me, sir!" (11). At this point Lady Croom and Captain Brice enter the room and discuss the parts of the landscape they fear Noakes intends to ruin on Lord Croom's request. Septimus and Chater mistakenly believe they are referring to the places in the garden Septimus and Mrs. Chater met in sexual congress, a confusion that draws another parallel between Romanticism and the entropy of body heat. Lady Croom praises the Classical landscape of Sidley Park and

says, “*‘Et in Arcadia ego!’* ‘Here I am in Arcadia,’ Thomasina” (16). Shortly afterward, gunshots are heard out in the park, to which Septimus comments, “A calendar of slaughter. ‘Even in Arcadia, there am I!’”, to which Thomasina retorts, “Oh, phooey to Death!” (18), and then asks, “Are you in love with my mother, Septimus!” (18). Her attitude points from a literal to a symbolic transformation induced by death as Thanatos.

The Eros of Septimus’s affair with Mrs. Chater and then with Lady Croom represents the emotional attraction that leads to entropy and characterizes the second law. Yet it also signifies the profane attachments of the characters that are destined to be short lived as they undergo a transformation through Thanatos to a higher level of Eros, a more unified state of being as demonstrated through the final attraction at the end of the play between Septimus and Thomasina. Death thus refers both to the transformation that Septimus and Thomasina are setting themselves up for through their relationship in scene one, as well as to Thomasina’s tragic death by fire when she goes to bed alone with a lit candle in 1812 after Septimus prudishly declines her offer to sleep together, indicative of his own choice of free will over determinism. In scene one, then, Stoppard presents an opposition between the intellect associated with Newtonian physics and the emotions associated with the second law, with the audience sensing amidst all the romantic chaos among the other characters the emergence of a budding love between Septimus and Thomasina. This attraction will evolve through a transformation from a lower level of Eros to a more integrated level by means of Thanatos, or the transcendence of chaos through negative entropy. Even within the context of entropy, therefore, the emotional attraction between characters has the effect of shifting the attention of the audience through negentropy from reason or the surface level of the mind toward more refined levels of consciousness. That is, the spectator’s awareness swings between two states of mind created through the production of order even within the context of disorder—a subtle shift from chaos toward the void of conceptions. As Hersh Zeifman says, “in a chaotically uncertain world, the only certainty is death—even in

Arcadia, as Septimus at one point reminds Thomasina” (2001, 189). But Thomasina doesn’t need reminding because she intuits that the entire universe is moving toward an entropic dead end as heat converts to cold. Nevertheless, *Arcadia* reveals that even within the dark night of entropy, a few bright stars of negentropic Eros continue to shine. As Fleming puts it, “life can be chaotic, but also stable, and within chaos there are windows of order” (2001, 200).

Scene two bring us up to the present day with the same oppositional structure between chaos and order found in scene one. The scene opens with Hannah on stage looking through Noakes’s sketch book and then leaving as the eighteen-year-old Chloe Coverly enters with Bernard. When Bernard learns from Chloe that the Miss Jarvis he is about to meet is actually Hannah Jarvis, whose book he had reviewed disparagingly, he asks her not to reveal his surname. Chloe exits and her fifteen-year-old brother Gus and older brother Valentine enter, with the latter coming and going throughout the scene. Bernard speaks with Valentine, who invited him to meet Hannah, and learns that the room they occupy has been cleared for a public dance that evening. When Hannah returns, Bernard deceptively praises her book on Lady Caroline Lamb, just as Septimus praised Mr. Chater’s poetry, and says he has come to do research on the poet Chater. Hannah, who reveals her dislike for academics, and Lady Croom are doing research on the gardens of the Park and on Thomasina’s sketch of a hermit. The present day characters, in doing research on their predecessors, also discuss the change in landscape gardening that represents the shift from Enlightenment to Romanticism, which parallels the shift from rationality to nonrationality and its effect on the spectator.

As mentioned earlier, Hannah considers Romanticism to be a sham. She says the hermit, who they believe to be Septimus, “was off his head. He covered every sheet with cabalistic proofs that the world was coming to an end. It’s perfect, isn’t it? A perfect symbol, I mean,” referring to the decline “from thinking to feeling” (36-37). When Chloe returns and blurts out Bernard’s surname, Hannah says,

“You absolute shit” (39). In spite of her resentment, Bernard wants to collaborate with Hannah, believing mistakenly that Byron killed Mr. Chater in a duel. He wants to do research on Byron as well as Chater, and when Hannah informs him that Byron and Chater attended university together, he kisses on the cheek just as Chloe enters the room and he exits. Chloe says of Bernard, “I thought there was a lot of sexual energy there, didn’t you?”, but Hannah has no interest, so Chloe asserts, “If you don’t want him, I’ll have him. Is he married?” (44). As the scene closes, Chloe says that her brother is secretly in love with Hannah, who thinks she’s referring to Valentine when she really means her younger brother Gus. At this point, Gus (“*in his customary silent awkwardness*” (45)), enters with an apple for Hannah—another allusion to the Eros of Eden (Romanticism) and to Newton’s discovery of gravity (Enlightenment). But at this stage Hannah shows resistance to Eros, as did Septimus toward Thomasina. As a guardian of the dispassionate intellect, she copes with life by trying to deny her feelings, either because of a past disappointment or a conscious decision to focus on her intellectual pursuits. Although they represent the arts and humanities, Hannah and Bernard are more scientific in their attempts to interpret the past than the three scientists, Thomasina, Septimus and Valentine, who tend to be less Newtonian and more intuitive in their approach. In her aversion for sentimentality, Hannah sees emotion as an undesirable irregularity, but in proving her theory about the Enlightenment and Septimus as the hermit she resorts to intuition like Thomasina. Stoppard’s characters thus integrate both free will and fate, unpredictability and determinism, experiencing a level of unity that goes beyond knowledge-about and knowledge-by-acquaintance.

THE PRE/TRANS FALLACY

The tension between the Enlightenment and Romanticism continues through scenes one and two until the end of the play. In scene one both Mrs. Chater and Lady Croom commit adultery with Septimus and Byron, but in scene two the pain of deception begins to

extend its reach to include other characters. That is, the disorder caused by deception and misunderstanding has expanded from the direct relationships between individuals such as Lady Croom, Septimus, Byron and Mr. and Mrs. Chater to encompass the representation of the past based on research that relies on inference based on secondary resources. Hannah has difficulty determining the truth of documents about the hermit, Bernard is mistaken about Byron having killed Mr. Chater in a duel, and all of the characters underestimate the extent to which entropy has saturated their lives. The biographical narratives the characters pursue do not reveal the whole truth about their research subjects. As discussed in relation to Pinter's *Birthday Party*, Fireman argues that narrative captures aspects of the self for description and examination and thereby helps to construct the self; he adds that "the portions of human consciousness beyond the purely somatic—self-awareness, self-understanding and self-knowledge—are products of personal narratives" (2003, 4-5). But as argued here, narrative self-awareness applies only to the verbal, constructed aspect of identity, not to the sacred experience of the void of conceptions. While reason, language and interpretation suffices to yield knowledge-about the socially constructed self, one needs to take a transrational, tranverbal, transpersonal approach to access the self as pure awareness. In the division between Romanticism and Enlightenment, the pre/trans fallacy discussed by Wilber needs to be avoided to reach higher nonrational levels of development suggested by the oscillation between Eros and Thanatos, free will and determinism.

Hannah condemns the "whole Romantic sham" (36) because she senses its regressive tendency for a prerational state, which suggests a throwback to an infantile union. As Wilber explains, this regression entails an "oceanic adualism, indissociation, and even primitive autism. This is, for example, precisely the route taken by Freud in *The Future of an Illusion*" (1998b, 88). Hannah believes that the emphasis on feeling in Romanticism tends to undermine the intellect by taking one backwards toward a more primitive state of development, whereas the Enlightenment serves to advance humanity by promoting a higher

level of development based on reason. According to Wilber, in the overall Romantic view, “one starts out in unconscious Heaven [as a child], an unconscious union with the Divine; one then *loses* this unconscious union, and thus plunges into conscious hell; one can then regain the Divine union, but now in a higher and conscious fashion” (1998b, 95; original emphasis). As Wilber explains, one can be conscious or unconscious of one’s union with the Divine, but one can never actually lose that union itself, “or you would cease to be” (1998b, 96). He further argues that childhood is not really an unconscious Heaven but rather an unconscious Hell, which through the growing awareness of adulthood becomes a conscious Hell. In growing up we experience more misery and alienation because of a lack of awareness of the Divine, not because of a loss of union, which would undermine the basis of our existence. Furthermore, as adults we grow in awareness of the pain of existence not out of an unquenchable desire that was absent to the infant self, but rather out of a heightened awareness of a desire-ridden world that an infant lives unconsciously.

As Hannah and especially Thomasina demonstrate, however, the self even within the context of Romanticism can grow in spirituality by transcending its sense of separateness and becoming more conscious of the Divine. This union or oneness, although unconscious, is never absent in the infant self. As Wilber argues, humans develop from an unconscious Hell to a conscious Hell and ultimately to a conscious Heaven (1998b, 97), a sequence Stoppard dramatizes through his characters. Both characters and audience develop from an unconscious duality to a conscious duality and ultimately toward a conscious unity. As Wilber says, “the infantile state is not unconscious transpersonal, it is basically prepersonal. It is not transrational, it is prerational. It is not transverbal, it is preverbal. It is not trans-egoic, it is pre-egoic. And the course of human development—and evolution at large—is from subconscious to self-conscious to superconscious; from prepersonal to personal to transpersonal; from under-mental to mental to over-mental; from pre-temporal to temporal to transtemporal, by any other name: eternal” (1998b, 97-98). Hannah believes that Romanticism involves a

regression to a subconscious, prepersonal, under-mental emotional state that she herself attempts to counteract through a denial of feelings and an emphasis on her intellectual pursuits. But Thomasina, through her own intellectual pursuits and intuition, demonstrates that not all Romantics suffer from such a regression. On the contrary, Thomasina surpasses the intellectual acuity of her tutor, Septimus, who represents an Enlightenment stance on the validity of Newtonian physics. If anything, Septimus himself exhibits the same vulnerability to regression as do Romantics such as Byron. On the one hand, Byron, who is discussed by the other characters but never appears on stage, intellectually rejects much of the Romantic theory on nature, feeling and idealistic love, but in practice he succumbs to the same kind of infantile, mindless passion engaged in by Chater and Septimus.

Throughout the play Thomasina intuits a deeper level of the laws of nature than Septimus, which implies that unlike him she also remembers, however vaguely, a union with the Divine. Hannah, on the other hand, suffers a mental and emotional block toward a sense of union, as if confusing the transrational, transversal, transpersonal with the prerational, preverbal, prepersonal. When Bernard entices her to have carnal embrace, she protests:

Hannah: Oh . . . No. Thanks . . . (*then, protesting*)
Bernard!

Bernard: You should try it. It's very understated.

Hannah: Nothing against it.

Bernard: Yes, you have. You should let yourself go a bit. You might have written a better book. Or at any rate the right book.

Hannah: Sex and literature. Literature and sex. Your conversation, left to itself, doesn't have many places

to go. Like two marbles rolling around a pudding basin.
One of them is always sex. (84).

Earlier, Chloe also accuses Hannah of resisting the offer of intimacy: “You’ve been deeply wounded in the past, haven’t you, Hannah?” (75). Hannah’s fear of intimacy suggests a fear of letting go of the rational, verbal, personal dimension of the self in order to achieve a transrational, transverbal, transpersonal state. This fear may stem in part from her committing the pre/trans fallacy, from confusing the transrational with a prerational, infantile dependence on the other. As Michael Goldman says, “*Intimacy* comes from the Latin superlative *intimus*, ‘most inward,’ and the impulse, the desire, perhaps the need to achieve a superlative degree of inwardness, has haunted European thought since who-knows-when” (2000, 77; original italics). In the context of the Divine or sacred experience, intimacy between self and other therefore depends on the degree of intimacy between two aspects of the self: that is, the intimacy between one’s constructed identity and one’s “superlative degree of inwardness.”

In *Arcadia*, Stoppard creates a “total” theatre where both levels of intimacy are present simultaneously—thus intimating and promoting the experience among characters and audience of a transcendental reality beyond the pre/trans fallacy. Far from undermining transcendental awareness, Stoppard contextualizes it within culture through a theatre that attempts to create a new consciousness. This transformation involves the decontingencing of actor and spectator from the boundaries of ordinary language and identity, allowing for a greater intimacy with no-mind or a void in thought—which is one reason transformations of character and spectator may seem “never wholly clear” in terms of logical discourse. Intimacy with our superlative degree of inwardness arguably forms the basis for all other types of intimacy. It involves going beyond the duality of one’s socially constructed identity, beyond the intentional knowledge of the other in a subject/object dualism toward knowledge-by-identity. In the early scenes of *Arcadia*, Hannah resists this transformation while Thomasina embraces it, although by the end of the play Hannah comes

around to an acceptance of intimacy, as does Septimus, although belatedly. As Fleming puts it, “*Arcadia* is a celebration of the human struggle to obtain knowledge, with meaning arriving as much out of the process as the product” (2001, 200). What he omits, however, but what Stoppard renders through his characters is the knower as internal observer, without whom the process of knowing and object of knowledge remain incomplete.

As an unidentifiable emptiness, pure consciousness or a void in thought is knowable not indirectly through language or ideas, but only through the immediacy (or knowledge-by-identity) of transcognitive, transpersonal noncontingent Being after language and ideas have run their course. Whatever third-person, objective theory we use to describe it, the subjective “experience” of a void of conceptions, as demonstrated through a different way of knowing in the plays of Stoppard, Pinter and Ionesco, is trans-cultural, transpersonal, and thus largely the same in any theatre. While functionalists like Dennett (1991), Katz (1978) and others question the likelihood of unmediated experience, claiming that different types of mystical, Gnostic, or aesthetic experience do not point to a shareable transcendent source, but merely reflect different cultural traditions, Stoppard’s work illustrates that while all contentful experiences are context related, it is not inconsistent to assume that contentless Gnostic or aesthetic experiences, even though arising out of appropriate contexts, are nevertheless in and of themselves context-free (see Almond 1990, 216). Differences in the expression of aesthetic experience, as Stoppard illustrates, reside only in the cultural contexts through which transpersonal, mythic encounters with superlative inwardness are evoked. Stoppard questions the unified concept of self as a function of the mind, but in the process opens up a theatrical space in which performers and spectators share an intimacy with the self as a function of consciousness without qualities (see Deutsch 1973, 62-65). The fact that we can know the internal observer only by being it and not by observing it (Deikman 355) precludes the possibility of infinite regress through which the self-reflexive subject becomes the object of another subject in an endless chain of subject/object duality. Moreover, as

Daniel Meyer-Dinkgräfe shows, immaterial consciousness cannot be *thought* about by the material intellect (2003). As Thomasina demonstrates, immaterial pure consciousness as expressed through transrational insights such as her intuition of chaos theory exceeds the rational mind, just as the actor in entering a dramatic text exceeds the text by rendering intimate for the audience the presence of a new life that the text does not exhaust (see Goldman 2000, 50). As Zeifman says, “The problem with Hannah’s attempt to inhabit her own private version of ‘Arcadia,’ a paradise of rationality and predictability, is that God ultimately is *not* a Newtonian; there is a ‘serpent’ in the garden, and that serpent, as always, is the irrational and seductive power of Eros” (2001, 187; original emphasis). This Eros has a carnal as well as a spiritual dimension; and to achieve the transrational requires an integration of both mind/body and consciousness, not an exclusive emphasis on the mind/body.

AESTHERIC RAPTURE AND THE TRANSRATIONAL

In scene three, Thomasina describes her mother flirting with Byron, a friend of Septimus. As the play unfolds, she also makes advances in her theory of chaos and laments the loss of all the knowledge of antiquity by fire in ancient Egypt. Septimus, however, says that “Ancient cures for diseases will reveal themselves once more. Mathematical discoveries glimpsed and lost to view will have their time again” (51). But Thomasina refers not only to science but also to the arts: “Oh, Septimus!—can you bear it? All the lost plays of the Athenians! Two hundred at least by Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripedes—thousands of poems—Aristotle’s own library brought to Egypt by the noodle’s ancestors? How can we sleep for grief? (50). Modern scientists can recover losses in the sciences, a field of rationality and empirical observation, but the arts as a different way of knowing provide phenomenological experiences of the sort that lead to the transrational, transverbal state associated with knowledge-by-identity, an experience of *rasa* or aesthetic rapture.

As discussed in *The Natyashastra*, the notion of suggestion (*dhvani*) evolved to explain how the artist's emotion (*bhava*) gives rise to the experience of *rasa*. Anandavardhana says that *dhvani* is the suggested meaning that "flashes into the minds of sympathetic appreciators who perceive the true import (of poetry) when they have turned away from conventional meaning" (1974, 75). In theatre, the presence of sacred experience can only be evoked through the power of suggestion as a form of *rasa*, given that the ineffable cannot be rendered directly, and especially not through logical discourse. Stoppard's play renders sacred events allegorically by suggestion, which brings about what *The Natyashastra* describes as a "pacification of mind" (Tarlekar 1975, 54), or a move toward a void of conceptions. As *The Natyashastra* says, "Drama was meant to evoke Rasa. Rasa is so called because it is relished. Its meaning can be accepted as 'aesthetic delight'" (*ibid.*). *Rasa* is the relish of "the permanent mood," or sentiments that "are not in the worldly experience" (Tarlekar 1975, 56). In *Arcadia*, Stoppard points us beyond worldly experience of Eros and Thanatos toward the source of all thought and emotions, the transpersonal self.

Most Western philosophers, particularly constructivists like Steven Katz (1978) and others, argue that consciousness always has an intentional object, and that even mystical experience is constructed by language and culture. As Robert Forman argues, however, mystical or sacred experiences "don't result from a process of building or constructing mystical experiences . . . but rather from an *un-constructing* of language and belief . . . from something like a *releasing* of experience from language" (1999, 99; original emphasis). By language he implies what the *Rig-Veda* and Indian grammarians such as Bhartrhari call the lower levels of language that involve space, time and the duality of subject and object. As Bhartrhari notes, language consists of four levels corresponding to different levels of consciousness, ranging from the spoken word in ordinary waking consciousness to the subtlest form of thought in pure consciousness (Coward 1976). As we move from the ordinary waking state toward pure consciousness (*turiya*), the unity of sound and meaning, name and

form increases. Of the four levels of language, the first two are *vaikhari* and *madhyama*, which belong to the ordinary waking state and in Saussurean terms correspond to the general field of *parole* and *langue*, which consist of a temporal/spatial gap between sound and meaning. The two higher levels of language are *pashyanti* and *para*, which can only be experienced through non-intentional pure consciousness. They are transverbal in the sense of being without a temporal sequence between sound and meaning. Harold Coward notes that the main difference between the two higher levels is that *pashyanti* consists of an impulse toward expression because it lies at the juncture between Brahman and maya (illusion or expressed form), while *para*, which has no impulse toward expression, lies within Brahman itself (1990, 90). Both of these levels, however, are conveyed in theatre through the power of suggestion.

The notion of intentionality in ordinary waking consciousness entails a subject being conscious of an object, event or other qualia. William James classifies this into two kinds of knowledge: “knowledge-about,” which we gain by thinking about something; and “knowledge-by-acquaintance,” which we gain through direct sensory experience (see Barnard 1994, 123-34; Forman 199, 109-27). Forman refers to the pure consciousness event as a non-intentional experience or “knowledge-by-identity,” in which there is no subject/object duality; “the subject knows something by virtue of being it. . . . It is a reflexive or self-referential form of knowing. I *know* my consciousness and I know that I am and have been conscious simply because I *am* it” (1999, 118; original emphasis). As a truly direct or immediate form of knowledge, non-intentional pure consciousness is devoid of the dualism of the subject-perceiving-object and subject-thinking-thought (Forman 1999, 125).

The Natyashastra describes eight basic sentiments or emotional modes, each of which has its basis in pure consciousness: the comic, erotic, pathetic, furious, heroic, terrible, odious, and marvelous (*ibid.*). Drama employs suggestion because the idealized flavor of these sentiments, being outside of worldly experience, can only be

apprehended “by that cognition which is free from obstacles [like ego consciousness] and which is of the nature of bliss” (Ramachandran 1980, 101). From this perspective, the suggestive power of art pacifies the thinking mind by taking us toward a level of language (*pashyanti/para*) and consciousness (*turiya*) where it can relish a void of conceptions, which is ultimately nothing other than the self as bliss consciousness (*sat-chit-ananda*) knowing itself. The emotion associated with *rasa*, therefore, does not cause a regression to a preverbal, prerational, prepersonal state. Rather it induces a transverbal, transrational, transpersonal transformation, such as that suggested by Thomasina’s realization that although she can entertain a prerational, infantile dream of marrying Byron, she knows transrationally that she is falling in love with Septimus. Even though Septimus is sceptical of Thomasina’s intuition of the second law of thermodynamics, she does not let this theoretical difference interfere with her emotional attraction to him. Indeed, her mind in relation to Septimus exhibits a form of self-transcendence, as if she were the true artist in the play. As Giorgio Agamben says, “The artist is the man without content, who has no other identity than a perpetual emerging out of the nothingness of expression” (1999, 55). Thomasina is like an artist who can experience the no content of a void in thought. Agamben adds that “Artistic subjectivity without content is now the pure force of negation that everywhere and at all times affirms only itself as absolute freedom that mirrors itself in pure self-consciousness” (56). Stoppard’s *Arcadia* until almost the end produces this effect on the audience primarily through Thomasina, whose mathematical intuition reflects the no content of an artist, a state of mind open to the freedom of natural law as opposed to the normative conventions of either Classical or Romantic culture. Hannah also embodies the notion that classical and romantic dispositions are not mutually exclusive, thereby illustrating the coexistence of opposites pervading the performance.

In scene four, Valentine confirms Thomasina’s genius when he tells Hannah how with pencil and paper she improvised mathematical techniques that he can only calculate on a computer. He elaborates

on the analogy between Romanticism and chaos, explaining how Thomasina was on the right track by renouncing the Classical science. "Then maths left the real world behind, just like modern art, really. Nature was classical, maths was suddenly Picassos. But now nature is having the last laugh. The freaky stuff is turning out to be the mathematics of the natural world" (59). Through deterministic chaos Thomasina intuits that irregularity triggers the emergence of life. Classical math before Thomasina was part of nature, but then through the perspective of the second law nature becomes freaky as Thomasina predicted. From a psychological standpoint, conventional reason sometimes appears absurd, but not everything nonrational deserves to be glorified as a route to the Divine. In one sense Hannah's scepticism derives from her intellectual stance that sometimes what appears to be transrational may in fact only be prerational, an exaggerated emotionalism that is merely infantile and regressive. Bernard, who in scene four continues to do research on Byron, puts Hannah off because he seems to have regressive tendencies. His attraction for Hannah appears nonrational, but unlike Thomasina's nonrational attraction for Septimus it veers toward the prerational instead of the transrational, revealing his regressive predisposition rather than a form of spiritual transcendence.

In scene five Bernard reads out his mistaken theory that Byron killed Mr. Chater in a duel over his wife. As we have seen, Hannah warns him that his theory will lead to his disgrace. Valentine, moreover, dismisses Bernard's narrative biographies dealing with personalities, thereby confirming the argument mentioned earlier that narrative cannot access the transpersonal self: "The questions you're asking don't matter, you see. It's like arguing who got there first with the calculus. The English say Newton, the Germans say Leibnitz. But it doesn't *matter*. Personalities. What matters is the calculus. Scientific progress. Knowledge" (80; original emphasis).

Reminiscent of Agamben, though, Bernard defends art with the argument that art and artistic genius exceed scientific understanding: "Parameters! You can't stick Byron's head in your laptop. Genius

isn't like your average grouse" (80). While Valentine advocates a scientific approach that privileges the object of knowledge and its context, Bernard defends art and philosophy as providing greater access to the self. He says, "If knowledge isn't self-knowledge it isn't doing much, mate. Is the universe expanding? Is it contracting? [. . .] Leave me out. I can expand my universe without you" (81). Bernard's argument that art is timeless depends on his mechanistic view of the universe, his claim that Newtonian laws surpass the limits of time, again showing the interdependence of unpredictability and determinism. But we can see in his attempt to develop a theory of Byron not for its literary value but rather to enhance his own fame and fortune that his intuition doesn't match that of Thomasiana or Hannah, again illustrating his contradictory nature. Nevertheless, by promoting knowledge attained through art, Bernard points to the suggestive power of *rasa* as opposed to logical discourse as a means to enrich human consciousness through knowledge-by-identity.

In analyzing Paul Ricoeur's concept of discursive or narrative identity, Dieter Teichert writes that "Identity as selfhood is not simply there like an objective fact. To possess an identity as selfhood means to be the subject of dynamic experience, instability, and fragility" (2004, 185-86). As Ricoeur says, "narrative identity is not a stable and seamless identity. Just as it is possible to compose several plots on the subject of the same incidents . . . so it is always possible to weave different, even opposed, plots about our lives" (1988, 248). Although flexible and open, narrative identity emerges from intentional consciousness, either that of ourselves, as in autobiography, or of society in the case of our constructed roles. Teichert continues that "The self does not exist as an isolated, autonomous entity which constitutes itself as a Cartesian ego. Nor is the self a mere passive product of a society. Ricoeur's position takes a middle path between these extreme positions. Selves are built up in the process of assimilating, interpreting, and integrating the contents of the cultural environment" (2004, 186; Ricoeur, 1969). In Stoppard's theatre, the dynamic, unstable and fragile identities of the characters are woven into their opposing views on science, culture and romance, but the

changeable nature of these views exposes a background of non-intentional consciousness through which these identities are held together. In other words, Bernard's theory of Byron's identity cannot fathom the essence of Byron, who as an artist, as Agamben says, is a man without content. Similarly, Hannah and Bernard find a reference to the Sidley Park hermit, who they discover to be Septimus, but without understanding his true identity. Bernard, moreover, tells Hannah that the sketch on her book jacket of "Lord Byron and Caroline Lamb at the Royal Academy" is a fake, for Byron was in Italy at the time of the sketch, but he turns out to be wrong about this too.

These erroneous narratives suggest that for spectators to access any truth about identity they have to go beyond language and interpretation through a transverbal, transrational experience of *rasa*. Stoppard shows that we can reach the no content of the transpersonal self only through the power of suggestion. The characters in the present doing research on the characters of the past through the study of narrative demonstrate the fallibility of narrative, but scene seven, by bringing all the characters together in the same time frame, reveals the truth about the co-presence of the rational and the emotional. At the beginning of the scene, Chloe discovers from Valentine that the deterministic universe doesn't work and concludes that "it's all because of sex [. . .] That's what I think. The universe is deterministic all right, just like Newton said, I mean it's trying to be, but the only thing going wrong is people fancying people who aren't supposed to be in that part of the plan" (97). Evidence of this recurs when Valentine tries to flirt with Hannah by asking, "Can't we have a trial marriage and I'll call it off in the morning?" (99). Although she turns down the offer, when Valentine produces the computer iterations of Thomasina's equations of the second law, Hannah finds them beautiful. Hannah rejects Romanticism and denies her emotions, but Thomasina's equations on the second law and chaos intrigue her, foreshadowing her own impending acceptance of feeling at the end of the play. In discussing the afterlife with Valentine, which serves as a metaphor of self-transformation through Thanatos, she says, "Believe in the after, by all means, but not the life. Believe in God, the soul, the spirit, the

infinite, believe in angels if you like, but not in the great celestial get-together for an exchange of views” (100). This argument implies that she has yet to grasp the nature of Thanatos as a transformation to an intersubjective community in part based on emotional bonds. Death in Stoppard’s theatre thus points metaphorically beyond our subjected-ness to a rebirth of the memory of consciousness—which embodies an experience beyond space/time and the play’s dichotomies—classical/romantic, Newtonian/chaotic, intuition/logic, heart/mind, order/disorder.

As Hannah tells Valentine, Thomasina “died in the fire [. . .] the night before her seventeenth birthday” (101), which on one level symbolizes her undergoing a transformation to a higher state of Eros. The men, on the other hand, remain largely trapped in the heat of sexual passion, each trying to seduce any number of women out of promiscuity rather than love, or as Thomasina puts it, “The action of bodies in heat” (111). Thomasina tells her brother Augustus that Septimus kissed her to seal his promise to teach her how to waltz. Even though she has an ephemeral fantasy of marrying Byron, Thomasina considers him unpredictable and unreliable compared to Septimus; indeed, she could also be referring to Byron when, during her discussion of him with Septimus and Lady Croom, she exclaims, “The Emperor of Irregularity!” (113) just as Noakes enters the room. Through Thomasina telling Noakes that his steam pump “can never get out of it what you put in [. . .] Newton’s equations go forwards and backwards, they do not care which way. But the heat equation cares very much, it goes only one way ” (115), Stoppard alludes to the possibility that because of their unpredictable passion men are the main victims of entropy. Thomasina and Hannah, on the other hand, experience negentropy in their move away from regressive prerational obsessions toward knowledge-by-identity of the transrational “better self” (Grinshpon 2003, viii). Thomasina’s lifestyle embodies her understanding, while Valentine like the other men are subjugated by disembodied abstractions and the regressive actions of their bodies in heat.

Although the ignorance on the part of Byron, Septimus and the other men has the effect of accelerating entropy, by the end of the play Thomasina and Hannah manage to reverse this regression in part and recover a semblance of order, at least socially. As Paul Edwards says,

The final scene of the play shows us an image of perfect harmony, time overcome through the copresence of past and present as the modern couple Hannah and the new, silent genius of the Coverly family, Gus, dance alongside Thomasina and Septimus to the tune of a waltz. But the audience knows that “tomorrow” or “tonight,” Thomasina will take a candle, mount the stairs to her bedroom and be burnt to death. She cannot be brought back—certainly not by algebra. The overcoming of time at the conclusion of *Arcadia* is a triumph of art, not of science, and like all such triumphs it is momentary, fragile, and all the more poignant for being quite useless. (2001, 182-83)

Of all the men, Septimus comes closest to emulating Thomasina and Hannah, although it takes him twenty-two years of reiterating Thomasina's equations after she dies and leads to becoming a mad hermit. But having fallen in love with Thomasina on the eve of her death, Septimus has finally become a non-regressive Romantic through his emotional attachment. Similarly, Hannah undergoes a transformation toward emotional attachment when she finally accepts Gus's request for a dance. As Stoppard says, “None of us is tidy”; “none of us is classifiable. Even the facility to perceive and define two ideas such as the classical and romantic in opposition to each other indicates that one shares a little bit of each” (quoted by Zeifman, 2001, 190). The classical and romantic thus represent the duality of human existence, not that of mind and body, but rather of mind/body on one side and consciousness on the other. Although Hannah rejects carnality, her biography on Byron's lover Caroline Lamb is entitled *Caro*, which is short for Caroline but also a pun on “flesh” (Zeifman 191). Her growth to a genuinely spiritual domain, like Thomasina's,

does not involve the rejection of the physical or the pseudo union of the preverbal, prerational, regressive stage of development, but rather a transcending of the separate-self sense to a transrational, transverbal experience. This experience for characters and audience alike may be momentary and fragile, as Edwards claims, but hardly useless—except for the mind/body side of duality they move toward transcending through the *rasa* of the transrational self.

Transpersonal love as represented by Thomasina and eventually by Hannah and Septimus starts from the field of duality and transcends to a divine love, a love based on the union of knowledge-by-identity. As Wayne Teasdale says, this journey toward a trans- as opposed to a pre-unified experience “puts us on the road to realizing and actualizing who we really are in our ultimate being. Enlightenment is the awakening to our identity as boundless awareness, but it is incomplete unless our compassion, sensitivity, and love are similarly awakened and actualized in our lives and relationships” (1999, 77). As the play closes, the two dances simultaneously on stage—Hannah and Gus in the present and Thomasina and Septimus in the past—symbolize not simply the restoration of a semblance of order, or rather of orderly disorder, but also the embodiment of love as knowledge-by-identity through a unity of the rational and transrational, of mind/body and consciousness. Both the characters and spectators achieve a taste of wholeness, an aesthetic experience that, as Meyer-Dinkgräfe says, “is an experience that combines pure consciousness with the specific contents of a given performance in which *rasa* is created by the actors in conjunction with music and various aspects of scenography” (2005, 193). This dance represents not the innocence of infantile prerational existence but rather a contentful experience that is context related, yet nevertheless yields a contentless Gnostic or aesthetic experience—one that arises out of appropriate contexts but remains in and of itself context-free. The ineffable loss endured by Septimus symbolizes a transformation from one level of Eros based on duality to a higher level of spiritual development characterized by a unity amidst diversity.

One of the mysteries of *Arcadia* concerns why Gus doesn't speak. Hannah agrees to dance with him after he provides her with the evidence she needs to prove her theory about Septimus, but Gus's "natural genius" has more to do with his transverbal, psychic-like abilities to suggest that the universe has a deeper mystery to it than that available through a mechanistic description. As Fleming says, "In *Jumpers* Stoppard's moral philosopher declares that 'there is more in [humans] than meets the microscope' (68), and Gus seems to be an embodiment of that metaphysical belief" (2001, 207). Arguably, Stoppard suggests through Gus's transverbal, transrational character that an understanding of truth does not hinge on the use of language and interpretation but rather on a knowledge-by-identity achieved through a pure consciousness event, a state of being the spectator of *Arcadia* can taste through an experience of *rasa*.

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INTERACTIVE VOICES BETWEEN JAMES JOYCE AND ROBERT ANTON WILSON

Brian David Phillips

"Those readers who are not thinking of the constantly shifting perspectives in Ulysses . . . are probably thinking of my own novels. Like Joyce, Brecht and Welles, I have always considered the Victorian novel, with its omniscient (personal or impersonal) narrator and its one block-like 'objective' 'reality,' to be totally obsolete and incapable of conveying 20th Century experience. All the novel (or film) of today should attempt to do is recount how various people create their own individualized reality-tunnels in their quest for that ever-receding Holy Grail, 'the real truth,' which exists, if at all, outside our space-time continuum."

--Robert Anton Wilson

Ishtar Rising (p. xxii)

At first glance, one might consider the work of James Joyce - - a modernist writer - - and that of Robert Anton Wilson - - a postmodernist critic-philosopher-writer - - to be too far removed in time and space to be fruitfully discussed together, but there's far more

in common than not in their writing. Joyce has had a tremendous influence on many modern writers, both "canonical" and not. One of those he has had a most decided effect upon is Wilson. Joyce's effect upon Wilson's writing style extends throughout the entire range of his corpus of works - - his prose, drama, poetry, essays - - fictional and nonfictional. Granted, others have influenced Wilson (*and some quite pervasively*⁺⁺⁺), but Joyce seems to have had a particularly special influence upon him - - in one interview, Wilson went so far as to say Joyce has in some way influenced everything he wrote (On Finnegans Wake). The extent of this Joycean influence on Wilson's writing is quite pervasive - - we know that Wilson first read *Finnegans Wake* at the age of sixteen (about 1948) and has been re-reading, studying, and lecturing on it ever since (Illuminati Papers 31). In this paper, I will examine just how this influence has manifested itself in Wilson's writing style.^{§§§}

I will not attempt to be comprehensive when dealing with Wilson's work. Rather, I will primarily discuss the major influence

⁺⁺⁺*For instance, Carl Jung, R. Buckminster Fuller, Friedrich Nietzsche, Wilhelm Reich, Timothy Leary, and Aleister Crowley have all had major impact upon Wilson's thinking and his writing. One can also see strong parallels with the ideas of Jacques Derrida and Jacques Lacan, although I've found no direct influence-link . . . yet. The system is complex enough to warrant further exploration.*

^{§§§}*Although many writers have been influenced by Joyce, I have chosen Wilson for this study primarily because he is in turn influencing a generation of Discordian poets, writers, and philosophers - as anyone familiar with the Erisian Movement is well aware of - and because I find his work inherently worthy of consideration in and of itself. While this particular study deals with Wilson as he is influenced by Joyce, future work will deal with Wilson's work as independent of others. Perhaps others would be interested in continuing with this sort of influence study with other authors and Joyce or Wilson. For my purposes, the scope of the study needed to be rigidly limited to these two writers in this particular stylistic exchange relationship. This does not imply that this is the only point worthy of study in Wilson's work - far from it. This limitation in discussion is that of convenience, nothing more.*

patterns regarding *narrative fiction* style involved in the work of the two writers, particularly looking at examples from Joyce's *Ulysses***** and their relationships to those of Wilson's writings.

Analysis of Joyce's writing style is by no means a new endeavor. For the most part, I will follow the example provided by Karen Lawrence in her *The Odyssey of Style in Ulysses* - *-although my own concern with her work is limited to its usefulness for providing guideposts for appropriational studies like the present one.* This is despite some of the shortcomings in Lawrence's work.†††† The problem with Joyce studies is not that there is a lack of material, but rather that there's simply so much that one is often-times swamped in the effort to "get to the meat of the matter."^{††††}

In this analysis, I first wish to introduce several of the various major stylistic techniques which Joyce employed in his writing of *Ulysses* and how they are recapitulated in Wilson's work. I will then examine some of the thematic elements and ideas which Wilson seems

**** We will concentrate upon *Ulysses* here for several reasons: (1) the parameters of the study have to be limited somehow, or it will become much too broad for a journal of this type; (2) convenience of citation; and (3) significance of influence, with the possible exception of *Finnegans Wake* this is the one work by Joyce which has had the most profound impact upon Wilson.

†††† Lawrence tends to omit several stylistic techniques which I have chosen to explore here due to Wilson's appropriation. This is understandable as Lawrence's focus is not on influence patterns but on experimental technique. One problem I do find in her piece is the sometime-oversimplification of placing a stylistic maneuver into only one or two chapters when Joyce combined his stylistic experiments throughout the work (albeit she is correct in observing that there were usually one or two dominant effects in each chapter).

†††† Other works which have proven useful insofar as examining Joyce's stylistic experiments in *Ulysses* are Zack Bowen's *Ulysses as a Comic Novel*, Sheldon Brivic's *The Veil of Signs*, Jacques Derrida's "*Ulysses Gramophone*" in *The Augmented Ninth*, and most especially John Porter Houston's *Joyce and Prose* and Lorraine Weir's *Writing Joyce*.

to have acquired from Joyce. Lastly, I will note some of the ways in which Wilson acknowledges his debt to Joyce, including the various allusions to Joyce found scattered throughout his corpus.^{§§§§}

NON SEQUITUR AND COLLAGE

One of Joyce's basic stylistic conventions is to make use of *non sequitur* and *collage*. This is the combining of elements which formerly had little to do with one another, but together create an synthesis of meaning. That is, the narrative parts would not normally be found together, but once they are juxtaposed, they form a new meaning.

While the technique is employed throughout *Ulysses*, it is found most predominantly in the "*Aeolus*" chapter. Here, we find the collage of what appear to be newspaper headlines and the narrative about newspaper men. A simple enough example of Joyce's use of this effect occurs quite early in *Ulysses*:

IN THE HEART OF THE HIBERNIAN

METROPOLIS

Before Nelson's pillar trams slowed, shunted, changed trolley, started for Blackrock, Kingstown and Dalkey, Clonskea, Rathgar and Terenure, Palmerston Park and upper Rathmines, Sandymount Green, Rathmines, Ringsend and Sandymount Tower, Harold's Cross.

^{§§§§}*It is useful for one to keep in mind that Wilson is not what Harold Bloom would have identified as a "strong" poet in his Anxiety of Influence. He not only acknowledges his debt to Joyce, he seems to revel in it. This does not, however, make Wilson an unoriginal poet . . . far from it, I would say. Of course, there is the additional effect which Wilson seems to be attempting to accomplish which does fit Bloom's scheme, and that is the ephebe poet appropriating the precursor poet.*

(96)

The mood is set by the independent heading which leads us into the narrative which follows. The various tram lines become the arteries and veins extending from the very heart of Dublin.

The collage-headlines also work as linkages from one "episode" within the narrative to the next, shifting the reader's concentration from one element to another. For instance, at one point Joyce sets up Bloom's exit from the newspaper office as follows:

[Bloom] went to the door and, holding it ajar, paused. J. J. O'Molloy slapped the heavy pages over. The noise of two shrill voices, a mouthorgan, echoed in the bare hallway from the newsboys squatted on the doorsteps:

--We are the boys of Wexford

Who fought with heart and hand.

EXIT BLOOM

--I'm just running round to Bachelor's walk, Mr Bloom said, about this ad of Keyes's. Want to fix it up. They tell me he's round there in Dillon's.

He looked indecisively for a moment at their faces. The editor who, leaning against the mantelshelf, had propped his head on his hand, suddenly stretched forth an arm amply.

--Begone! he said. The world is before you.

--Back in no time, Mr Bloom said, hurrying out.
(Ulysses 106-7)

The subhead "Exit Bloom" is almost theatrical in its positioning and use, and yet it serves as a transition from one element to the next. Notice the use of lyrics from a song to lead into the transition. Wilson takes up on this technique, integrating it into his own collage effects:

"Holy God." Joe laughed. "Do what *thou* wilt shall be the whole of the law."

The goose gets out of the bottle the same way John Dillinger got out of the "escape-proof" Crown point jail.

"Jesus motherfucking Christ," Joe gasped. "*It's alive!*"

JUST LIKE A TREE THAT'S STANDING BY
THE WAAATER

WE SHALL NOT WE SHALL NOT BE
MOVED

The only place where all five Illuminati Primi met was the Great Hall of Grudad in Agharti, the thirty-thousand-year-old Illuminati center on the peaks of the Tibetan Himalayas, with a lower-level water front harbor on the vast underground Sea of Valusia. (Wilson and Shea, Leviathan 23)^{*****}

^{*****} *For our purposes, I will consider the three original **Illuminatus** novels to be principally authored by Wilson. Although **Illuminatus** was in fact co-authored with Robert Shea, it is Wilson's style which seems to most permeate the piece. Wilson has returned time and time again to the subject matter, while Shea has for the most part abandoned it. I am sure that anyone who has read Wilson's later works and even half-heartedly compared them to Shea's later **Shiké** novels would agree with me on this point. This does not invalidate Shea's obvious contributions to the work, I merely make this distinction for the convenience of this paper. In a*

The heading, part of the lyrics to a song variously repeated throughout this volume of the novel, serves as a bridge into the next scene of the narrative.

SPACETIME GAMES (SYNCHRONICITIES IN SPACE AND TIME)

One of the major stylistic achievements made by Joyce in *Ulysses* is his collapse of space and time. His technique for doing this has also had the greatest impact upon Wilson's writing and ideas. We must bear in mind that Joyce was writing at the beginning of the century when Einstein's ideas about the Space-Time continuum were just receiving publicity. Joyce pounced upon these "new" ideas, incorporating them into the very fabric of his work.

This technique of narrative interruption through synchronic occurrence is very important in Joyce's later writing. The technique is employed quite often in *Ulysses*, particularly in the "*Wandering Rocks*" and "*Sirens*." For instance, Father Conmee's journey along Dublin's streets is interrupted by unrelated asides on Mr Denis J Maginni, professor of dancing, and then on Mrs M'Guinness, and finally we return to the narrative on Father Conmee (181). The only unifier for the three separate narrative events is their *coincidence* in time - - their synchronic occurrence.

Wilson uses the same technique in his own writing. For instance, the narrative involving George Dorn and his striking a deal with the Syndicate leaders is interrupted by an aside synchronic event at the bottom of the ocean - - detailed in Joycean language - - and then the narrative returns to Dorn:

longer work, I would prefer to address Shea's contributions more closely . . . something which is not possible nor needed here.

They reentered Drake's office, and Drake and Maldonado each signed the parchment scroll [Drake] smiled at George. "Since you can't guarantee the additional objects, I'll expect to hear from your boss within twenty-four hours after you leave here. This whole deal is contingent upon the additional payment from you."

ORGASM. HER BUBBIES FRITCHED BY THE GYNING DEEPSEADOODLER. All in a lewdercrass chaste for a moulteeng fawkin. In fact, hearing Drake say that he was to be leaving the Syndicate fortress made George feel a bit better. He signed in behalf of the Discordians and Jung signed as a witness. (Wilson and Shea, The Eye in the Pyramid 285-86)

This is not just a simple case of collage as in the previous section. It is a shift in space to the bottom of the ocean where the primordial creature Leviathan is acting - - a synchronic event separated in time. However, there is a connection between the Leviathan aside and the Dorn story-thread . . . and that is of charged emotional/physical reaction.

Thus, we have the *coincidence* of the synchronic occurrence, but it is a coincidence loaded with meaning - - a *meaningful coincidence*, **synchronicity**. It is the use of these Jungian synchronicities which Wilson has borrowed most heavily from Joyce.

According to Lawrence, Joyce's interruptive episodes are attempts to demonstrate a lack of connective fiber in time and space. She further notes this in another of Joyce's techniques, the repetition of events from different perspectives (Style 85). An example of this from Ulysses which Lawrence also employs in building her own case regarding Joyce's style and synchronicity, is that of "*woman and the*

twig":

A flushed young man came from a gap of a hedge and after him came a young woman with wild nodding daisies in her hand. The young man raised his cap abruptly: the young woman abruptly bent and with slow care detached from her light skirt a clinging twig.

Father Conmee blessed both gravely and turned a thin page of his breviary. *Sin* (Joyce, Ulysses 184)

Note that Father Conmee's text happens to be opening to the reference "*Sin*" - - meaningful coincidence, true synchronicity. Later, the narrative is interrupted by a recurrence of the image: "The young woman with slow care detached from her light skirt a clinging twig" (190). The main difference between the two citations is that of speed, the medium of time - - in the second version, time is slowing down. Rather than this being a demonstration of "absence of connective fiber," I would argue that it is an affirmation of the time/space continuum.

These experimental effects achieved with time and space occur throughout the novel Ulysses. Often, the first occurrence of an event in the narrative serves as some sort of "tease" or prelude to the full experience of it. The second version may go into fuller detail in the description or narration. For instance, the conversation between Father Cowley and Simon Dedalus is first recorded rather simply, as an interruption of the regular narrative: "--Hello, Simon, Father Cowley said. How are things? --Hello, Bob, old man, Mr Dedalus answered, stopping" (Joyce, Ulysses 197). The same conversation is repeated later, but continues on from where the first instance lets off:

--Hello, Simon, Father Cowley said. How are things?

--Hello, Bob, old man, Mr Dedalus answered, stopping.

They clasped hands loudly outside Reddy and Daughter's. Father Cowley brushed his moustache often downward with a scooping hand. (200)

Additional information is supplied, more details added to the reader's picture of the events.

Wilson follows Joyce's example, using this technique as a means to provide the reader with new perspectives within which to view the event. He will often describe an event in one book which originally occurred in another book, but his perspective might be wholly different. Dialogue is very often skewed and warped, characters changed, all in an effort to demonstrate his own creed that all views, all beliefs, all perspectives are valid. It is the viewer/perceiver that matters. Note the following scene from *Illuminatus* - - George Dorn has just been rescued from the Mad Dog County Jail by the militant anarchist Mavis (*the destruction of the jail walls coincided with George's own masturbatory orgasm, so his trousers are a bit messy*):

"That splotch of come on your trousers has had me horny ever since Mad Dog. Also the excitement of the raid. I've got some tension to burn off. I'd prefer to save myself for a man who completely meets the criteria of my value system. But I could get awfully horny waiting for him. No regrets, no guilt, though. You're all right. You'll do."

"What are you talking about?"

"I'm talking about your fucking me, George."
(Wilson and Shea, *The Eye in the Pyramid* 78)

Compare this to the very same event as it is described in *Schrodinger's Cat*:

"I've a lot of tension since raiding the jail," Mavis went on, slipping the trenchcoat to the sand. "I really need a good Potter Stewart, George. Wouldn't you like to Potter Stewart me? Wouldn't you like to lie on the sand and stick your great big pulsating Rehnquist into my warm Feinstein?"

"This is ridiculous."

"Listen, George," Mavis went on intensely. "When I was young I decided to save myself for a man who completely meets the criteria of my value system. That's when I was reading Ayn Rand, you see. But then I realized I could get awfully horny waiting for him to come along. You'll have to do." (Wilson, The Homing Pigeons 14)

Not only are certain details added and others left out, but the very language is warped. It should also be noted, although not entirely evident in this particular excerpt, that the event is being observed by Frank Dashwood (George's alternate personality from *the Universe Next Door*) in the second selection while the Illuminatus selection has no such observer.

For both Joyce and Wilson, all versions of the same incident are correct. However, their correctness is not based in objectivity, but in the subjectivity of the individual *narrator/persona-of-the-moment*. By reading two versions of an event, the reader builds a third, even more complex version of the event - - which seems to be the purpose behind Wilson's experiments with the technique (*as he reads Joyce*).

BORROWED STYLES

Another stylistic convention Joyce uses in Ulysses which

Wilson seems to have adopted is that of *the borrowed style* whereby the author departs from his usual mode of writing and enters another, borrowed, style which the reader recognizes as of a certain type. This is both an experiment in language and a means of disrupting the reader's preconceived notions of how information is going to be imparted. Of course, there are also practical reasons for adopting other styles . . . those of furthering the plot in the new style.

While Joyce's major experiments with the technique of borrowing styles are primarily found in the "*Cyclops*," "*Nausicaa*," and "*Oxen of the Sun*" episodes of *Ulysses*, Wilson's are not so limited. At the same time, it should be noted, Wilson's tend not to be so heavily "experimental" or self-indulgent as Joyce's - - while Joyce often uses the technique as an ends in itself, Wilson uses it more sparingly and usually as a means for advancing the narrative.

According to Lawrence, Joyce's melange of styles has two important philosophical implications: first, it expresses Joyce's skepticism about any one mode of writing; and second, the interpolated passages demonstrate the problem of the modern writer - - "the styles of the past are available only as parody and the discourse of the present only as cliché" (Style 108). Note the adaptation of a medieval tone in the following selection from *Ulysses*:

Dunlop, Judge, the noblest Roman of them all, A.E., Arval, the Name Ineffable, in heaven hight: K. H., their master, whose identity is no secret to adepts. Brothers of the great white lodge always watching to see if they can help. The Christ with the bridesister, moisture of light, born of an ensouled virgin Mrs Cooper Oakley once glimpsed our very illustrious sister H. P. B.'s elemental.

O, fie! Out on't! *Pfuiteufel!* You naughtn't to look, missus, so you naughtn't when a lady's ashowing her elemental. (Joyce, *Ulysses* 152)

Here we experience a juxtaposition of modern act and medieval sensation. Wilson's stylistic changes tend not to be so unexpectedly confusing. For instance, a pseudo-religious tone is adopted during a black magic ritual conducted by Aleister Crowley in *Masks of the Illuminati*:

Hear me Crowley said IEOU PUR IOU PUR IOATH
IAEO IOOU ABRASAX SABRIAM OO OO ADONAI
EDE EDU ANGELOS TON THEON LAI GAIA AEPE
DIATHARNA THORON! Indwelling sun of myself
Thou fire Thou sixfold star initiator compassed about
with force and fire Indwelling soul of myself
Sunlionserpent Hail all Hail thou great wild beast Thou
IAO Lust of my soul Lust of mine angel pouring
himself forth within my soul (267)

Unsettling, but not altogether disruptive of our expectations. Another typical example of Wilson's stylistic borrowings occurs in the same novel:

Glory to thee from gilded tomb, resounded the
voice of Tim Finnegan.

Glory to thee from waiting womb, chanted
Molly Bloom.

Glory to thee from earth unploughed, cried
Osiris.

Glory to thee from virgin vowed, sang Isis. (286)

While also a direct allusion to Joyce's characters, this is a much more effective use of the religious chant than the former example - - not so much because of the style being adopted but because of the medium and context of the piece itself.

THE RHETORIC OF DRAMA

One of the most common observations about Joyce's writing is that his is a most aural style - - that is his writing depends more upon the oral element than the visual. It seems natural for such a writer to experiment with the dramatic form - -particularly due to its inherent dependence upon dialogue.

While all of the "*Circe*" episode of *Ulysses* is an experiment in drama, there are obvious preludes to it in earlier sections of the novel. Note how the following brief selection seems to be no more than a collection of quotes from a dialogue. The lines are ascribed to speakers in prose fashion, but their delivery is as if from a drama.

--Did Tom Kernan turn up? Martin Cunningham asked, twirling the peak of his beard gently.

--Yes, Mr Bloom answered. He's behind with Ned Lambert and Hynes.

--And Corny Kelleher himself? Mr Power asked.

--At the cemetery, Martin Cunningham said.

--I met M'Coy this morning, Mr Bloom said. He said he's try to come.

The carriage halted short.

--What's wrong?

--We're stopped.

--Where are we?

Mr Bloom put his head out of the window.

--The grand canal, he said. (Joyce, Ulysses 74)

It would take one very little effort to rearrange the elements of this brief exchange in order to transform it into the form of a *real* drama.

Like Joyce, Wilson also experiments with dramatic elements in his prose. At one point in Illuminatus, the brief aside "SIMON MAGUS. You will come to know gods" is soon followed by that of "VECTORS. You will come to no gods" (The Eye in the Pyramid 298). This is a slight contamination of the prose by a dramatic element, a technique Wilson borrows from Joyce. Elsewhere, he becomes much more bold about the infection:

It is said that nineteen peace officers were torn limb from limb in the course of the hanging of Wing Chee.

FRANK: But he was hanged anyway.

ERNEST: But they knew they had hanged a *man*.

FRANK: Like hell. They thought they'd just hanged a crazy gook. (The Universe Next Door 167)

Here we see the prose surrendering itself to the drama - - a turning within itself. We also see the technique of allusion being applied, another fairly standard Joycean strategy.

The most important episode of Ulysses, at least as far as it's drama is concerned, is that of "Circe" - - which is all drama. According to Lawrence, the entire chapter is figurative (Style 146). Events can no longer be empirically trusted as real or unreal. Even a rather mundane greeting between husband and wife, carries other

levels of meaning in Joyce's Ulyssesian drama:

BLOOM

Molly!

MARION

Welly? Mrs Marion from this out, my dear man, when you speak to me. (*satirically*) Has poor little hubby cold feet waiting so long?

BLOOM

(*shifts from foot to foot*) No, no. Not the least little bit.
(Joyce, Ulysses 359)

This seems like a fairly normal enough greeting, until we realize that Bloom's ankles are fettered, something not likely to happen in objective "reality" but quite possible in Bloom's subjective fantasy/nightmare (*not to mention, the "cold feet" \impotence subtext*).

By the time we get to "*Circe*" in Ulysses, two things have changed in the novel: impressionism is replaced by expressionism and analogy gives way to dramatized conceit (Lawrence, Style 148-49). The same changes occur in Wilson's use of drama. Notice the style with which he writes Joyce's monologue from Masks of the *Illuminati*:

JOYCE

[*Liturgically*]:
heart

In my high and mountain

away

I have laughed thirtytwo years

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In folly and scorn: the flesh and
blood

Of werewolf Time. (287)

This expressionistic effect is carried through with the filmic script-jumps such as "*Trying for Pix of the Cock*" which occurs in *Right Where You Are Sitting Now*, which is predominantly a non-fiction collection of essays:

Map of Ireland, Camera pans in on Dublin area.

NARRATOR'S VOICE (offscreen): On April 23, 1014, Brian Boru moved his armies onto the field of Clontarf, which is Gaelic for bull...

click, blurry lines

AL PACINO in a very dark, shadowy room.

PACINO: Shit, shit, shit!!

CAMERA pulls back, ACTRESS comes into view.

ACTRESS: Damn you, you motherfucker! (155)

Although the piece is on one level a fairly accurate report of what one might see if one were to switch channels of the television, it is presented in the work as more - - as a rendering of how twentieth-century man (or at least Wilson) experiences reality. Of course further comparison of Joyce's and Wilson's expressionistic drama can be explored through an analysis of the trial and sexual images in "*Circe*" with Wilson's play, *Wilhelm Reich in Hell*.

PLAYING WITH LANGUAGE

Joyce plays with language. It's one of the things his prose does best. He uses language in ways which are bold and new - -and confounding and confusing - - his prose is often an experiment in linguistics.^{††††} While "*Eumaeus*" is the episode Lawrence and others consider most successful in terms of Joyce's linguistic play, all of *Ulysses* may be considered such a game - - and *Finnegans Wake* even more so. For instance, Joyce often substitutes wrong\slant-words in his prose, warping language to gain the proper effect: "I'm the bloody well gigant rolls all them bloody well boulders, bones for my steppingstones. Feefawfum. I zmallz de bloodz odz an Iridzman" (*Ulysses* 37).

Wilson, who styles himself a "*guerilla ontologist*"^{‡‡‡‡} - -using and mis-using language as a means of exploration into meaning and perception - - uses the same kind of linguistic strategies as Joyce, with much the same effect: "Clem looked around uncertainly. SDATE YOUR BIZNIZ PLEEZ, said a computerized voice, evidently out of the ceiling" (*The Homing Pigeons* 69). Joyce's "I zmallz de bloodz odz an Iridzman" paves the way for Wilson's "SDATE YOUR BIZNIZ PLEEZ."

Joyce's language games are part of the very fabric of *Ulysses*. The novel cannot stand without them - - and *this is even more true with *Finnegans Wake**. Joyce fills the pages with small linguistic quirks like: "Davy Byrne smiledyawdednodded all in one: --Iiiiiichaaaaaach!" (145). Following suit, Wilson likewise fills the

^{††††}This "schizophrenic use of language" is one of the appeals Joyce's writing had for Jung, he found it at once confounding, confusing, and extremely appealing (see Jung's essay on Joyce in his *Collected Works*).

^{‡‡‡‡}One letter I received from Wilson had the heading: "*Uncle Bob's Olde Time Soda Shoppe & Guerilla Ontology Works*" [complete with multi-lingual quotes and anecdotes].

pages of his novels with such turns-of-phrase and language games:

"Little check on her? Liddel chick honor?" Sir Talis Saur chanted. "If god is dog spelled backward,"^{§§§§§} he hissed, lisping, "what does that mean? Not the Almighty?" But Sir John was fucking a fox-bitch in heat, groveling in the mire; mind and heart and soul lost in the Night of Pan. (Masks 97)

Wilson's language play has precursors other than Joyce, of course. One can also hear the voices of Aleister Crowley, of Wilhelm Reich, and of Erwin Schrodinger in Wilson's words, but Joyce's seems, at least to me, to be most steady. All of these influences are mixed together and cooked at incredible temperatures, producing an unusual alchemical style.

Often, Wilson will turn to a similar subject in his novels, using different language experiments in each text's approach. For instance, in *The Homing Pigeons*, Wilson wrote an entire novel filled with graphic sex, but without using sexually graphic words - - he replaced them with proper nouns (*usually the names of politicians or of radical feminists, often the target of Wilson's cutting wit*). Thus, a vision of the Goddess of Love masturbating takes on skewed form:

She appeared to Marvin Gardens reclining upon a golden bed, and Her hair was splendidly red and She was naked and wanton and unashamed; on Her face was the narrow-eyed bliss of Kali, and one hand was opening the lips of Her Feinstein as She pleased Herself. She was on page sixty-four of *Penthouse*. (189)

No one reading the passage could possibly mistake what the Feinstein

^{§§§§§}Wilson takes the "god" - "dog" palindrome from *Ulysses*, as we will see later.

is - - and yet Wilson uses a word that is completely out of place and it still delivers the desired meaning. ***** Thus, for Wilson, meaning is not in the word, but in the recipient's perception of it's meaning. Compare this scene with one from Masks of the Illuminati in which Wilson describes a similar action by another woman, also in a "holy" context:

She was sprawled totally naked, except for a blue garter with a silver star, on her left thigh. Goldly nude on a crimson-jeweled Arabic purr-purplebed, her left hand lewdly moving in the grove of brown hair above that maddening garter, doing that horrid disgusting thing to herself, to gather per darker bane, a bolt like a brick sheet hose, her face flushed with the same unbearable and inhuman rapture as the famous statue of Saint Teresa in Rome. "To the puer, all things are puella," Yeats mumbled, vanishing with myriad reflections into infinite mirrors. (Wilson, Masks 97)

It isn't the sexual organ which is the focus of the latter selection as was the case in the former. Rather, Wilson merely alludes to the movements . . . at least less graphically so. The "purr-purplebed" could come straight from Joyce - - it gives both information about the bed itself and of the feline nature of the woman's personality. †††††

***** *The novel is an experiment in language which is also intended as something of an attack on radical feminist notions of censorship. The piece is filled with explicit sexual scenes and of obscenities. There are no "colorful words" though. In place of the normal descriptive off-color language used for such scenes, Wilson uses the names of prominent feminists and politicians (primarily those who have called for some sort of censorship at one time or another). Wilson has a favorite technique in which he gives people a piece of radical feminist writing which damns men as male chauvinists and as the root to all sexism. Most people he gives the piece to react neutrally or in support of the writing. He then gives them the original document which he has doctored - a selection from Adolph Hitler's Mein Kampf. He has opposed many movements which profess liberation and freedom and equal rights but which use similar totalitarian rhetoric.*

††††† *And, of course, the Goddess of Fertility archetype is often accompanied by a*

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Usages similar to the slant-pun "brick sheet hose" can certainly also be found in Joyce's prose.

SONGS AND RHYMES

Another stylistic technique which is quite evidently appropriated by Wilson from Joyce is that of the quotation of poetry and song lyrics within his text. Throughout *Ulysses*, Joyce frequently uses songs as a means of adding "color" to a scene. In the following brief passage, Buck Mulligan sings a bit of an old song:

Buck Mulligan's face smiled with delight.

--Charming! he said in a finical sweet voice, showing his white teeth and blinking his eyes pleasantly. Do you think she was? Quite charming!

Then, suddenly overclouding all his features, he growled in a hoarsened rasping voice as he hewed at the loaf:

--*For old Mary Ann*

She doesn't care a damn.

But, hising up her petticoats

He crammed his mouth with fry and munched and droned. (11)

Wilson also frequently has characters singing songs as narrative

large cat of some sort (i.e., Ishtar's lions) - - not to mention the slang expression which equates female genitals with felines - pussies all.

counterpoint in his own prose - - such as Howard the Dolphin's several solos in *Illuminatus* - - much in the same way as Joyce does in *Ulysses*.

Wilson's use of song does not stop at the level of character-voiced action. The songs will also be voiced by the invisible narrator as a supplement to the narrative action. For instance, one should note the way in which he frequently quotes from the song "*Rock Around the Clock*" in *The Eye in the Pyramid* as a narrative interruption which adds meaning to the events (*the ticking-down of the clock towards the destruction of the world - - or the "immanetizing of the Eschaton"*). This same technique is employed in similar fashion by Joyce:

Many errors, many failures but not the one sin. I am a
struggler now at the end of my days. But I will fight
for the right till the end.

For Ulster will fight

And Ulster will be right.

Stephen raided the sheets in his hand.

--Well, sir, he began (*Ulysses* 29)

Joyce uses the song lyrics to further clarify Stephen's state of mind. I believe it is likely, given the high degree of influence by Joyce on his writing, that Wilson may very well have appropriated the technique from Joyce, consciously or unconsciously so.

Joyce - - *in keeping with his narrative displacement of space and time* - - will often tie a song's melody or words to a flashback sequence, invoking a character's particular emotional response to another character (*at a certain time, usually the present looking back on the lost past*) and memories surrounding that character. As an

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illustration of this technique, we can see that at one point in the narrative, Bloom reminisces about his daughter and Joyce interrupts the narrative with lines from the lyrics to a song about seaside girls:

On the *Erin's King* that day round the Kish. Damned old tub pitching about. Not a bit funky. Her [Milly Bloom] pale blue scarf loose in the wind with her hair.

All dimpled cheeks and curls,

Your head it simply swirls.

Seaside girls. Torn envelope. Hands stuck in trousers' pockets, jarvey off for the day, singing. Friend of the family. *Swirls*, he says. Pier with lamps, summer evening, band.

Those girls, those girls,

Those lovely seaside girls.

Milly too. Young kisses: the first. Far away now past. Mrs Marion. Reading, lying back now, counting the strands of her hair, smiling, braiding. (54-55)

While Bloom is here thinking of his daughter, we can see Wilson and Shea using the same technique in *Illuminatus* when Simon Moon speaks of his own dead Wobbly father, linking the memory with the song "*Joe Hill*":

It's uncool to love your father these days, so I didn't even know that i loved him until they closed the coffin and I heard myself sobbing, and it comes back again, that same emptiness, whenever I hear "Joe Hill":

"The copper bosses killed you, Joe."

"I never died," said he.

Both lines are true, the mourning never ends.
(The Eye in the Pyramid 63)

The songs have objective meaning outside of the novels, and yet Joyce and Wilson have appropriated them into their respective writings - - *infusing them with subjective meaning for the characters with which the songs are introduced in the narratives.*

At other times, Joyce (*and Wilson following him*) will use a song within a flashback as part of the flashback event itself- - *and not as part of the present narrative emotive restructuring of that flashback event as above.* Bloom, in one brief scene involving Martin Cunningham, does not add special meaning to the *geisha* song which he recollects, he merely remembers having heard of another character (Martin's drunken wife) singing it (Ulysses 80).

Wilson also has moments when a song is merely part of the event of the flashback with little or no emotive baggage attached to it. For instance, when, in *The Homing Pigeons*, Frank Dashwood spies his alternate universe self George Dorn having sex with Mavis on the beach, he notices a woodpecker in a tree - -triggering a flashback memory of a song he sang in high school:

The woodpecker went to work above them just then,
banging away like a Rock drummer. Dashwood
remembered from Nutley High School:

The woodpecker pecked on the outhouse
door;

He pecked and he pecked till his pecker
was sore. (14)

Of course, this particular episode is also an example of synchronicity, although I use it here to illustrate another technique.*****

CHARACTER CROSS-OVERS

Throughout Joyce's corpus of writings, a major character from one work will often appear as a minor character in another. Sometimes characters become related to one another through complicated means of blood, friendship, enmity, or other means. This technique goes well beyond the obvious relationships that one book in a series would have with another (*for instance, Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and Ulysses both have Stephen Dedalus as major characters, but they are both about him so this is not unusual or remarkable - - just as Wilson's Illuminatus books are part of the same series so they would unsurprisingly share characters*). What Joyce does which is interesting with these character cross-overs is to create relationships where they are surprising or extraneous to the present work.

Examples of this extraneous reference can be seen in a few of the scattered references in Ulysses to characters from Dubliners. I will illustrate this technique here by using as examples Joyce's cross-references to three characters from "The Dead" in Ulysses. First, Bloom thinks of a line from a song which then reminds him of Julia Morkan (*Aunt Julia, one of the spinster sisters, from "The Dead"*)

******This particular scene is at once an example of flashback song quotation without psycho-emotional content and synchronicity on at least a few levels: (1) it is synchronistic in that the woodpecker triggers a memory of a song about woodpeckers from high school; (2) it is synchronistic in that the song being remembered is really not about woodpeckers, but about sex - - it's basically a sophomoric pun ("pecker" = "penis"); and, (3) it is synchronistic in that this is once more an instance of Wilson's use of a kind of apophrades (Bloomian return of the dead) in which he retells a scene from one novel in another - - we have already examined this scene in that context earlier in this paper.*

who, like Molly Bloom, was a singer (133). Stephen also thinks of Julia Morkan, but this time as a dying woman, and as related to another character from "*The Dead*," his godmother Kate Morkan. The text lists details that Stephen is reminded of when he sees Bloom in the home-and-hearth scene (547). Lastly, Molly refers to characters from "*The Dead*" in her long monologue. At one point, Molly remarks in passing upon the singing ability of Bartell D'Arcy, an acquaintance of hers (636-7) - - but also one of the guests at the party hosted by the Misses Morkan in "*The Dead*."

Like Joyce, Wilson introduces relatives of characters from one novel into another (for example, Sigismundo Maldonado of *The Historical Illuminatus Chronicles* - - set in the late 18th century - - is the ancestor of Banana-Nose Maldonado of *Illuminatus* - - set in the 20th century; likewise, Simon Moon's Irish ancestor is found sailing to America in the same work). Several characters found in *Illuminatus* appear in the non-fictional *The Illuminati Papers* as the "authors" of several of the essays (Simon Moon, Hagbard Celine, and Epicene Wildeblood all appear as essayists - - *Wilson uses his own characters as pseudonyms for his essays, interestingly each writes only upon his own narrow field of interest [computers, economics/politics, art-film-music]*).

SEXUAL FRANKNESS

Obviously, from the various quotations I have thus far employed in this paper, one can see that Joyce and Wilson share the trait of frankness in sexual description. In fact, they're both quite liberal with their erotic scenes and graphic vocabulary. This in and of itself is not necessarily interesting. Given the high degree of freedom today's authors have to include sexual images within their work, one would be hard pressed to make a case that Wilson receives his sense of literary erotic freedom from Joyce. §§§§§§

§§§§§§ *One could make a case for influence here, but not of sole influence. We have*

What is interesting is the strong relationship between certain scenes in Ulysses in which Joyce describes sexuality and the inclusion of very similar scenes in Wilson's work. These passages become even more intriguing when we note that while they are quite similar in situation and the ideas being expressed, they do differ in one important aspect: Joyce tells about sexuality, but Wilson shows it. Take for example this brief instance in which Molly describes her breasts and Bloom's habit of sucking on them for long periods:

yes I think he made them a bit firmer sucking them like
that so long he made me thirsty titties he calls them I
had to laugh yes this one anyhow stiff the nipple gets
for the least thing Ill get him to keep that up
(620)

In Illuminatus, Wilson's Bloom, Saul Goodman, is shown in the act of performing the very same nursing behavior on his own wife's nipples. Rebecca, like her precursor Molly, also enjoys the erotic sensation: "'Oh, Saul. Oh, Saul, Saul,' Rebecca closed her eyes as the mouth tightened on her nipple . . ." (The Golden Apple 90).

Just as Joyce had Molly describe this nursing behavior of Bloom's as a habit, Wilson shows Saul nursing at his young wife's breasts on more than one occasion (a habit of his own lovemaking). ***** As if to cement the connection even further,

to keep in mind that Wilson has been influenced by several writers and thinkers who were quite free in their discussion of human sexuality (Wilhelm Reich's psychological theories are an example in point - - although Wilson seems less intrigued by Reich's ideas as by his suppression and censorship, the emphasis Reich placed on the orgasm is still there nonetheless).

***** *Unlike his impotent precursor Bloom, Goodman has no trouble making love to his own wife. He is also faithful to her. An interesting contrast between the two characters.*

Wilson's Goodman uses the same pet name for Rebecca's breasts as Bloom uses for Molly's:

Oh, darling, yes, darling, I like it too. It makes me happy to make you happy Oh, Rebecca. Let me kiss them again. They're so pretty. Pretty pretty titties. Mmm. Mmm. Pretty. And so big and round. Oh, you've got two hard-ons and I've only got one. And this, this, ah, you like it, don't you, that's three hard-ons. You want me to take my finger away and kiss it? Oh, darling, pretty belly, pretty. Mmm. Mmm. Darling, Mmm. MMMMM. Mmm. Lord. Lord. (The Golden Apple 93)

Of course, Bloom and Goodman are certainly not the only men to have called their wives' breasts "*titties*," so there is no way for me to demonstrate conclusively that Wilson must have gotten the idea from Joyce - - *nor is it necessary here to do so*. However, even without being able to say it is a definite incidence of appropriation, one still has to admit the connection is interestingly quite strong {*coincidence or coincidance?*}.

Joyce and Wilson seem to share some basic ideas about sexuality. We observe this particularly in how their characters relate to one another sexually and how they interpret these actions. For instance, in *Ulysses* Joyce has Molly present her views on male sexual motives and response while describing some of her early sexual experiences⁺⁺⁺⁺⁺:

⁺⁺⁺⁺⁺*Rather, Molly presents Joyce's impression of a woman's view of male sexuality. While Jung praised Joyce for his ability to get inside a woman's head and provide insights into feminine psychology, this assessment may be a little naive. For instance, notice that one of Molly's first masturbation techniques is to use a banana for penetration into the vagina. This probably reflects more of Joyce's male fantasy about female masturbation than actual female sexual practice.*

after I tried with the Banana but I was afraid it might break and get lost up in me somewhere because they once took something down out of a woman that was up there for years . . . theyre all mad to get in there where they come out of youd think they could never go far enough up and then theyre done with you in a way till the next time yes because theres a wonderful feeling there so tender all the time how did we finish it off yes O yes I pulled him off into my handkerchief pretending not to be excited but I opened my legs I wouldnt let him touch me inside my petticoat (626)

Notice that Molly's basic assessment of male sexuality is that of an over-riding desire for deep penetration. She characterizes all men as desperate to enter a woman's vagina as far as thrust and penis length will allow. This view that men are self-centered sexual creatures concerned with physical depth (*but not emotional*) in their sexual intercourse is an old one and still quite common. At least one of Wilson's characters seems to at least partially share this obsession with physical depth during sexual intercourse. In *The Eye in the Pyramid*, George Dorn experiences the same kind of "need" when confronted with a very seductive Mavis while on board the *Lief Erickson*^{*****}: "She'd sucked his cock, he'd watched her in manic manustupration, but he was desperate to get inside her, all the way, up the womb, riding her ovarian trolley to the wonderful land of fuck, as Henry Miller said" (252). One difference we can clearly see between the prose by Joyce and Wilson in these two examples, and elsewhere, is that of show and tell. In the former excerpt, Joyce tells us about this male sexuality

******The Lief Erickson is Hagbard Celine's gigantic submarine. It is crewed by an international group of anarchist capitalists. It also happens to be painted a bright gold (an allusion to the song by the "Beatles" - "Yellow Submarine"). This is a reflection of Celine's humor in the book (his manifesto is titled Never Whistle While You're Pissing), but more importantly it is both part of Wilson's complex system of inter-related synchronicities in the novel and his own humor in/outside it.*

through Molly's description while Wilson **shows** us through George's actions in the latter. Joyce's most graphic sexual moments are usually those of description, of **telling**, while Wilson's are those of action, of **showing**.

Granted, Joyce can be quite frank and sometimes shocking, but his are still primarily descriptions. Certainly, he can be quite accurate in his prose regarding sexuality and relationships with passages consciously filled with graphic sensibilities, as when Molly describes her frustration with Bloom's odd "impotent consent" to her adultery: "Ill let him know . . . that his wife is fucked and damn well fucked too up to my neck nearly not by him 5 or 6 times handrunning" (*Ulysses* 641). The difference between passages like this one by Joyce and those by Wilson, though, still remains that the former **tells** while the latter **shows**. This is particularly interesting because they treat so many very similar subjects and often have the same underlying idea or value to express.

ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES

At this point in our investigation, I should at least mention the organizational strategies which Joyce and Wilson employ in their writing. Joyce's *Ulysses* follows the Greek mythological framework of Homer's *Odyssey*. Wilson also uses a mythological framework for his *Illuminatus*, the Hebrew Kabbalah.^{§§§§§§§§} For his *Historical*

^{§§§§§§§§}Those familiar with Umberto Eco's *Foucault's Pendulum* are aware of Eco's use of the *Kabbalah* as the organizing framework for that novel. There are quite a few other similarities between the two novels - - sinister conspiracies, hidden truths, alchemical parallels, etc. It is doubtful that there is direct influence going on here, though. Eco's novel was written much later than Wilson's, but I doubt that he has read *Illuminatus* - - although that certainly is possible. For the moment, I would prefer to place the similarities between the two in the category of *coincidence* - - meaningful coincidence. Of course, another true *synchronistic coincidence* related to this thread of reasoning would bring us to the use another Bloom, Harold this time, makes of Kabbalah in his literary theory -- that of the anxiety of influence (and thus the uroboros devours itself -- returning to the beginning which is the

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Illuminatus Chronicles, Wilson continues this pattern by using still another mythological/mystical framework: each chapter represents a gloss on the Major Arcana (triumphs/trumps) of the **Tarot**.

There is also some very interesting overlap between these organizational structures. While Joyce's **Ulysses** may have a Greek predecessor, it may also have some connections to Kabbalah. After all, the protagonist is Jewish. There are also Greek elements in Wilson's **Illuminatus** - the goddess Eris is Greek as well as several of the main and minor characters throughout the series.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL FICTIONS

As any and practically all commentators on Joyce have noted, Joyce's fictions are more than mere creations from nothing - *-exnihilio musings* - - but are more often than not based somehow in his own life. Joyce's means for coping with real life seems to have been to remake it into fictional life. Thus, his stories are often more autobiographical than not.

Stephen's disillusionment with the church and his rejection of the religion and beliefs of his parents, all this is Joyce's. Events which occur in the novels almost invariably have precedent in Joyce's real life. Wilson, unsurprisingly, follows suit. For instance, few scholars would deny that Lilith Velkor in all her incarnations as red-headed beauty in **Illuminatus** has a most striking resemblance to Wilson's own wife, Arlen Riley Wilson.

It is partly here - - in autobiography - - wherein we may find at least a partial key as to why Joyce has had such a strong impact upon Wilson's writing - - the power of the kindred soul. Wilson and Joyce may be separated through **SPACETIME**, but they are united through

present study).

experience. While Joyce was Irish, Wilson is Irish-American, raised in a predominantly Irish neighborhood.***** Both were raised Catholic, but each felt the Church to be an oppressive institution and rejected it. Both followed unconventional paths in their lives and had unusual careers - - leading lives flavored with heavy doses of anarchism.

Possibly because he may experience a strong sense of affinity for his precursor, Wilson has taken certain elements of Joyce to heart, both as a scholar of Joycean prose and as a writer-philosopher heavily influenced by it. During his years living in Ireland, Wilson had time to pursue some of his pet theories about Joyce and his writing.†††††††† One such theory is his belief that the "mysterious" man in the brown mackintosh who appears at several points in *Ulysses* is Joyce himself (Wilson, *Cosmic Trigger* 2 180). Although Wilson has yet to present a satisfactory "proof" that this mysterious fellow is Joyce, it has not stopped him from experimenting with the same perceived technique. As Wilson imagines his precursor Joyce stepping into the pages of his fictions, Wilson steps into the pages of his own:

***** *As one of my readers for my earlier approach to this material points out, those wishing more information on the Irish issue and Joyce should turn to Lin Yu-Chen's [林玉珍] piece on the subject, "Joyce, Yeats, and Irish Issues" in **Chung Wai Literary Monthly** (vol. 21, no. 11, April 1993, pp. 118-144 [中外文學 21 卷 11 期]). Those wishing Wilson's accounts on his own Irish background and how it shaped his life and writings should turn to both volumes of his autobiography, **Cosmic Trigger**, albeit the second volume is more informative on this issue.*

†††††††† *Wilson has always been rather outspoken on Joycean matters, both conventional and unconventional. Often his theories seem controversial on the surface, but upon closer examination one finds much more to them than shock value. A case in point would be his comparisons of Joyce's **Finnegans Wake** with the I-Ching and the DNA molecule (*Coincidance*). At first, one wonders where anyone could get such far-fetched ideas. It begins to make more sense when one looks at the case a little more closely (besides, the DNA - I-Ching connection is one that has been debated by Chinese scholars before Wilson appropriated it for Joycean matters [see Tchen Ni-Kia's "The Chinese DNA in I-Ching, 5000 years before the reinvention of the modern DNA, identical one to other," **Chinese Culture**, Vol. XXIV, No. 3, September 1983, pp. 41-55].*

Joe [Malik] began with only a rough idea: he was going to write a novel about a man writing a novel.

He decided to call his protagonist Robert Anton Wilson

Then he set the writer to work.

Wilson began writing a comedy about quantum physics called Schrodinger's Cat.

Unfortunately, he perversely put Malik inside the book, as one of the characters

And slowly and insidiously, the illusion began to seem real. Joe began to *identify* with his role in the book.

He began to think *Wilson* had created *him*.

He was trapped in his own device. (Wilson, The Universe Next Door 11-12)

This is one case in which we need not establish that Joyce actually used the technique in order to cite it as an example of influence upon Wilson's prose. I believe this may be an interesting case of perception. Wilson *perceives* this to be one of Joyce's techniques - - so regardless of it actually being so or not, he is being influenced by his *perception* of Joyce's style. *****

***** *In a more detailed analysis, one might also explore Wilson's stylistic borrowings from Joyce in terms of parody. The techniques I have presented here seem to be less parody and more appropriational though.*

ALLUSIONS TO JOYCE

As part of our final analysis, I would like to present the one technique in which Wilson gives the most clear and obvious indication of his debt to Joyce - - the allusion. Throughout his writings, Wilson gives at least a subtle nod toward his precursor in the adoption of the various stylistic techniques we have thus far discussed. However, Wilson goes further in this acknowledgement through the use of allusions to Joyce. These allusions range from subtle nuances, to quotes, to simple chapter headings. In *Illuminatus* we find that Atlanta Hope's best-selling novel is titled *Telemachus Sneezed* (also the title of one of the sub-chapters in that trilogy). Another of Wilson's novels, *The Homing Pigeons*, includes a chapter titled "*The Return to Ithaca.*" These are obvious allusions to *Ulysses*, but there are more subtle ones as well.

Often when we find an obvious allusion to Joyce's *Ulysses* in one of Wilson's books, it sets up a chain of more complicated, more subtle, allusions in other books. For instance, at one point in his autobiography, *Cosmic Trigger*, Wilson discusses the link between the star Sirius, dogs, and various religions. In that discussion, he remarks upon a passage in *Ulysses*:

Nevertheless, such is the repressed gullibility of even the most hardened Skeptic that I have found myself wondering once or twice about new meanings in the ancient Zen riddle, "Does a dog have the Buddha-nature?" And, on rereading Joyce's *Ulysses* for the first time in several years, the Metaprogrammer was struck by the Black Mass in which the souls of all the saved chant "Goooooooooooooooood" while all the souls of the damned chant "Dooooooooooooooooog."
(144)

In the Gabler edition of *Ulysses*, these "Black Mass" quotations occur

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on pages 489 and 490. When we read further in this section, we find a description of the room and the altar:

On an eminence, the centre of the earth, rises the fieldaltar of Saint Barbara. Black candles rise from its gospel and epistle horns. From the high barbicans of the tower two shafts of light fall on the smokepalled altarstone. on the altarstone Mrs Mina Purefoy, goddess of unreason, lies, naked, fettered, a chalice resting on her swollen belly. Father Malachi O'Flynn in a lace petticoat and reversed chasuble, his two left feet back to the front, celebrates camp mass. The Reverend Mr Hugh C Haines Love M.A. in a plain cassock and mortarboard, his head and collar back to the front, holds over the celebrant's head an open umbrella. (489)

Compare this "Black Mass" description to that found in Wilson and Shea's ***Illuminatus*** when it is Joe Malik who participates in the "Rite of Shiva" and not Stephen Dedalus:

It was as if he had left the twentieth century. The furnishings and the very architecture were Hebraic, Arabic, and medieval European, all mixed together in a most dis-orienting way, and entirely unrelieved by any trace of the modern or functional.

A black-draped altar stood in the center, and upon it lay the thirteenth member of the coven. She was a woman with red hair and green eyes--the traits which Satan supposedly relished most in mortal females She was, of course, naked, and her body would be the medium through which this strange sacrament would be attempted. (The Eye in the Pyramid 117)

Thus, one reference in *Cosmic Trigger* leads the reader to the source in *Ulysses* which in turn leads us to yet another level of allusion in *Illuminatus* - - a far more complex and richer system than it at first appears to be.

Another direct allusion to *Ulysses*, albeit a rather odd one, occurs in *The Homing Pigeons*. Just as Joyce took the larger-than-life epic characters of his Homeric precursor and collapsed them into ordinary human beings, for this novel Wilson takes his Joycean precursor, ordinary human beings, and collapses them into mere anatomical parts. Thus, Ulysses becomes no longer a man, but a penis. One of the subplots of this novel deals with the sex-change operation of Epicene Wildeblood who becomes Mary-Margaret Wildeblood. The penis, a rather large one, is amputated^{§§§§§§§§} and changes hands quite a few times before making it into the possession of the anarchist dwarf Markof Chaney who has a plastic surgeon graft it onto his own body (not being satisfied with his own organ). Eventually, Markof and Mary-Margaret meet:

They went to the kitchen to get the cognac, and he was swaggering a bit, like Perry Mason about to cross-examine, or the new gun in town.

He patted her Frankel gently. She patted his new Courage.

Then they went to the bedroom, and--after circumnavigating the globe and passing through 10²³ possible universes--Ulysses finally returned to Ithaca.

^{§§§§§§§§}*At the time of writing this particular novel, Wilson was either employing poetic license or he was ignorant of the medical procedure for sex-change surgery. He may have been naively assuming, as most people seem to believe, that the penis is amputated for these operations, or he may have been parodying such mistaken beliefs.*

(201)

Not the most direct nor flattering of allusions, but an allusion nonetheless.

Wilson's one work of fiction to date which contains the largest number of direct allusions to the work of Joyce is *Masks of the Illuminati* in which James Joyce also happens to be a character. One of the more clever of these occurs when Wilson describes Joyce's reaction to hearing "*Die Lorelei*":

The accordionist started a new tune: *Die Lorelei*. Joyce watched dim shadows ambiguously move, starting at the bookcase. "Flowers," he muttered. "*Blume*." (277)

Of course, this is an allusion to Leopold Bloom's pseudonym "Henry Flowers." Another reference to *Ulysses* can be found during one of the drug-and-sex initiation scenes: "*Je suis Bovary*, Flaubert said looking embarrassed. *Je suis Molly Bloom*, Joyce said unembarrassed" (285).

In other allusions in *Masks of the Illuminati* Wilson refers not to Joyce's writing, but to his life. For instance, at one time the character Joyce has an hallucination in which he sees:

Lucia Joyce lifted her skirt flirtatiously, showing a blue garter.

Go, damn you, she shouted at James. Hide under the ground. I know you're watching us. Watching, always watching. You know everything--men women boys girls--and you see through it all don't you? You live in your head and

don't love anyone. ***** (284)

Here, we are obviously seeing a kind of *return of the dead*, as in *Ulysses*. Joyce is confronted by the spirit of his schizophrenic daughter (*who, although not physically dead at this point, is certainly spiritually dead to Joyce and beyond his reach by this time in the novel*).

In his non-fiction work, Wilson will often discuss Joyce's novels or quote from them merely to add *color* or emphasis to one of his points regarding such diverse interests as politics, poetry, quantum physics, economics, and psychology. Turning to works such as *Right Where You Are Sitting Now*, *The Illuminati Papers*, *Prometheus Rising* and *Quantum Psychology* we can find just such references.

At other times, Wilson spends a great deal of time and effort to specifically and more extensively discuss Joyce's work. We will often be treated to insights into his impressions of a work or a concept. Just such a brief occurrence can be found in an account of his impressions of Dublin and synchronicity in Joyce:

On June 16, 1985, I went to the office of the *Dublin Evening Herald* to turn in my review of the new "corrected" edition of *Ulysses* I was handing in a review of a book containing 1000 synchronicities and I seemed to be part of a larger synchronicity containing both me and the book. (*Cosmic Trigger 2* 178)

The fullest and most detailed discussions of Joyce by Wilson are found in *Coincidence* and several of his lectures.

Sometimes, Wilson will turn to Joyce, not out of intellectual

***** Notice the lack of quotation marks in this novel - - another technique Wilson may have borrowed from Joyce.

but out of emotional need. Demonstrating just how deeply he is affected by Joyce, Wilson turned to his precursor in even so emotional a time as his daughter's death^{††††††††}:

Looking out my window down at the vast sprawl of the Bay Area, I sometimes recall that somewhere down there another young girl lies beaten to death, another poor cop is breaking the news to another pair of bereaved parents. We still have one murder every 14 minutes in this mad society. I know, truly, that I have been a lucky man, and my family has been lucky compared to most of human history, which is still, as Joyce said, a nightmare from which we are seeking to awake. (Cosmic Trigger 252)

In this particular instance, Wilson's view of Joyce may seem quite pessimistic, but that is understandable given the immediate circumstances. On the whole, Wilson tends to receive a very positive message from Joyce. Although Wilson is quite a skeptic, this should not be too easily confused with a pessimistic life philosophy. He is actually one of the most optimistic philosopher-writers writing today.

In this paper, I have tried to demonstrate how several stylistic techniques originally employed by Joyce have been appropriated by Wilson. These techniques and their related elements range from the use of verbal collage, synchronicity, borrowed styles, drama, linguistic play, song/rhyme, character cross-over, sexual frankness, organizing principles, autobiographical elements, and allusion. I have tried to

^{††††††††} *Luna Wilson was the first murder victim to be placed in cryogenic suspension - - at the time of his daughter's murder; Wilson was the head of the Institute for the Study of the Human Future and had many friends in this field. It was through donations made by such friends and others that this expensive and complicated procedure was made possible for his daughter. Luna was just 15 years-of-age when she died, beaten to death during a robbery. Wilson's account of Luna's life and death is the most powerful and most moving episode in his autobiography (see Cosmic Trigger).*

maintain throughout that although Wilson received many of these techniques (and more) from Joyce, he has managed to make them his own - - *all the while acknowledging where he got them from.*

As a final note, I feel compelled to stress that Wilson is not a mere imitator. A danger in this kind of influential comparison is that readers may receive a skewed image of the ephebe writer. While Wilson has been influenced in style by Joyce - - at least that is what this paper has been an attempt to demonstrate - - there is much more to Wilson's work than this influence.

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BITTER TEARS AT SAD MARY'S

A Living on the Edge Interactive Drama

for ten players

Scott Beattie and Tonia Walden

Setting: Sad Mary's Bar and Girl. Located off the Plaza of Flowers, this is a popular hang-out on The Edge. The stone building has two stories and overlooks the plaza. Above the door is a statue of Mary, pregnant and weeping into her hands. Only the words "Bar and Girl" appear on the face of the building. Most nights this seedy dive is crammed with cutthroats, scumbags and lowlifes - drinking, dealing and jostling for the best place to view the fights. The venue features a stage on which the management hosts fights, exotic dancers and performance art (such as Francesca and her Leather Friends, Volt-Eater, the Masked Maniac, Antonio and the Power Drill of Love and Cooking with Hans and Ivan - only for those with the strongest of stomachs). Tonight, however, it is New Years Eve and the majority of the Al Amarjan citizens are on the streets, celebrating, thieving or cutting throats. The bar is quiet with just ten customers, enjoying the quiet away from the carnival. There are no fights tonight and Joe and Evangeline are the only staff present. It looks like it is going to be a quiet

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night.

People in the Bar:

Joe & Evangeline (Bar Staff) These are the Game Moderators, they play no active role in the story and you may ask them if you want to try something tricky or contact someone outside the list of players. For example, if you want to try to pick someone's pocket, or spike their drink or phone someone, see a GM.

Bob Fine - Bob is a working Joe who is almost a constant fixture at Sad Mary's betting on the fights or drinking himself into a stupor. He is a good listener but seldom tells anyone about his own woes except that his old lady wants to work him till he drops. He has an arrogant smirk and is never seen without a toothpick in the corner of his mouth. When not drinking alcohol he has his coffee jumped with amphetamines. He has an annoying habit of taking things you say very literally.

Bruno Roth - Roth is burger through and through. Al Amarja sees a lot of tourists and their ready cash, gullibility and lack of powerful friends has led to the slang term 'burger' being coined for tourists. Roth is a famous American author and he wrote a bestselling novel which recreates Grimms' fairy tales for adults in modern settings. His book "The Perpendicular Grimm" has had a deal of commercial success. Almost everyone has a copy of it on their bookcase but since he uses such long words, very few people have actually read it. He hangs around at Sad Mary's soaking up the atmosphere, fiercely scribbling into his little note book. He has a caring and thoughtful manner for an academic.

Donald Baughman - Another American burger on holiday with his wife Eleanor. He is a quiet, sensible man of sombre demeanour and few words.

Eleanor Baughman - American burger on holiday with her husband

Donald. She is small and nervous, like a mouse. Her gaze darts about the bar. The most striking aspect of her appearance is the white lock of hair at her temple.

Elias Bettelheim - A kindly old bespectacled toymaker who often gives out free gifts to the children of the Edge. He lives above a ramshackle shop filled with all sorts of wonders and strange devices. He carries a tatty old woollen coat around with him, despite the temperate climate of Al Amarja. He is a gentle and wise old man who occasionally says the strangest things for apparently no reason at all.

Max Reaver - Max is a peace officer although she is off duty this evening. On Al Amarja only peace officers may carry guns, which has led to the knife becoming an important fashion accessory. Other things which are (technically) illegal are drugs and psychic powers. She seems fairly shy for a cop, standing well back from people she talks to. In fact, her quiet, reserved nature has led to many an embarrassing situation. Max has an apparent ability to blend in with the furniture. Many a time patrons have been bragging about their illegal or unscrupulous deeds, unaware that Max is sitting nearby, tossing a bar coaster or toying with a bit of hair.

Montgomery Knapp - The Fable's Creed is a society of satanists of the worst sort; rich, decadent and downright vicious. As the president, Her Exaltedness Monique D'Aubainne allows equal suffrage for all religions the satanists have equal standing to Baptists on Al Amarja. Most Edge citizens treat both with equal dislike and distrust. Monsieur Knapp is devilishly handsome and carries a cane inscribed with mystical symbols.

Mathurin Turgot - This sleazy street dealer lurks about the most disreputable parts of The Edge. He is seen in the company of other low-lives, furtively conducting their shady transactions, strangely without the fashionable yet functional knife which is de rigueur for most Edge dwellers. He has a seedy appearance, yet he has gleaming

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white teeth and a charming manner.

Faith Semelaigne - Faith is known in the Plaza of Flowers as “the woman in the red dress”. She has been a prostitute for several years but seems to be branching off into other transactions. Perhaps she is providing for her retirement. Certainly her clients, who range from shoe salesmen to defrocked priests have no complaints about her services. She enhances her natural elegance with understated makeup and fragrances. Her wicked grin suggests that there is a calculating intelligence behind those beautiful green eyes.

Hippensteel - The edge is full of street personalities, making their living in what ever demented way they please. Although she may revolt you by picking through her matted hair under her mangy Daniel Boone hat, Hippensteel is usually a source of unusual curiosities and advice to help with all but the most mundane of problems. If only she didn't look at you in that intense, almost indecent way...

Game Moderator's Guide to Running Sad Marys:

First of all read all of the character sheets. Twice. This should give you a handle on most of the plots, as well as the deceit and intrigue. This guide should clear up some of the more confusing plots.

This freeform introduces a few new conspiracies to *Over the Edge*. It is intended as a generic introduction to the game, and as such it should not give away too much on the existing conspiracies which might prejudice someone's campaign. There are some hints relating to the Pharoahs and their relationship to the Aphids, but apart from this, most of the rest shouldn't be a problem.

If players want to play their own characters, this creates a problem for the GM. The plots are tailor made for this set of characters and it is unlikely that characters can be easily transposed. This means the GM has to write new plots for the player characters, or let them run with minimal plots such as 'find out what's going on at Sad Mary's'.

This is specially designed as a small freeform. It was originally run as a New Year's Eve party with a small group of friends, cocktails and Mediterranean food. Many restaurants will let you book a private room for these purposes (although you do have to be careful when telling them what you're up to - telling them you are running a 'murder party' is a lot less risky than actually describing this freeform).

St Mary's of Bethlem - The Semiotic Assassin's Plot

This is the central plot of the freeform, and there are only hints relating to this on some of the character sheets. Most of this plot has to be run by the Gms, in their guise as bar staff at Sad Mary's. It requires a subtle touch.

The basic plot is this. A group of postmodern ruffians, The Semiotic Assassins, are after one of their many enemies, the last of the Matagot

Sorcerers (Hippensteel). She just happens to be at Sad Mary's when they decide to strike. They use deconstruction magic which alters the reality of the victim, writing them out of objective reality. In this case the Semiotic Assassins seek to transform Sad Mary's on the Al Amarjan mythic world, to St Mary's of Bethlem Asylum on (our own) mundane world. Thus she will be out of their hair forever. They are prepared to sacrifice everyone else, including Bob Fine who is one of their agents.

The transformation is gradual and indicated by the role played by the GMs (who change from seedy bar staff to patronising nursing staff) and the use of some props:

- Once the freeform has reached its half way mark, Gms should start giving out Madness cards. This makes the character believe that they are really a mental patient and that Al Amarja is merely a fantasy world. The only people immune to this are Bruno Roth as he is a powerful (if latent) semiotic mage and Faith Semaleigne who is his creature. Bob, Max and Elias because of their experience of weird alternative realities and transformation should be the last three to get these cards.
- Background music changes from some kind of cool Arabic/Jazz to something inane and annoying like 100 hits of Hawaii played on plunky nylon string guitar.
- The Bar Coasters change from "Sad Mary's Bar and Girl" to "St Mary's Hospital". This can be done gradually without anyone catching on for a while.
- The cutlery disappears. Characters are left with one the cutlery that they cannot hurt themselves with.
- Any tasty food disappears, it is replaced by jelly and custard.

- No alcoholic drinks - characters get orange cordial and pills.
- Weaponry etc become toys.
- Fringe powers cease to work
- Only writing materials are crayons and butchers paper. Encourage the players to make drawings, do craft and undertake other forms of therapy.
- Joe and Evangeline turn from bar staff into hospital psychiatric nurses and order patients to get into their jim-jams or take their medication. Be as patronising and horrible as you like.
- If anyone tries to leave there are bars on the window. Door is locked and barred with other hospital staff on the other side. Can see wind blowing through trees on a sunny day somewhere in the country.

There is a scrying crystal ball floating about in this freeform, but it is broken. If the ball is fixed (Elias can do this), it picks up random signals from outside. If Montgomery uses it to try and see what he saw before (look at the sheet, I don't want to explain it all here) he will see the Monk, the Tapir and the Hairless Man (not the Blind Pencil Seller) gloating that the Semiotic Ritual is complete and soon they will all forget who they really are and become merely mental patients. The last of the Matagots is no more! Bwahhahahahahahahaha!

Only way out is to get back to normal is get Bruno, the Latent Semiotic Mage, to write the characters back into the real world. To do this they have to tell him EVERYTHING. This involves everyone sitting around and spilling their life story for Bruno to write down. Anything they do not tell him drops out of reality. You may need to

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drop some hints if players are not figuring this out. Faith's unreality is the key to the whole issue.

One last point, unless Bruno thinks to include a phrase which says something like "they all loved their very best friend Bruno", he will probably turn up dead in a couple of days. Folks don't like the thought of God wandering around.

The Baughman Murder

Eleanor has murdered her husband Donald, whose body was subsequently eaten (don't ask). His wallet was found by an amnesiac man who, believing it to be his own, returned to the hotel. Eleanor, worried about her rash actions has used a transformation drug (Fugue) to remould this man's features to look like Donald.

The man is actually Rainer King, apparently a human but actually a creature called an Aphid. Aphid's have a secondary lymph system which produces a drug called Apep's Breath. This is the source of immortality for another species known as the Pharoahs, who keep the Aphid's like cattle. Rainer King (the man with the crooked nose) escaped.

The big problem for Aphids is that unless they have this fluid 'milked' from their systems, they grow slower and lazier and stupider until they can be retrieved by their masters. Rainer thought he had this under control until his was mugged by Mathurin Turgot who extracted the Apep's Breath and dumped him in the sewer. A blow to the head robbed Rainer of his memory.

Now poor 'Donald' is getting stupider by the minute. Hand out Stupid cards to reflect this. This should start early in the freeform or it will get mixed up with the madness cards. The only way to reverse the process is for someone to extract the Apep's Breath with a needle.

The other plots you can figure out for yourself. If not, contact Scott (email: scott.beattie@arts.monash.edu.au) for some help.

It is a good idea to give the players their sheets (plus a copy of the general guide to who's who) a week or so before the freeform starts. This gives them an opportunity to read their plots carefully and to prepare costumes.

Have fun.

Brian David Phillips

Bob Fine

Appearance: Working Joe & Barfly
True Nature: Semiotic Assassin
Job: Undercover Peace Officer

Central Trait:

Undercover Cop - Includes fighting both bare handed and with weapons, lying, keeping cool in hazardous situations, disguise - 4 dice (drinks jumped coffee)

Side Traits:

Fringe Power: Semiotic Assassination - knows the ritual magic of reality deconstruction. This takes a long time and a lot of research but can prevent someone or something from ever existing. Bob is not a very powerful mage and can only perform this sort of magic in co-operation with other Semiotic Assassins- 1 dice (takes meanings literally)

Tough - Resists pain, fatigue and intimidation - 3 dice (always keeps a toothpick in the corner of his mouth)

Flaw:

Cocky - Believes he is far cleverer than anyone else (arrogant smirk)

Motivation: To bring a bit of order to an untidy world
Secret: Loves animal films, cries every time he sees Lassie
Important Person: J Edgar Hoover (a man's man)

Experience: 1 dice
Hit Points: 28

Equipment: Gun (concealed)
Peace Force ID
Semiotic Cypher Spike implanted in the base of the skull

Wallet with \$100

Everyone at Sad Mary's knows Bob Fine, working joe and regular barfly. They know about his working class lifestyle, his casual prejudices and his fondness for hard liquor. What they do not know is the fact that he is an undercover Peace Officer working for the feared Constance D'Aubainne and also a semiotic magician, a member of the sinister conspiracy group known as the Semiotic Assassins.

The movement of post modernism has taught us that power is knowledge and knowledge is power. The science of semiotics has taught us that much power is caught up in the meanings of words - the interpretation we assign to things defines their reality. The Semiotic Magicians have put this theory into practice.

If you can deconstruct a reality to its bare essences then you can destroy it or even reconstruct it in a different manner. Many primitive religions place importance on a person's true name. Control the name and you control the person. This is a form of Semiotic Magic.

The Semiotic Assassins are a conspiracy of semiotic magicians who use ritual semiotic magic to destroy or alter their targets. They recently struck a killing blow against their foremost enemy - a group of Atlantean sorcerers known as "Matamaggots" or something. These mages had a small eastern European country under their control, a country which no longer has a name. The Semiotic Assassins gathered the nine essences of the nation and deconstructed its reality - the name fell out of books and living memory, atlases rearranged themselves around the space where the country used to be, millions of people ceased to have ever existed. Rumour has it that one of the sorcerers escaped and is seeking revenge on the Semiotic Assassins.

The Semiotic Assassins use a device known as a 'Cypher Spike' to enhance their ritual magic. This piece of metal is embedded in the base of the skull and attunes the brain to semiotic resonances. Some

Semiotic Mages are so powerful that they do not need to alter their minds in this way. In fact some latent semiotic magicians quite happily create and redefine reality without ever realising in. Characters from stories may come alive, fictional places may become real. The Semiotic Magician who created such things seems to have the power to alter the reality by altering the original text. It is rumoured that the United States of American is the result of such an unintended semiotic construction by a group of nineteenth century Viennese novelists who desired to create a convincing fictional country. What is clear is that the creation may outlive the creator as America continues despite the fact that all five of the Austrian writers are long since dead.

Bob was not involved in the destruction of the unnamed country but he has been contacted by another Assassin, a blind pencil seller, who has told him that the escaped sorcerer has come to the island of Al Amarja and has been seen frequenting Sad Mary's. The Blind Pencil Seller represents the Fickle Trust, a group of powerful assassins which includes Brother Hystronicus (a Dominican friar), Lesser (a talking tapir) and Sir Hamilton (an entirely hairless man). The Blind Pencil Seller mentioned the existence of the sorcerer to Bob and said that he would be in contact again in one of the private booths at Sad Mary's.

He never made the meeting. His corpse was found in a back alley, throat cut. Someone had dabbed astrological graffiti in his blood suggesting that the Aries Gang was responsible. The Peace Force have followed up on this murder by clamping down on the Aries operations but Bob is sure that it is a set-up and the Matamaggot (whoever he or she is) is responsible.

The Semiotic Assassins are also interested in the writings of Bruno Roth, the American professor who is on holiday in Al Amarja. He is said to be working on a 'theory of everything' a philosophical work which could amount to a form of semiotic shorthand, a theory underpinning all of reality. This would be invaluable in the Semiotic Assassins schemes for world domination. The Peace Force Central Dispatch have issued a general notice to keep an eye on Roth as

various conspiracies may be out to get him and his theory. Bob has taken due note of this and has been following him around as he sees the sights of the Edge.

Dispatch has also put Bob onto the MC Hamish case. Hamish runs a pirate radio station which broadcasts from somewhere in the Critica Range. Hamish is a fundamentalist Christian and has incited much violence through his sermons on 'morality vengeance'. Basically he suggests that someone who does something to offend your sense of morality is actually committing a moral crime against you. The only course open for a victim of such a moral crime is revenge - an eye for an eye - usually through physical violence. Thus Hamish is responsible for a wave of outrage and violence against sex workers, abortion clinic staff and patients, homosexuals, drug users, non-Christians, fashion models, intellectuals and their pets. The Peace Force want him removed, permanently. The heat has got too much for Hamish and he has stopped broadcasting recently. Bob has found an old shack full of radio gear in the Critica Range woodlands. He saw an old land rover leaving the site but could not make out the muddy numberplate in the dark. Not much to go on.

Bob has also kept abreast of Peace Force investigations in other areas on the Plaza of Flowers. First there is an enormous black dog which has been killing people. Also, there is a new drug on the market. It is called "Fugue" and it apparently allows people to mould their faces into disgusting shapes. Talk about 'off your face'. It usually wears off with the drug but prolonged use can be dangerous.

The Peace Force want this drug investigated. It has quite a high street value so Bob is interested in finding the source of the drug and taking over operations for himself. Drugs are officially illegal on Al Amarja but the Peace Force does little to enforce the laws unless it wants to persecute someone for some other reason.

Bob also knows buyer for a drug called "Milkwhite". A member of Doctor Nusbaum's staff (at the D'Aubainne Hospital) has offered Bob

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\$10,000 for a quantity of the drug. Bob has no idea what it is or where it comes from but this kind of money is too good to pass up. After all, cops earn lousy wages.

Finally, Bob has his eye on Hippensteel, the annoying street lunatic who frequents Sad Mary's. She is certainly up to no good. He saw her slip into a private booth with that scumbag Turgot the other day. Earlier this evening she skulked off to the mens' toilets. Elias Bettelheim, the old toymaker waited until he thought no one was looking and went after her. Perhaps she has some kind of sick sex thing going?

OBJECTIVES:

- Get the theory of everything for the Semiotic Assassin to use, furthering their sinister plans for world domination.
- Locate a source of Milkwhite to sell.
- Find source of fugue drug and take over operations using whatever means are necessary.

Bruno Roth

Appearance: Burger
True Nature: Academic Fraud
Job: Professor, famous author

Central Trait:

Plagiarist - Knows how to lie, bluff baffle the opponent with postmodernist gobbledegook. Also allows Bruno to sneak around in empty offices, riffle through files and quickly glance at a colleagues notes while pretending to do something else - 4 dice (uses long words like 'deconstruction', 'paradigm', 'poststructuralism', 'knowledge/power relationship' and 'semiotic induction')

Side Traits:

Lady's Man - Bruno is a bit of a charmer and loves to string the ladies along, often several at a time. This has frequently got him into trouble with undergraduate students. - 3 dice (thoughtful, caring manner)

Hack Writer - Bruno is a talented fiction author, particularly when reinterpreting fairy tales in a modern milieu- 4 dice (keeps a notebook of ideas)

Flaw:

Ambition - Bruno is impatient and cannot wait to figure things out for himself. He looks for any shortcut to achieve his goals.

Motivation: Fame & glory
Secret: Has cheated on every single piece of assessment and every publication in his career
Important Person: Sally Krensler, the little girl in grade 2 who sat next to Bruno and had all the right answers

Experience Pool: 1 Dice

Hit Points: 14

Bruno is a successful author whose book "The Perpendicular Grimm" brought him fame and modest fortune a few years ago. It was a reworking of the traditional fairy tales into a modern setting with disturbing twists of character, reflecting the dark side to fairy tales that were often suppressed in translation. For example his favourite story, was a modern cautionary tale about Little Red Riding Hood, portrayed her as a decadent vamp with no heart. However Bruno's seeming brilliance is only a facade, as he has never used an original idea in his life - even his fairy tale book idea was stolen from an obscure comic book. His first book was "The ID and I" a book which attacked modern psychology in a fictional setting. Being about peoples psychosis it was an immediate hit - Bruno had stolen the idea from the author Donald Baughman, whom he got drunk one night and they spent the night drunkenly discussing what was to become the plot of the book consisting mainly of Donald's innovative observations. The book set Bruno on the road to success and he can generally call the shots at publishing houses nowadays. His (some might say indulgent) use of long words in his books means only academics usually manage to finish his books giving them intellectual snobbery value - thus almost has them in their bookshelf but none will admit to only having read them half way through.

He has recently been boasting of a book on the "Theory of Everything", a soer of semiotic Grand Unifying Theory, which is already being anticipated as a critical success within literary circles. Unfortunately for Bruno he knows it is not his own idea, but once again Donald Baughman's. He has tracked Baughman who is on holiday in the country of Al Amarja - this country has a rather exotic if seedy reputation and Bruno has decided that if he is to steal Donald's latest idea that it would be the ideal remote locale.

Bruno is still on speaking terms with Donald Baughman, who does not really remember how much his contributions helped Bruno's career. However Bruno only feigns friendship with the man as he abhors the

way Baughman treats his wife, Eleanor. He constantly belittles her achievements and never misses an opportunity to humiliate her in public. Although Bruno thought she must have a "victim" complex to stay with the man so long, to his surprise he saw her just the other night meeting with a stranger with a crooked nose - they appeared to be on intimate terms. However when Bruno met with Donald, Eleanor was by his side as usual. Baughman seemed less abrasive than normal and almost seemed at a loss when Bruno strode up to greet him. Eleanor apologised that they were extremely busy but have agreed to meet at the local bar, Sad Marys. Bruno is going to try to attempt to loosen Donald's tongue and make at start at his intellectual thievery.

Al Amarja so far hasn't been exactly hospitable - earlier this week his room was robbed - the thief only got a few valuables but for some reason they also stole his copy of "The Perpendicular Grimm" which Bruno carries for good luck. He has also been harassed by loonies who have been leaving threatening notes - he suspects Christian fundamentalist group who don't like his books which often deal with exploding theological beliefs. Yesterday, was miserable and rainy and he keep getting the feeling he was being followed and which got him so worked up that he attempted to run. He literally bowled over a shabby old man in his attempt to flee, who he found out was Elias the Toymaker. When he helped Elias up he couldn't help but smell the strong unpleasant odour of wet dog that hung around the man

The country seems full of loonies - and the bar doesn't seem to have any policy in keeping them out. They let a shabby old bag lady in wearing a Daniel Boone hat who snuck off to the men's toilets earlier this evening. As soon as she left Elias Bettelheim snuck away after her. Perhaps there is some kinky sex thing going on. Bruno just doesn't want to know.

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EQUIPMENT

Notebook and Pencil

Wallet with \$500

OBJECTIVES

- Locate "Theory of Everything"
- Find out who is after you and stop them
- Bruno has a contract for a new fiction book which he has already been paid handsome advances on. He has got writer's block and is desperately looking for a story to write. Perhaps something on Al Amarja will inspire him.

Donald Baughman

Appearance: Burger
True Nature: Confused Academic
Job: Professor

Central Trait:

Amnesiac Professor - Donald should know lots of things about literature and philosophy. He is supposed to be working on a theory of everything - a philosophical equivalent of the Grand Unifying Theory. Unfortunately he cannot remember anything. (wears boring clothes)

Side Traits:

Sensible - Donald is not easily conned or carried away by excitement. He prefers to keep his distance and make a quiet evaluation. This is not to say that he is not a fun guy - he laughs on the inside - 3 dice (does not show strong emotion)

Devoted to his wife - Eleanor is the light of Donald's life. Donald gets a bonus dice in any situation where Eleanor's welfare is at stake such as a berserk rage to protect her from harm - bonus dice (always hovers around Eleanor)

Flaw:

Amnesia - since the blow to his head, large patches of Donald's memories have been a bit fuzzy

Goal: To make sense of life

Secret: There is something, but he has forgotten what it is

Important Person: Eleanor Baughman, the only secure anchor in a confused world.

Experience Pool: 1 dice

Equipment: Wallet with ID and about \$6 (someone stole the rest)

Donald is a rather confused person. Apart from the last few days, his memories are a blur. Prior to that, the last thing he remembers is a flash of light and pain and then being icy cold. He woke up by the side of an underground river (some might say a natural sewer). Nearby, he found his wallet with his drivers license and a hotel room receipt. Not quite knowing where he was or where the hotel was, he wandered the streets for a time trying to collect his thoughts, but his head throbbed in pain and he realised there was dried blood on the back of his skull. He was disgusted when a horrible street person wearing a ridiculous Daniel Boone hat, suddenly came up to him and rubbed herself closely against him. Scared that she was making a sexual advance he ran quickly away.

Dazed he asked strangers the whereabouts of the hotel and went seeking refuge. The hotel staff didn't recognise him but they called down Eleanor, who he couldn't remember either. She was his wife, and he realised to his horror that all his memories were gone. He obviously had been attacked and probably robbed but he can't remember who did it. Eleanor took care of him and tended to his injuries and he now feels physically better though mentally he feels drained and his memories haven't come back yet

He noticed that he has some kind of a strange brand mark on his chest - it resembles an Egyptian hieroglyph. He asked Eleanor where he got it from and she said it was an accident when they were in Cairo - that he had been interested in a strange scarification technique and the confused natives performed it on him before he could protest. Quite frankly it sounded like a bullshit answer.

Eleanor also revealed that she was addicted to a drug known as 'Fugue' which she has been buying from that shady street person, Mathurin Turgot. She claims she needs \$2000 for her next hit, but she is broke. Poor old Donald is broke, too and he cannot remember the account codes for his bank account.

Apparently Donald is a professor who had been working on some sort of theory. However he can't find any note or books on whatever this was - he thought if he could find them it might jog his memory. The notes were probably lost in the river - or perhaps someone stole them

Tonight he is meeting his friend Bruno Roth the author, whom he also can't remember a thing about. He tried to read Bruno's book "The Perpendicular Grimm" to try and remember something, but there were so many long words in it that he only got through the first couple of chapters.

He was waiting for both Eleanor and Bruno in a private booth at Sad Mary's Bar when he saw the disgusting street person again going into one of the private booths. Curious he eavesdropped on her conversation and found out her name was Hippensteel (sounds like an orthopaedic hip replacement). She was telling Mathurin, the drug dealer, that she had seen the prostitute Faith kill a blind pencil seller. This hit Donald with a jolt - he remembers an image of a blind pencil seller talking to him and giving Donald money and then sharp pain of a syringe in his chest. The memory only lasted a moment but it was very vivid. Mathurin gave Hippensteel something small in return for this information. Something which made a tinkling noise.

He also saw Hippensteel sneak off to the men's toilets earlier this evening. As soon as she left the elderly Elias Bettelheim snuck away after her. Is there no end to the depravities in this place?.

OBJECTIVES

- Find out what happened to you so that you lost your memory

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- Get some money to pay Mathurin. God only knows what Donald could sell to raise money in a seedy and desperate town like the edge.
- Find out what the drug 'Fugue' is. What does it do and why does Eleanor use it. What are her chances of kicking the addiction? Find a cheaper source of the drug than that shyster Mathurin Turgot.

Eleanor Baughman

Appearance: Burger

True Nature: Psychologically Abused Professor's Wife

Job: Sculptor

Central Trait:

Visual Artist - Eleanor is involved with a wide variety of visual arts but prefers sculpture - 4 dice (dirty finger nails)

Side Traits:

Animal Empathy (Fringe Power) - Animals get on well with Eleanor and she can often get them to do things that they would not ordinarily do - 2 dice (white lock of hair)

Quick - Can move and react rapidly to avoid danger - 3 dice (nervous eyes)

Flaw:

Sucker for a Pretty Face - penalty dice when being seduced or manipulated by an attractive man or woman. (Roving gaze)

Motivation: To find a happy life

Secret: Has murdered her husband

Important Person: Virginia Woolf (favourite author)

Experience Pool: 1 dice

Hit Points: 14

Equipment: 1 last dose of fugue

about \$60 (spent most of her money on Fugue or Faith)

Needle and syringe

Eleanor is the wife of famed academic Donald Baughman. Her marriage until recently had been a very unhappy one. Donald enjoys

psychologically torturing people - none more so than his wife. He takes out all his social and mental frustrations on her, belittling her achievements and making her feel inferior. After he used a piece of her sculpture as an unfavourable example of the delusions of the artistic mind, at an international conference she finally snapped. Knowing they were going on a holiday to the remote country of Al Amarja, where she had heard life is cheap, she bided her time. As soon as they arrive she acted, drugging him with sleeping pills in his cocoa and smothering him with a pillow as he slept. She dumped the body in an old abandoned sewage tunnel and informed the hotel he had gone back to New York but she would stay on for a few weeks. She then made the most of Donald's money buying services from a local prostitute, Faith. She has started to feel more than a passing affection - she has fallen in love or at least lust. She buys Faith gifts to try and win her affection and although Faith is very grateful, Eleanor can't help thinking she is only putting on an act for a client. Eleanor would dearly love her affection to be honestly reciprocated. Recently she gave Faith a locked jewel box for safekeeping. It hides her dead husband's research notes - these notes could be quite valuable at a later date, as he was working on the "Theory of everything" - a philosophical equivalent of the Grand Unifying Theory.

However Eleanor's new lifestyle changed all of a sudden, when a couple of days ago a man with a crooked nose turned up at the hotel reception claiming to be her husband. He said he was amnesiac but had Donald's wallet and drivers licence. She thought he had probably stolen them but in her panic about what to do thought up a rather brilliant plan.

From Faith, she had heard about a drug called "Fugue" which can allow flesh to be sculpted into new shapes. While the stranger was still in his dazed and confused state she brought a large dose from the local drug dealer Mathurin Turgot. Making sure he was in a deep stupor she sculpted his face into a very passable likeness of Donald's. The new "Donald" accepted the change without comment making her think his story about losing his memories is probably true.

He has not said a word about blackmail and his devotion and gratitude to her seems sincere and is rather touching. Unfortunately she has to keep buying more "Fugue" to keep renew the change (always while he is in a sedated sleep) but his face is starting to settle into the new shape and soon he will resemble Donald permanently. Turgot has been asking for more and more money for the "Fugue" - at first it was \$500, now \$1000 per dose. Eleanor is late on the last payment and Turgot is getting impatient. She has also asked Turgot about aphrodisiacs (with the hope of using one on Faith) but he is unlikely to help until she settles her debt with him. She has 'confessed' to Donald that she is addicted to Fugue and needs \$2000 to get her next hit.

She

The fake Donald has some kind of a strange brand mark on his chest - it resembles an Egyptian hieroglyph. He asked Eleanor where he got it from and she said it was an accident when they were in Cairo - that he had been interested in a strange scarification technique and the confused natives performed it on him before he could protest. Not very clever but the best she could come up with at the time - what would induce someone to get a painful brand - surely it couldn't have been voluntary?

Tonight they are meeting with the famed author Bruno Roth, who is the author of "The Perpendicular Grimm". He has been a friend of Donald's for years although Donald felt that some of Bruno's ideas in one of his books, were rather close to some of his own theories - not that he could ever remember discussing it with him. Not that Eleanor really cares - and certainly the fake "Donald" won't remember this rivalry. She and "Donald" are meeting Bruno in one of the private booths in Sad Marys Bar.

When she came in she saw the local street personality Hippensteel sneak off to the men's toilets earlier this evening. As

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soon as she left Elias Bettelheim, the elderly toymaker snuck away after her. Perhaps there is some kinky sex thing going on.

OBJECTIVES

- Prevent anyone from finding out that you have murdered Donald. Also help the imposter maintain the facade.
- Get Faith to leave Al Amarja with you and live happily ever after
- Find out who the imposter really is and if he really has lost his memory

Elias Bettelheim

Appearance: Kindly Toymaker

True Name: Racher Vanderle, a Faerie Wolf

Job: Faerie Anarchist

Central Trait:

Reality Anarchist - Racher is devoted to the extinction of rationality in the modern world. While his aims seem similar to the Cut-Ups, he does not necessarily wish to defeat control addicts but rather to attack rationality itself. Racher's motivation for this is to restore the power of the Faerie realm which is threatened by a rational world where people do not believe in Faeries or magic. Racher has the power to undermine logic through inducing bizarre chains of events, make books on rationality unreadable, make machines and computers fail and generally throw a spanner into our assumptions about a rational, ordered world - 2 dice (says bizarre things for no reason)

Side Traits:

Shapechange (Fringe Power) - Racher carries an old coat with him everywhere he goes. This is his skin, while he has it on he may turn into a wolf (4 dice in combat, 28 hit points). The coat's true form is of rich black fur but he has disguised it with a glamour so that it appears to be an old woollen coat. He can change form only twice per day. He may turn into any human form he likes, but not one which resembles a living person (carries tatty old coat)

Make Toys - Racher has learnt to make lots of Faerie Toys, all of which do spiteful and unnecessarily harmful things to their owners. They range from the merely annoying to the potentially fatal - 4 dice (Wears spectacles to see details)

Flaw:

Vulnerable to Iron (does double damage and prevents shapeshifting)

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Motivation: To create irrationality so that the Faerie realm can spread once more. And to do this in the most annoying way possible.

Secret: Was once the sex slave of a vampire, but that is another story.

Important Person: James Dean, Racher admired his loner cool and used his form often, until things got a little hot back in Scotland.

Experience Pool: One Dice

Hit Points: 14

Equipment:

Black fur coat

Toys with sharp edges to take off children's fingers, smell funny and other sorts of nasty tricks

Dog Collar and Biscuits

\$200 in mixed currencies

Elias is really a dog. A dog called Racher.

Racher was born 300 years ago, the Faerie child of a Wolf Beast Lord from Arcadia and a fallen nun. Racher spent many years wandering Scotland as one of the 'black dogs' of lore - faerie spirits who punish evil-doers and aid the innocent. Unfortunately Racher had trouble getting the hang of this and was forever confusing the two. In the 1950s he became the familiar of a Scottish Chaos Magician, Grant Blake. Blake taught Racher how to assume human form and, perhaps more importantly, how to annoy those you despise.

Racher has come to Al Amarja to try and set up a new base for his faerie infiltrations into the rationale world. Back in Scotland, he had managed to piss off quite a few people, including some vampires, who would now like to own a dog skin coat. He also had heard his mentor Blake might have been involved in faery hunting - this rather worried him as Blake kind of scares him (not that he would admit it).

He learnt of a gateway out of Arcadia which led to a Greek island near Al Amarja. Racher used this, encountering the Lord of the Hunt who was none too pleased that some humans had been using the portal to enter Arcadia and go raiding for fay flora, fauna and folk. On the island Racher used his natural charm to persuade some good fisher folk to take him to Al Amarja (i.e. he stole their boat, which was their only means of livelihood). He fits right into this place where nobody ask questions and most paranoid delusions turn out to be true anyway. Thus it is the perfect hidey hole. So far he has had a lot of fun tracking down conspiracy theories and spying on people, but hasn't actually done a lot about any of it. Because too many people know about Racher, he has adopted a cunning disguise. He is pretending to be a kindly old toymaker called Elias Bettelheim. He has a small shop where he sells dangerous Faerie toys to small children, aimed at spreading irrationality and confusion.

Racher knows that reality is a tenuous concept and it often shifts and changes without people being aware of the change, simply just accepting this new version as if it had always existed. Although the idea is clear the practice of reality deconstructing is another matter altogether. If you can deconstruct a reality to it's bare essences then you can destroy it or even reconstruct it in a different manner. Many primitive religions place importance on a person's true name. Control the name and you control the person. This is a form of Semiotic Magic.

Racher has discovered a group known as the Semiotic assassins who sound very interesting. The Semiotic assassin use semiotic magic to destroy or alter their targets. They recently struck a killing blow against their foremost enemy - the Matagot sorcerers, who were descended from Atlantean mages. The Matagots had a small eastern European country under their control, a country which no longer has a name. The Semiotic Assassins gathered the nine essences of the nation and deconstructed its reality - the name fell out of books and living memory, atlases rearranged themselves around the space where the country used to be, millions of people ceased to have ever existed.

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Rumour has it one of the Matagots escaped and is seeking revenge on the Semiotic Assassins.

The Semiotic Assassins use a device known as a "Cyber Spike" to enhance their ritual magic. This piece of metal is embedded in the base of the skull and attunes the brain to semiotic resonances. Some Semiotic Mages are so powerful that they do not need to alter their minds in this way. In fact some latent semiotic magicians quite happily create and redefine reality without ever realising it. Characters from stories may come alive, fictional places may become real. The Semiotic Magician who created such things seems to have the power to alter the reality by altering the original text. It is rumoured that the United States of America is the result of such an unintended semiotic construction by a group of nineteenth century Viennese novelists who desires to create a convincing fictional country. What is clear is that the creation may outlive the creator as America continues despite the fact that all five of the Austrian writers are long since dead.

Racher has also discovered that Matagot actually is a word that means sorcerer CAT. Racher can't believe cats could perform magic - dogs yes, but cats are too stupid. Anyway he wants to interfere with the assassins to see if he could learn how to deconstruct large areas of reality which should be replaced with the faerie realm - how is another matter - maybe if he just confuses the Semiotic magicians everything will fall into place?

There was a Blind Pencil Seller who used to work the corner near Sad Marys. Racher thought he may have been a faerie hunter (because he had some iron coated pencils) but he refrained from killing him as he found out he was a contact for the semiotic assassins while eavesdropping near the public phones. Lately the pencil seller hasn't been on his corner and no-one has seen him. Perhaps someone else got to him before Racher could.

Drugs while technically illegal are quite commonplace. There is a new drug on the market which has Racher worried it is called "Fugue" and

is rumoured to allow flesh to be "shaped" - sounds rather like a shape-shifting drug. Does it have something to do with the faerie realm, and if so why didn't he know about it? And how can you annoy people with it?

Racher is also out to get the fanatical phantom Christian MC Hamish, who runs a pirate radio station. MC Hamish purports to be a cool youth deacon, spreading the gospel of Christ (ugh). Faeries hate Christians because their faith has eroded the old religions and destroyed much of the Faerie world of Arcadia. What MC Hamish actually spreads is hatred and rage - which you could almost respect him for but he is also a fundamental Christian. He has incited much violence through his sermons on "Morality vengeance". Basically he suggests that someone who does something to offend your sense of morality is actually committing a moral crime against you. The only course open for a victim of such a moral crime is revenge - an eye for an eye - usually through physical violence. Thus Hamish is responsible for a wave of outrage and violence against sex workers, abortion clinic staff and patients, homosexuals, drug users, non-Christians, fashion models, intellectuals and their pets (the pet bit has you worried). The Peace Force wants him removed permanently and Racher is only too willing to help. The heat must have got too much for Hamish and he has stopped broadcasting recently.

There is an underground river which runs under Al Amarja which is a great place to go and have a sniff about and see what dead things have floated to the river banks. A few weeks ago, late at night when Racher was taking himself for a walk, he saw the burger Eleanor Baughman dump something in a sewer leading to the river. It was suspiciously long and heavy looking, like a corpse wrapped in a blanket and she was having trouble getting it sink but eventually it did.

Although Racher primarily went to Al Amarja to get away from vampires he has found out there is a type of vampire that live in this country - they are something to do with Egypt and keep humans as slaves - they are said to brand them almost like cattle but apparently

there is some sort of symbiotic relationship between the vampire and the slaves. Montgomery Knapp the satanist smells like a dog. You wonder if it is just his distasteful sexual appetites or whether it is something else?

The burger Bruno Roth is a bestselling author who has written several controversial bestsellers , that often offend Christians because of the way they question theological ideas. Racher thinks this is pretty good and has followed him and noticed it really disturbed him so he kept doing it, accidentally running into him and making noises when Bruno knows no one else is around.

The street freak Hippensteel went into mens' toilets which intrigued Racher . No one noticed as Racher stealthily followed her. Racher waited for fifteen minutes outside the stall she had locked herself in- heard splashing and tinkling music. Suddenly there was a 'klink' followed by more splashing and swearing from Hippensteel. Then she left, holding a small ball which she slipped into her pocket.

OBJECTIVES:

- Interfere with the plans of any rationalist conspiracies. Keep an eye out for any Semiotic Assassins or those stupid cat magicians. Remember: pissing people off is fun!
- Locate and destroy MC Hamish
- Find the source of the Fugue Drug and see how it relates to Faerie

Max Reaver

Appearance: Peace Officer

True Nature: Lift Handset, Cut-up Girl

Job: Reality Terrorist

Central Trait:

Reality Infiltrator - Lift is superb at pretending to be someone else. She can lie without hesitation, improvise flawlessly and pass herself off as any type of person without being questioned - 4 dice (you tend to forget that she is there)

Side Traits:

Tongueslip (fringe power) - Lift can force persons to say the wrong thing as though it were a 'Freudian Slip'. She uses this on important people to embarrass them and undermine their reality. When you wish to use this give one of your five tongueslip cards to a GM. To use this power Lift must tug at a certain strand of hair which is actually a wire running through her skull and attached to a strange gland implanted behind her hypothalamus. Thus stimulated, the gland pumps strange chemicals into her nasal passage which she sneezes into the air. People inhaling the air-borne drug are the susceptible to the fringe power. (toys with a bit of her hair)

The Ancient Art of Mock-Fu - May use ordinary household objects to deadly effect by knowing just how to grip them or how to throw them - 3 dice (flips a beer coaster in her hand)

Flaw:

Tourette's Fur Allergy - physical or close contact with animals makes Lift scream obscenities. This can also be triggered by animal fur on people's clothes. (Stands well back from people - especially Elias, Montgomery and Hippensteel)

Motivation: To foil the schemes of control-addicts

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everywhere

Secret: Lift enjoys the power rush of being a cop but does not want to tell her cut-up compatriots who will think she has gone over to the control addicts side.

Important Person: Immanuel Fisbinsler, from alternative X, inventor of the automatic psalm, the electric finger, the heterosexual hedgetrimmer and other oddities.

Experience Pool: 1 dice

Hit Points: 21

Equipment: Fake Al Amarja Peace Force Badge

Real Gun

5 doses of Fugue (sells for \$100)

\$300 in money belt

Recipe for Fugue: Wings of 4 faeries

Teaspoon of peanut butter (extra crunchy)

1 brownie - lightly beaten (preferably chocolate chip)

2 Stinkcup mushrooms (from Arcadia)

1 cup boggie juice (freshly squeezed)

The Cutups are an international (and interdimensional) loose alliance of loonies, freaks and oddities. Their motto is "Dada was the theory - we are the practice". Their alternative motto is "This is the weather the cuckoo likes, armoured division submissive to vernacular the world into a gambling birdhouse velocity" The Cutups hate conspiracies and the control addicts who run them. The primary weapon in the Cutups arsenal is chaotic irrationality - they attack conspiracies by attacking the reality which undermines them. The Cutups place special importance on Al Amarja as it is simply crawling with conspiracies.

Lift Handset is a Cutup Girl from Alternative X - a dimension of weird science and even weirder cooking utensils. She is on Al Amarja posing as Peace Officer. Her mission: to stop the reality shifting machinations a sinister conspiracy known as the Semiotic Assassins.

The movement of postmodernism has taught us that power is knowledge and knowledge is power. The science of semiotics has taught us that much power is caught up in the meanings of words - the interpretation we assign to things defines their reality. Semiotic magicians have put this theory into practice.

If you can deconstruct a reality to its bare essences then you can destroy it or even reconstruct it in a different manner. Many primitive religions place importance on a person's true name. Control the name and you control the person. This is a form of Semiotic Magic.

The Semiotic Assassins are a conspiracy of semiotic magicians who use ritual semiotic magic to destroy or alter their targets. They recently struck a killing blow against their foremost enemy - the Matagot sorcerers, who were descended from Atlantean mages. The Matagots had a small eastern European country under their control, a country which no longer has a name. The Semiotic Assassins gathered the nine essences of the nation and deconstructed its reality - the name fell out of books and living memory, atlases rearranged themselves around the space where the country used to be, millions of people ceased to have ever existed. Rumour has it that one of the Matagots escaped and is seeking revenge on the Semiotic Assassins.

The Semiotic Assassins use a device known as a 'Cypher Spike' to enhance their ritual magic. This piece of metal is embedded in the base of the skull and attunes the brain to semiotic resonances. Some Semiotic Mages are so powerful that they do not need to alter their minds in this way. In fact some latent semiotic magicians quite happily create and redefine reality without ever realising in. Characters

from stories may come alive, fictional places may become real. The Semiotic Magician who created such things seems to have the power to alter the reality by altering the original text. It is rumoured that the United States of American is the result of such an unintended semiotic construction by a group of nineteenth century Viennese novelists who desired to create a convincing fictional country. What is clear is that the creation may outlive the creator as America continues despite the fact that all five of the Austrian writers are long since dead. Lift suspects that Faith, the prostitute in the red dress is this sort of construct as she is certainly not real. Not that Lift holds this against Faith, some of her best friends are not real.

The Cutups know that the Semiotic Assassins are involved in some plot regarding Sad Mary's. Their spy within the Semiotic Assassins ranks, a blind pencil seller, met with a powerful group inside the order known as the Fickle Trust. The group comprises of a monk, a talking tapir and a hairless man. They plan something big involving Sad Marys, apparently involving the escaped Matagot sorcerer. Unfortunately the blind pencil seller has gone missing, perhaps the Assassins caught him out.

Lift is currently attempting to discover what the Semiotic Assassins are up to. The American author, Bruno Roth, is on Al Amarja at the moment. He is apparently working on a 'theory for everything' a philosophical work which promises to create a form of semiotic shorthand which undermines all meanings. The Cutups want this theory as it would help them skew reality even further. Even if they cannot get the theory it must not, at any cost, fall into the hands of the semiotic assassins. There are other conspiracies on the island which would no doubt also be interested in it.

Lift is notionally a Peace Officer called Max Reaver. She has little contact with other Peace Officers as she fears they will discover her deceit. She has, however, learnt from other Officers about things which are happening on the Edge.

The cops are in a huge uproar about the pirate radio station run by the mysterious and fanatical MC Hamish. He purports to be a cool youth deacon, spreading the gospel of Christ. What he spreads is hatred and rage. Hamish runs his pirate radio station from somewhere in the Critica Range. Hamish is a fundamentalist Christian and has incited much violence through his sermons on 'morality vengeance'. Basically he suggests that someone who does something to offend your sense of morality is actually committing a moral crime against you. The only course open for a victim of such a moral crime is revenge - an eye for an eye - usually through physical violence. Thus Hamish is responsible for a wave of outrage and violence against sex workers, abortion clinic staff and patients, homosexuals, drug users, non-Christians, fashion models, intellectuals and their pets. The Peace Force want him removed, permanently. The heat must have got too much for Hamish and he has stopped broadcasting recently.

Drugs, while technically illegal on Al Amarja, are quite commonplace as the Peace Force does not enforce the law unless it is seeking to persecute someone for some other reason. Lift supports herself from making and selling a drug known as 'Fugue'. The drug (which must be injected) creates a euphoric high and makes the flesh malleable and liquid. The strange shapes experienced give a new meaning to 'off your face'. It is dangerous if taken over time and changes might become permanent. Another Cutup, a Scottish Chaos Magician called Grant Blake sold Lift the recipe as well as the location of a gateway to the Faerie lands of Arcadia (where the ingredients may be found) in a Greek ruin on one of the islands near Al Amarja.

Lift has been capturing Faeries for this potent brew and selling it to the sleazy street dealer Mathurin Turgot. Recently her intrusions have come to the attentions of the Lord of the Hunt. Things are getting a little too dangerous in Arcadia so Lift wants to sell the business (the recipe and the gateway location).

She is also wary of dealing with Turgot. A few days ago she saw him following a man with a crooked nose. Turgot hit the man over the

head, injected him with something and dragged him into the sewers and dumped him in the underground river. By the time Lift got to the river, the body had gone. This piece of nastiness has certainly soured business relations between her and Turgot.

Lift has to be careful of her fur allergy. She must keep her distance from Elias, Montgomery and Hippensteel as all three smell of animal fur. If they get too close Lift will start swearing uncontrollably. There is something going on between Elias and Hippensteel. Lift saw the both of them slip away to the mens' toilets together, earlier this evening. Perhaps it is some sick sexual thing involving a furry animal?

OBJECTIVES

- Obtain the Theory of Everything before the semiotic assassins or any other megalomaniac control addicts get to it
- Sell the Fugue business (the recipe and the location of the gateway to Arcadia) as it is getting too dangerous.
- Find out what happened to the Blind Pencil Seller.

Montgomery Knapp

Appearance: Decadent Socialite and Satanist
True Nature: Barduk Wolf Spirit
Job: Vengeance Spirit

Central Trait:

Spirit of Justice - the spirit can take on the physical form of a great wolf in order to pursue its quest for vengeance. In this form it can attack with 4 dice with 28 hit points. It can only use this power for a just cause. (Believes in right and wrong)

Side Traits:

Elegant Charmer - the spirit has digested the soul of Montgomery Knapp and has learnt his smooth charms - 3 dice (devilishly handsome)

Ocult Historian - the spirit has also absorbed much of Knapp's eclectic knowledge of the rum and uncanny. - 3 dice (always carries a cane with the ancient Romanian sign of the wolf inscribed on it)

Flaw:

Cannot physically or otherwise directly interfere with the murderer of Donald Baughman.

Motivation: To bring justice to the murderer of Donald Baughman

Secret: Fan of MC Hamish's right wing extremist pirate radio program. It is illegal under hatemongering laws on Al Amarja as the president, her exaltedness Monique D'Aubbaine liberated the island from the fascists and does not like this sort of extremist.

Important Person: Donald Baughman

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Experience Pool: 1 dice

Hit Points: 28

Equipment: Knife

Occult doo-dads

Wallet with \$200

\$1000 secreted in a shoe

The Barduk are spirits of justice. They are wolves who roam the spirit realm, waiting for acts of extreme violence to rupture the veil between the spirit world and the real one. Once unleashed on the real world they pursue evil-doers, devouring them body and soul until the offender who caused the rift is brought to justice. The wilds of the spirit world are notoriously devoid of the souls of sinners so when a Barduk enters our world, it slathers at the smell of so much ripe and succulent evil. The only limit on the Barduk's power is that, in the quest for justice, it cannot harm the original sinner. It must disclose the sinner and allow others to wreak vengeance. It must then return to the spirit world and await its reward.

A week ago, Donald Baughman was murdered. His body was dumped in an underground river and vanished without a trace. The Barduk spirit entered our world in the form of a wolf. It devoured evil wherever it found the stench of depravity but did not get close to finding Baughman's murderer. It is not like the old days where shamans would heed the portents of spirit beasts. These days everyone thinks that cujo is back in town. The Barduk realised that to pursue its quest it would have to possess a human form.

In the woods of the Critica Range it followed Mathurin Turgot in his battered old landrover to an old cabin believing him to be an evildoer but finding his soul to be curiously unstained for a drug dealer

and murderer. Unable to understand this or possess the man it let him be, making a mental note to follow up on him later.

Then the Barduk entered the apartment of Montgomery Knapp, a satanist and all round foul individual. He was not home so it chased his cat around for half an hour until it escaped. When Knapp came home, he met the hot breath of fury. The Barduk killed him and entered his body through the bite.

The spirit healed the body and made a home within it. Knapp's soul was destroyed so it had free reign of the man's body and his memories. He was a satanist, a member of a group known as the Fable's Creed.

He was researching a race known as 'the aphids'. They appear to be human yet their blood contains the secret of immortality. If their blood is not drunk regularly they become more and more feeble minded until they die. Knapp was desperately seeking these creatures as they may hold the key to immortality. He always wanted to be a vampire. Mortality caught up with him first, however.

Knapp's possessions were mostly tacky occult knick-knacks of little importance. One item did attract the Barduk's attention. It was a small crystal sphere filled with shiny metal fragments which made a melodic tinkly noise when shaken. If stared at for long enough, it gave visions - people, places, events. Most were unimportant. One vision the Barduk remembers clearly as it involves Sad Mary's. A monk, a blind pencil seller, a talking tapir and a hairless man meet inside an old warehouse. The tapir speaks, "The place of the weeping madonna - that is where she may be found. We shall trap her there. She is the last of her race, all others are dead, or rather, have never actually existed. <grunt>- the wonders of semiotic magic. The Matagot will soon cease to be of concern to us."

That was all. The Barduk does not know if the vision was past, future or merely fantasy. The ball was stolen by a burglar before it had time to experiment further. The Barduk wants the ball back, it may hold the key to some important conspiracy. Even if it does not,

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it rolled around the floor making a tinkly noise and was fun to chase about. Turgot seems to deal in almost everything - perhaps the thief has sold it to him?

The Barduk has met other dwellers on the Edge, particularly around the Plaza of Flowers, on its quest for justice. Before it adopted its human shape it ran into Hippensteel the street lunatic who was talking to some cats in an alley. They all spat at him and he thought it prudent to leave, recalling from a previous stint on the mortal coil how much a scratch across the nose smarts. Hippensteel has a lot to do with cats, she reeks from their foul smell.

Elias Bettelheim on the other hand smells pleasantly of dog, particularly when he is wet from the rain of the last few weeks. So why is it that both Hippensteel and Elias slipped off to the men's toilets together earlier this evening? Does it come to this - that even the natural order of things is turning upside down?

Faith Semalaigne, the prostitute in the red dress is not real. She has no soul. It is not even that the soul has some demonic mortgage on it - it simply does not exist. The Barduk is intrigued.

While in human form, the Barduk has grown to enjoy the things that humanity is privileged with. It enjoys the television and the radio - especially the broadcasts of the radio pirate MC Hamish. He may be a narrow minded moralistic bigot, but at least he believes in righteousness and justice. The show has gone off the air recently - perhaps one of his critics caught up with him.

In fact, the Barduk is so enjoying life in the material world that it does not want to return to the spirit world. Besides, there are far more sinners here - a Barduk's banquet every day! It fully intends to complete its quest eventually, but wishes to explore some of its options first. Some shamans in the past could bind a spirit to a place, a thing or a body. If this occurs then the Barduk might not have to return to

the spirit realm when the killer of Baughman is brought to justice.

Tonight the Barduk was in for a shock. Donald Baughman walking around, alive and breathing. It must be some kind of trick - he smells kind of funny. This is a mystery which must be solved, make no mistake.

OBJECTIVES:

- Find out if this is the real Donald brought back to life or merely an imposter. If not, find out who killed Donald and see that they are brought to justice, or at least do enough to satisfy the powers that be that you are doing your duty.
- Find someone who can bind him to the earth so that he does not have to return to the spirit world when the murderer is brought to justice.
- Try to understand the prophecy of the ball. Find out who has the ball and recover it.

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Mathurin Turgot

Appearance: Shady Street Dealer

True Nature: Fundamentalist Christian Shady Street Dealer

Job: Shady Street Dealer

Central Trait:

Slick Conman - Turgot uses this skill both to buy and sell on the street and also to give charismatic sermons as MC Hamish. 3 dice (pearly-white teeth despite an otherwise seedy appearance)

Side Traits:

Pharmacy - Turgot's primary business is in trafficking drugs and he knows his business well. He can identify most major drugs by smell and taste and knows the effects, side effects and street value. 3 dice (stained fingers from dabbling with chemicals)

Quick with a knife - living on the street and dealing with unsavoury types has meant that Turgot has had to learn how to use a knife to survive. His speciality is flicking a knife out of his sleeve and burying it in an opponents abdomen before the other has had time to draw a weapon. 4 dice (appears to carry no weapons)

Flaw: Puritanical maniac

Motivation: To cleanse God's green world

Secret: Is really a stereotypical Scotsman, dour and mean with money.

Important Person: John the Baptist, personal hero.

Experience Pool: 1 dice

Hit Points: 28

Equipment:

Concealed Cold Iron Knife and Fork (for ferreting out the fairies!)

Drugs - (Lack of enforcement of drug laws by the Peace Force makes prices low)

Zorro (\$2/hit - user sees moral issue in black and white)

Blue Shock (\$5/hit - momentarily awakens every nerve ending in intense agony and makes the user extremely alert for about half an hour- popular in S&M circles)

Communion (\$25/hit creates blissful religious experience)

MDA³ - (\$15/hit creates the perfect orgasm - but only the first time it is used. Subsequent uses become more squalid and pitiful and users push themselves to depraved limits, never to find this perfection again)

LSD (\$.50/hit)

Cocaine (\$1/hit)

Mathurin is out of Fugue (usually \$500/hit)

Clean Needles and Syringes

Various concealed knives

Wallet with his last \$50

Hamish Turgthistle grew up on the hard, mean streets of Edinburgh. He was an orphan and his aunty brought him up strictly, with respect for the laws of God. From an early age he had a strong sense of morality beaten into him. He is glad of those acts of familial violence now as from this crucible he forged morals of steel. He also learnt that those who commit crimes of morality do so deliberately to offend the morality of good folk. Because of this constant victimisation of his morals, Hamish decided to strike back against those who committed this immorality, to tear the stinking heart out of Sodom and Gomorrah and purge the world with God's holy will.

He sought out the worst scum on the streets in order to know the face of evil. He earned his money from running drugs and nutting heads in Edinburgh. Those who had offended against his morality were paid back in kind through "morality vengeance". Drug users, whores, abortion fiends and their so-called doctors, homos, non-Christians of every foul and unspeakable sort, fashion models strutting their sexuality shamelessly, intellectuals who question the order of God's world (and their evil little pets) - none are safe from Hamish's

vengeance. His morality is chaffed and bruised from their constant immorality. The only thing to do is to strike back. Only by living amongst the filth and dealing their deals may one really sort the wheat from the chaff. Anyone who succumbs to any illicit deal, who yields to the temptation, deserves what they have got coming to them.

Worse than street scum, Hamish discovered that Faeries were real and were passing themselves off as people in Edinburgh. He was almost bewitched by a sinister changeling girl with her wicked allure, but he slit her open with his knife. The knife just happened to be the one made of cold iron that his Auntie gave him, with warnings of the 'little folk'. Because the slut was a Faerie, she screamed in agony from contact with the knife! So it was true, all the legends about the evil little satanic creatures were true! There were faeries at the bottom of the garden, in the pub and down the shops! Since that day Hamish has carried his knife with him and killed many more of that disgusting, androgynous breed. He has also acquired a cold iron fork which is handing to use in stabbing suspected fay-folk. This tests their virtue - if they squawk they must be a fairy! Hamish is ever vigilant in case one ever tries to seduce him with their evil magic again.

One day Hamish learnt about the island of Al Amarja - a thriving boil of the pus of immorality on the arse of the world. In an ecstatic vision he realised that his destiny was to be God's lance and the burst this infection. He moved to Al Amarja with the money he obtained from running drugs in Scotland, adopting the role of the sleazy street dealer Mathurin Turgot. To his shock there were Faeries on Al Amarja also, so his private quest to rid the world of the eldritch fiends continues.

But even in this hell-hole, Hamish can feel the hand of the Lord, thumping him on the head. He often sneaks off in disguise to the sermons of various Christian denominations around the island. While this was a balm to his troubled soul, it was not enough. None of the churches were extreme enough in their war against immorality, so he decided to start his own crusade.

With the money of drug addicts and whoremongers he started to build a new Jerusalem. This empire has started with the intangible world, with radio waves. Hamish set up a pirate radio station from a small shack in the Critica Range. When on air he becomes MC Hamish, cool youth deacon and the voice of moral outrage. He urges his many listeners to take morality vengeance for themselves and has been quite pleased at the number of assaults, firebombings and lynchings which have been attributed to the ram.

Because of the need for secrecy, the station is miles out town in the woods, accessible only with Hamish's battered old land rover. It also costs a fortune to run power to this place including the bribes to corrupt public officials. He has recently had to close down operations until he can get enough cash to reconnect the electricity. In addition he is sure he has been followed out to the shack and on one occasion he was menaced by a black wolf which came out of the forest like a hell-hound. The woods are not safe.

Hamish encountered the brute later, only this time on the streets of The Edge. He ran from the animal. Believing it to be following him he contacted Faith who is not only a whore but the best city tracker in the business. He paid her to locate the black dog. She said that she saw it numerous times but kept losing it. It did enter both the back entrance of Montgomery Knapp's apartment building and the toyshop of Elias Bettelheim. Faith broke into Knapp's apartment and found very little of interest apart from the usual satanist paraphernalia (oh, he is the devil himself) and a small crystal sphere. It contains tiny metal fragments and makes strange music when shaken.

While all drugs are officially illegal on Al Amarja, the Peace Force do not enforce the laws unless they wish to persecute someone for other reasons. Because of this situation, Hamish makes precious little out of selling drugs. One high-profit drug is Fugue which is distributed by the Peace Officer Max Reaver at \$100 per hit. A

strange concoction it makes the flesh malleable and fluid. It gives a new meaning to 'off yer face'. Long term usage can be dangerous, but in small doses it has cosmetic uses in covering up wrinkles and scars. The burger Eleanor Baughman has bought several hits of Fugue from Hamish, probably trying to maintain her youth (Oh, fiendish vanity!). She has also asked for a love drug which may be used to seduce someone (foul adulteress!). Because she seems to desperate he has increased the price of Fugue from \$500 to \$1000. He gave her the last hit on credit but she is not coming forward with the cash. He has threatened Eleanor that he will go to the Peace Force if they do not pay. Perhaps Hamish should try to get the money from Donald, Eleanor's husband. His lack of vigilance and laxity in disciplining his wife will cost him much.

Recently a blind pencil seller paid him to obtain a quantity of drug known as "Apep's Breath" or "Milkwhite". The old man told him that there are inhuman creatures walking our streets which are known as "Aphids". They have a sort of secondary lymph system which produces a thick white liquid - the drug Apep's Breath. Hamish was told how to extract this drug with a needle and pointed in the direction of an Aphid, a stupid man with a crooked nose who frequented Sad Mary's. The moron walked right into a trap in the alley behind the bar (following a trail of coins) where Hamish clubbed him insensible and extracted the drug. He dragged the body into the sewers and tossed it into the underground river where it sank without a trace.

The blind pencil seller paid \$10,000 for the drug. This paid off most of Hamish's debts. He was looking forward to doing business with the old man in the future but the pencil seller turned up dead a few days later, apparently killed by the Aries Gang. Oh villainy!

Hamish also makes deals in other goods when there is the demand. The street lunatic Hippensteel is in a similar line of business, although she peddles the most ridiculous trash which some people seem to buy. She bought her smelly cat-skin hat from Hamish at a bazaar several months ago and seems to have worn it ever since. Speaking of smell,

Hamish ran into the old toymaker, Elias in the rain yesterday and his woollen coat was giving off a really rank odour - perhaps it is not wool at all but the fur from some repulsive animal? Perhaps he had been cavorting with the hell-hound that had come to his shop? It is worth looking into...

Hamish had an opportunity to rid himself of the crystal trinket that Faith acquired for him. They met in one of the private booths at Sad Mary's. Hippensteel had some gossip that she was bursting to tell, but reluctant to do so without recompense, so Hamish offered her a swap - the ball for the information. It appears that Hippensteel was witness to a homicide. Young Faith besides being a whore and a tracker is apparently a murderess (wicked woman. oh Jezebel!). It was she who killed the blind pencil seller, with a straight back razor. Hamish gave the old bag her toy and was left to brood over Faith's involvement with the blind man.

Hippensteel seems to have a lot on her plate. Earlier this evening she snuck off to the toilets with Elias Bettelheim. Perhaps they have some sick sex thing going? Perhaps they are doing IT with the hell-hound! Oh unthinkable villainy! Oh wretched sinners!

The famous author Bruno Roth is in Sad Mary's this evening. His book, "The Perpendicular Grimm" is the worst sort of heresy involving rude words and sexy bits. Hamish has been writing death threats to Roth in the name of various Christian fundamentalist groups ever since the book was published. So now he is in Al Amarja! Perhaps it is time for some morality vengeance...

OBJECTIVES

- Find a source of cash to pay the bills and get MC Hamish back on the air.

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- Keep an eye out for Faeries. They are everywhere you know. They are Satan's little helpers and should be crushed under the righteous fist of Christ! People think that Christ was a hippy - he wasn't, he kicked butt!
- Find out why the blind pencil seller was killed what the drug 'Apep's Breath has to do with anything.

Faith Semelaigne

Appearance: Prostitute
True Nature: Semiotic Construct in Search of a Standpoint
Job: Fairy tale character gone bad

Central Trait:

Sultry Seductress - Faith is capable of turning any vaguely sentient creature's knees to jelly with her lithe gait and winsome smile. 4 dice (Wears understated makeup and perfume)

Side Traits:

Urban Tracker - People and things that are frequently lost in the city, particularly one as large and bizarre as The Edge. Faith has an almost sixth sense for finding clues, and tracks or following people. 3 dice (Big green eyes)

Handy with a straight-edge razor - The Edge is a tough place and a girl has to know how to take care of herself. 3 dice (wicked twist to her grin)

Flaw:

Heartless - Faith is incapable of love or any other form of human warmth. She can fake these emotions but never really feels anything.

Motivation: To earn enough money to retire comfortably
Dark Secret: Not a real person
Important Person: Bruno Roth, her creator

Experience Pool: 1 dice
Hit Points: 21
Equipment: Red Dress
Straight Edge Razor
\$500 in cash

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A year ago Bruno Roth finished his novel, "The Perpendicular Grimm". On that day Faith Semalaigne was born. The book was a best-selling success, a semiotic reconstruction of Grimm's Fairy Tales in a modern milieu. One of the best stories involved the modern little red riding hood, a decadent vamp with no heart who lived above a sweet shop. On the day that Roth finished the book, a prostitute moved into the premises above the sweet shop on the Plaza of Flowers, a woman who wore a red dress. If all prostitutes have hearts of gold then she has pawned hers for she has no emotions at all. Her name she took from the insipid heroine of the trashy novel the previous tenants have left behind - Faith Semalaigne.

This is all that Faith knows about her athenic origins. Of her erstwhile father she knows a little more. Roth is an American professor of semiotics. His first work of fiction sits (largely unread) on every fashionable coffee table in the western world. The man is a complete fraud, who stole every idea, plagiarised every piece of writing and yet has the power to create something out of nothing, perhaps without even realising it.

Faith has made a comfortable living as a prostitute and is known about the Plaza of Flowers as "the woman in red" due to her vivid apparel, she wears no other colour. Her beauty is acclaimed, her sexual prowess renowned and her will without scruple or shame. Faith is totally devoid of emotion. She practices expressions in front of her mirror and mimics them quite well but this is never more than pretence.

Among her clients is the American burger Eleanor Baughman. Eleanor's husband Donald is a real bastard and Faith realised that Eleanor was more interested in having someone to care for her than for sexual gratification. Whatever she wants and is willing to pay for Faith is quite happy to oblige, giving an ostensibly sympathetic ear and apparently loving embrace.

Not everyone appreciates Faith's talents. There is a pirate radio

station which broadcasts the sermons of an MC Hamish to the Edge. He claims to be a 'cool youth deacon' but is in fact a right-wing extremist with a bee in his bonnet about morality. He encourages fundamentalists to strike back at those who offend their moral niceties and incites attack particularly on sex workers. Faith has had to run from attackers several times and once had her apartment broken into by extremists who killed a cat and scrawled 'whore' in its blood around her room in eight different languages. She has had new locks installed but the streets are alive with seething hatred and intolerance.

Eleanor came to Faith about a week ago quite frantic and gave her a jewel box for safe keeping. Realising her flat was not safe, Faith gave the box to Joe the barman at Sad Mary's. Joe is as reliable as any bank safety deposit box on Al Amarja, if not more so. A few days later Eleanor came again and asked Faith how expensive plastic surgery was on the Edge. Knowing some juicy rumours about the D'Aubainne Hospital Faith thought it more prudent to recommend a new drug called "Fugue" which makes the flesh malleable and changeable. Generally it is used for its freakout value but it can be used subtly. Over time it can become permanent. Faith directed Eleanor to Mathurin Turgot who deals in the stuff. Perhaps Eleanor wants to leave her husband and change her appearance so he cannot track her down.

Faith does not only work in the sex industry. Recently she has branched into other, more profitable areas. She has discovered a knack for following people in cities. Faith supplements her income by shadowing and tracking those who would rather remain hidden within the throngs of the Edge. Of the more unusual jobs she has had, tracking a black dog for Mathurin Turgot the drug dealer would have to have been the most difficult. The beast was like smoke, disappearing every time she chanced upon it. Only twice did she manage to keep up with the dog. Once it entered Montgomery Knapp's apartment through the rear door and another time it vanished in the alley behind Elias Bettelheim's toy shop.

Faith broke into Knapp's apartment to see what she could find. The man is a member of Fable's Creed, a satanist and an asshole through and through. His apartment was filled with ritual implements, lurid pornography and tacky ornaments. The only curiosity she discovered was a crystal sphere filled with tiny metal fragments. When shook, it made strange tinkling music. Faith pocketed this thing and sold it to Mathurin Turgot.

Faith did not follow up on Bettelheim. The senile old man is pretty harmless. He has never been a client but Faith is pretty sure there is something sexual going on between him and the derelict Hippensteel. They both vanished into the mens' toilets earlier this evening for about fifteen minutes. Oh well, competition is supposed to increase efficiency, especially when the competition is as poor as that old bag lady.

The last time Faith saw the dog she followed it out of the city and into the woods of the Critica range. She realised that it was stupid to leave the city but was torn by curiosity. The wolf vanished outside a small shack in the woods - a shack covered with radio transmission aerials. She crept closer to see if this was the lair of the infamous MC Hamish but someone started the engine of the old land rover and drove it directly toward the spot where Faith was standing. A chill ran down her spine. She fled into the woods, not knowing if the driver had seen her or not. She ran and ran until her feet bled and she was safely in the city again. She decided not to tell Turgot about the incident. If that was the pirate radio station then she could be in trouble of the worst possible kind and Turgot is hardly the trustworthy sort.

The dog she followed appeared to be big and shaggy like a wolf. This has concerned Faith as she knows enough of her Grimm stories to know about the big bad wolf. She dropped the case and has been thinking through her options if her nemesis comes from her. In the Roth story the girl above the sweet shop was killed by her wolf (the German pimp who gave her contaminated heroin) as she had no

grandma nor woodsman to help her. Does this fate stalk Faith on padded paws?

From time to time Faith works for a rich Egyptian man, Johnny Ammut. Unlike many others he does not underestimate Faith's abilities. He once paid her a sizeable sum of money to kill the blind pencil seller who used to hang around the plaza and make it look like the work of the Aries Gang. Faith slit the man's throat with a straight edge razor and started the rumour that the biker gang was responsible by daubing astrological symbols in his blood.

Recently Ammut has asked her to look for a missing man by the name of Rainer King. Ammut runs a drug rehabilitation centre and King somehow got loose and is wandering the streets. Faith has been shown a sketch of the man, his most distinctive feature being his crooked nose and the mark of a hieroglyph on one side of his chest. King is under a course of medication. If he does not get a dosage soon he will become slower and stupider until he slips into a catatonic state. Ammut is concerned about his charge and has offered \$20,000 for his safe return.

Bruno Roth is in Al Amarja at the moment. He has been frequenting Sad Mary's so Faith has been keeping an eye on him. She is wary about the man and his strange power. Could he change what she is, perhaps take away her beauty? If he dies, does she cease to exist or does she continue as before, only now safe from the power of her creator?

Ammut has also told her that there is a group known as the 'Semiotic Assassins' about who are planning something big in the Plaza of Flowers involving semiotic magic. It involves a country with no name, Atlantean Sorcerers known as 'Matagots' and a group of assassins known as the Fickle Trust. Ammut did not know any more. Perhaps these 'semiotic assassins' would understand how she came to be and help her with her dilemma.

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OBJECTIVES:

- Recover the missing man, Rainer King.
- Find a Semiotic Assassin or someone who knows about Semiotic Magic to ask about Roth.
- Locate the Big Bad Wolf and get to him before he gets to her

Hippensteel

Appearance: Loony Street Personality
True Nature: Pickli-Tash, Cat Lord of Atlantis
Job: Wheeler & Dealer

Central Trait:

Catburglar - There isn't a lock Hippensteel cannot pick, nor a balcony too high to climb nor a rooftop too slippery. Despite her bedraggled state, Hippensteel is as graceful and flexible as an Olympic gymnast- 4 dice (nimble fingers)

Side Traits:

Rough and Tumble Brawler - In fights Hippensteel hisses, spits and uses every dirty trick in the book - 3 dice (dishevelled appearance)

Eldritch Stomach (Fringe Power) - Hippensteel can eat anything, acid, poison, drug, whatever and digest it as though it were nourishing food. The only drawback of this is an oversupply of saliva which she uses to groom herself. (Always running hands through hair (after surreptitiously licking them))

Flaw:

Person Eater - Hippensteel stayed with some Satanists for a while. They once ate a small piece of human thigh, deciding that it didn't taste very nice, gave the rest to the cat. Since that day she has had a taste for human flesh. (Looks at people as though sizing them up)

Motivation: To have somewhere comfortable to sleep and shed hair

Dark Secret: Loves playing with water. This habit would disgust other cats if they knew. Back in Atlantis, she would often while away the hours playing with the water in the toilet with all her cat toys. The other cats never knew although

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they often made rude suggestions as to why she cloistered herself away.

Important Person: T Lobsang Rampa, a guru/charlatan who taught Hippensteel that no matter how dumb the product you are selling, there is always someone dumb enough to buy it.

Experience Pool: 1 dice

Hit Points: 28

Equipment:

‘Daniel Boone’ Hat with cat tail

Stolen Objects - a contortionary chronometer, a tube of dutch bicycle lubricant, a gleeful dinky (miniature), several biros, a packet of worry dolls, a medal with 'cretaceous cretin" inscribed on it, a spray can of instant membrane

Bruno's Book "The Perpendicular Grimm" stolen from his hotel room

Tinkly crystal sphere (minus tinkle)

Gold clam-shaped handbag with \$300 in scrappy smelly currency

Notebook containing a few handy Matagot rituals which Hippensteel is unfortunately not very good at.

A millennia ago, the great city-state of Atlantis was the greatest empire in the known world. It was ruled by the Matagots, cat sorcerers who lorded their power over their human slaves. But all empires fall. A group of human slaves stole arcane knowledge from their feline betters and rose up in rebellion. The magical forces unleashed in the conflict destroyed the empire, the very island sank beneath the waves, to the sound of a million shrieking cats.

A few of the Matagots survived this catastrophe (pun not intended) and set up a new empire in an eastern European nation. Learning from their mistakes the let the humans think that they had control and ruled the country from a shadowy cabal. Pickli-Tash is the descendant of

these great cat lords. She is a feline agent for this country, infiltrating other nations and gathering information to use against them. Her magical powers are quite weak but she has a notebook containing some of the spirit magic rituals she learnt at the academy. She is not strong enough to bind any but the weakest of spirits to objects or recently killed bodies, yet she once enabled a willing spirit to bind itself to a corpse.

She lived with the T Lobsang Rampa the occultist who claimed to be a lama from Lhasa and was actually a plumber from Plympton. He defrauded the occult and hippy movements of the sixties with his bullshit mysticism. Amused by his audacity, Pickli-Tash let him in on her secret and he let her write his autobiography "My Life with the Lama" by T Lobsang Rampa's cat.

When he died she moved to Al Amarja and pretended to be the familiar of one of the Fable's Creed (an Al Amarjan exclusive club of Satanists), Montgomery Knapp. He was a vain fool so she never told him that she was intelligent. His coven once dabbled with cannibalism and cooked up a small piece of human thigh. They did not like it so they fed it to the cat. Since that day she has had a taste for human flesh.

This parasitic arrangement came to an end one day when a big black dog attacked and killed Montgomery Knapp. Hippensteel fled and hid amongst the alley cats. She does not know what the dog was or why Knapp is now walking around apparently alive and she does not really want to know. Satanists, however pathetic are usually into some dangerous shit. Knapp was researching an ancient race which is supposed to live alongside humanity which are called "aphids" or something. They appear to be human except for the fact that they sometimes get very stupid for some reason. Perhaps Knapp discovered some mystery which he should have left alone. She has seen the dog once again in an alley where she and some cats were skulking. They hissed at it and it loped away. Ugly bastard!

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Pickli-Tash was considering her next move when she discovered that her country had been destroyed by the Semiotic Assassins. These insane powermongers had long been opposed by the Matagots and had used some kind of semiotic magic to destroy the country of the Matagots so that it never existed.

The movement of postmodernism has taught us that power is knowledge and knowledge is power. The science of semiotics has taught us that much power is caught up in the meanings of words - the interpretation we assign to things defines their reality. The Semiotic Magicians have put this theory into practice.

If you can deconstruct a reality to its bare essences then you can destroy it or even reconstruct it in a different manner. Many primitive religions place importance on a person's true name. Control the name and you control the person. This is a form of Semiotic Magic.

The Semiotic Assassins are a conspiracy of magicians who use ritual semiotic magic to destroy or alter their targets. This is the sorcery which was used to destroy the country of the Matagots - a country which no longer has a name. The Semiotic Assassins gathered the nine essences of the nation and deconstructed its reality - the name fell out of books and living memory, atlases rearranged themselves around the space where the country used to be, millions of people ceased to have ever existed.

While other spies may have been out of the country at the time, Pickli-Tash is the only survivor that she knows of. She has vowed revenge upon the semiotic assassins. Pickli-Tash does not know very much about the assassins save that it is rumoured they must mutilate themselves in some way during their training.

Pickli-Tash has been living on the streets, eating the corpses which are common finds in the alleys of the Edge. Due to the sympathetic magic of her eldritch stomach, she has learnt how to adopt a human

shape. This is a far more effective form to pursue her revenge. She has chosen the name "Hippensteel" because of the brand name of an osteopathic replacement she found inside one body. She prowls around, thieving interesting things and in Al Amarja, one can find a buyer for most things, however bizarre, given enough time and perseverance.

Hippensteel has made it her business to discover what is happening in her territory, around the Plaza of Flowers. She has been following the burger, Bruno Roth. She is sure that he is up to something. After breaking into his hotel room, she found a copy of his book "The Perpendicular Grimm" and decided to keep it. The book is an interesting read, it recreates old fairy stories in a modern setting.

One character, the girl in the red dress reminds Hippensteel of Faith the prostitute. Perhaps Roth knows Faith from somewhere else? Both live above a sweet shop and both are entirely ruthless and heartless. Faith seems literally to have no emotions. Hippensteel has peeked through her window while crouching on the rooftop and seen Faith in front of her mirror, practicing emotions. Mimicking laughter, pretending to be angry, feigning affection. Between each of these expressions Faith's face returned to a blank, robotic state, totally *tabula rasa*.

Further, Hippensteel saw Faith coldly and callously kill a man. She crept up behind the poor old inoffensive blind pencil seller and cut his throat with a straight razor. She then made some markings in the man's blood. Perhaps it was some kind of ritual? Anyway, word on the street was that the Aries Gang was responsible and Hippensteel can guess who started that rumour.

The only person Hippensteel has told about this is the sleazy street dealer Mathurin Turgot. He had in his possession a crystal sphere filled with tiny metal fragments which made a tinkly noise when

shaken. Knowing that Hippensteel was fond of curiosities he offered it to her in exchange for any snippets of information. Although she does not trust Turgot (she has seen him sneak off to church in disguise and also some nights he heads off to the woods in his beaten up old land rover for some nefarious purpose), she told him about Faith anyway and he gave her the ball.

She does not know what the ball does, but it makes a great noise when you chase it across the floor. It also floats very well. Actually, it used to float very well but earlier this evening she took it into the men's toilets in order to play with it in the lavatory. All was going well until she heard a dreadful 'klink' as it hit the porcelain and swiftly began to sink. She fished it out before it disappeared but it has a hole in it and no longer makes the nice tinkly noise. Perhaps someone can fix it.

Hippensteel is curious to see Donald Baughman here in Sad Mary's tonight. She found his body by the bank of underground river which flows under The Edge a few days ago - quite dead. Not being one to let things go to waste she ate it. The dead seem to be rising in great numbers these days. Perhaps it is a sign of something worse to come?

OBJECTIVES:

- Locate any Semiotic Assassins and get them killed
- Find the dog. Do everything spiteful to it because it is a dog and you are a cat.
- Find someone who can fix your favourite toy.

You realise that you are not where or who you thought you are .

You are a patient in St Mary's of Bethlem, a mental asylum. You periodically lapse into a fantasy world where you live on the mythical island of Al Amarja where everything is permitted.

Now that your medication has worn off, you realise that you are an inmate whose family has had you committed as a paranoid schizophrenic. This is not true, your family is out to get you.

You realise that you are not where or who you thought you are .

You are a patient in St Mary's of Bethlem, a mental asylum. You periodically lapses into a fantasy world where you live on the mythical island of Al Amarja where everything is permitted.

Now that your medication has worn off, you realise that you are actually a manic depressive who committed themself during a lucid period.

You realise that you are not where or who you thought you are .

You are a patient in St Mary's of Bethlem, a mental asylum. You periodically lapse into a fantasy world where you live on the mythical island of Al Amarja where everything is permitted.

Now that your medication has worn off, you realise that you are actually Jesus Christ who has adopted a mortal disguise in order to infiltrate a mental institution and discover what evil deeds are afoot.

You realise that you are not where or who you thought you are .

You are a patient in St Mary's of Bethlem, a mental asylum. You periodically lapse into a fantasy world where you live on the mythical island of Al Amarja where everything is permitted.

Now that your medication has worn off, you realise that you are actually a doctor who has been locked up with the loonies by mistake. You try to tell the staff but they will not listen.

You realise that you are not where or who you thought you are .

You are a patient in St Mary's of Bethlem, a mental asylum. You periodically lapse into a fantasy world where you live on the mythical island of Al Amarja where everything is permitted.

Now that your medication has worn off, you realise that you are actually an elderly person suffering from dementia. You try to remember who your grandchildren are and ask if they are coming to visit.

You realise that you are not where or who you thought you are .

You are a patient in St Mary's of Bethlem, a mental asylum. You periodically lapse into a fantasy world where you live on the mythical island of Al Amarja where everything is permitted.

Now that your medication has worn off, you realise that you have been locked up to keep you away from your little friends. Some of them came in space ships and some live at the bottom of the garden. The authorities think they have you locked up but you are getting messages from outer space - an escape is planned!

You realise that you are not where or who you thought you are .

You are a patient in St Mary's of Bethlem, a mental asylum. You periodically lapse into a fantasy world where you live on the mythical island of Al Amarja where everything is permitted.

Now that your medication has worn off, you realise that you are actually a person who has problems with depression. At first you thought you were just an alcoholic but the doctors told you that you had deeper mental problems and convinced your family to have you committed. This has not cheered you up in the slightest.

You realise that you are not where or who you thought you are .

You are a patient in St Mary's of Bethlem, a mental asylum. You periodically lapse into a fantasy world where you live on the mythical island of Al Amarja where everything is permitted.

Now that your medication has worn off, you realise that you are actually a victim of satanic abuse who has developed seventeen distinct personalities, one of which lives on Al Amarja.

You realise that you are not where or who you thought you are .

You are a patient in St Mary's of Bethlem, a mental asylum. You periodically lapse into a fantasy world where you live on the mythical island of Al Amarja where everything is permitted.

Now that your medication has worn off, you realise that you are actually a person who is prone to violent rages. You tried not to take it out on anyone else and ended up doing harm to yourself. Your body is covered in razor scars and cigarette burns. You spent several months in hospital after the last episode and then they put you in here. The drugs let you keep a lid on your anger (just) but cause strange hallucinations.

Journal of Virtual Realities, Interactive Dramas, and Literary Constructs

**A Multi-Discipline Peer-Reviewed Journal of
Scenario-Based Theatre-Style Interactive Drama Freeform
Live Action Roleplaying Games**

Call for Papers

The *Journal of Virtual Realities, Interactive Dramas, and Literary Constructs* is an online peer-reviewed journal on scenario-based interactive drama freeform live action roleplaying games which provides a forum for serious discussion of live roleplaying game theory, design, and practice. The journal is published regularly. The journal provides a forum for the discussion of any of the various scenario-based theatre-style live action roleplaying games, freeforms, and interactive dramas and invites contributions in all areas of literature, theory, design, and practice for educational, entertainment, and recreational roleplay. Formal and informal essays, articles, papers, and critical reviews are also welcome.

This is a peer-reviewed journal that may include formal papers and informal essays for and by the roleplaying community from a wide variety of disciplines. The focus is general enough so that authors should feel comfortable submitting material of either a formal or informal nature, albeit all submissions are peer-reviewed and should be appropriate to a serious and thoughtful discussion of that type -- we encourage articles, essays, and formal papers on all manner of live roleplaying, freeform, and interactive drama-related topics. Discussions of related ludology,

techniques, and good solid critical book and roleplay scenario or event reviews are quite welcome as well. As this is a multi-disciplinary journal, material related to a wide range of scenario-based learning, social psychology, critical theory, performance studies, popular culture, design, and more as they intersect with the interactive drama are also welcome. Pure design pieces related to scenario construction and review are also encouraged. Each issue will showcase one to three longform or four to six shortform interactive drama freeform live action roleplaying scenarios; creative scenario submissions of this type are very sought after. Scenarios for submission should include a section of self-reflective critical thought and formal designer's notes that discuss issues related to the creation of the piece as well as a formal section which reviews the author's performance experiences with the scenario.

As an international journal, the language of publication is English. Submissions are accepted throughout the year.

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A Multi-Discipline Peer-Reviewed Journal of Scenario-Based Theatre-Style Interactive Drama Freeform Live Action Roleplaying Games

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The *Journal of Virtual Realities, Interactive Dramas, and Literary Constructs* is a peer-reviewed journal which publishes one volume per year in an ongoing rollout schedule based upon acceptable submissions. Both *Microsoft Word* (6.0 or above) and txt files are acceptable. Once received, manuscripts will be sent to reviewers immediately.

1. Manuscripts submitted to *Journal of Virtual Realities, Interactive Dramas, and Literary Constructs* should follow the style sheet of the current *MLA Handbook* as appropriate. Scenario submissions may use informal formatting conventions as long as they stay within the guidelines here.
2. If your submission has notes, please use footnotes, not endnotes.
3. The font used is *Times New Roman* (11pt) – creative pieces, such as scenarios, may use other font sizes but should stay within the

same font type. If you use a special font that is non-system, you must include a copy of the font file with your submission. Please do not use columns in your piece.

4. Use a separate sheet to include your name, title, affiliated institution, and contact information (email) as well as a brief author's biography of 150-250 words to be included in the contributor's notes.
5. Include a brief summary or abstract of the submission.
6. If you use illustrations or photographs, you must include all pertinent information as well as statements of permissions and copyrights to demonstrate you have the rights to include the images and that they may be published within the Journal of Virtual Realities, Interactive Dramas, and Literary Constructs under the same online and print rights as the accompanying paper. In the event of rights disputes, the author is responsible and liable for any material included in that author's submission.

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