Novel Shocks:

Bureaucratic Surrealism and the US Novel

from 1948-1962

by

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Abstract

Novel Shocks argues that the US novel transforms in the 1950s. Treating the post-war period as a key transitional moment between the decline of the economic and geopolitical systems that operated under what Giovanni Arrighi terms the British "systemic cycle of accumulation," and the rise of the US cycle, I argue that the US novel too enters a period of transition. I develop a theory of a genre I term "bureaucratic surrealism" that captures the formal and political concerns of this transitional period. I take up Franco Moretti's claim that, beginning in the wake of World War I, the novel was no longer able to absorb the "traumas" of modernity, but suggest that the novel understands what Moretti terms "trauma" as forms of what Sigmund Freud calls "shock." The central claims of this dissertation are two-fold: first, that the novel's temporality, spatiality, and subjectivity are not only, as Moretti suggests, "dismantled" by shock, but that shock also begins to generate and produce different kinds of narrative time, space, and subjects; second, that throughout the 1950s, novels approached the most pressing political and social questions of their moment through the language, imagery, and symptomology of shock. In short, I suggest that shock acts as what Fredric Jameson terms an "ideologeme" of the social and political struggles of the 1950s. This dissertation opens by framing the problem of shock in the 1950s novel through Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man.* The following chapters trace how three seemingly disparate novels—Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged*, Flannery O'Connor's *Wise Blood*, and William Burroughs' *Naked Lunch*—offer a series of narrative solutions to the problem of shock. I conclude by suggesting that after *Catch 22* a new novelistic regime emerges, one in which shock moves to the centre of the form. Looking ahead to the works of Thomas Pynchon, Kathy Acker, Samuel Delaney and William Gaddis, I suggest that the neoliberal novel emerges, in a sense, from Snowden's wound.

Keywords: shock; neoliberalism; genre theory; literary history; American literature

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During my time at SFU, I have written numerous articles on the neoliberalization of the university, many of which have offered critiques of SFU. Perhaps, then, this is the place to say that such critiques come from a place of love and gratitude: from a recognition of what an intellectual, supportive, and innovative space I have been lucky enough to inhabit in SFU's Department of English and from a desire to preserve and better that space. Year after year, I have had the pleasure to meet exceptionally smart and creative scholars who have both supported me and deeply shaped my thinking. To name just a few, I'd like to thank Dave Gaertner, Graham Lyons, Jason Starnes, Marc Acherman, Emily Fedoruk, Kasim Husain, Peter McDonald, Haida Antolick, Kyle Carpenter, Ryan Fitzpatrick, and Natalie Knight.

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Introduction

If history can make cultural forms necessary,
it can make them impossible as well.

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—Franco Moretti

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Slowly but surely we are weaving a world fabric of international
security and growing prosperity.

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—Harry S. Truman

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Part way through Philip K. Dick's *Time Out of Joint* (1959), the protagonist, World War II veteran Ragle Gumm, finds himself groping for the "light cord that dangled in the darkness of the bathroom" (23). The reason he cannot find it, he quickly realizes, is because the cord is not there: the light of his bathroom is actually operated by a "switch on the wall" (23). Puzzled, Gumm muses, "I wasn't groping around randomly […] I was hunting for a light cord I had pulled many times. Pulled enough to set up a reflex response in my involuntary nervous system" (23). Throughout *Time Out of Joint*, Gumm encounters numerous instances like these "eerie feeling[s], the strong shock of familiarity, long association" (24) that don't line up with the world around him. Gumm's sense of dysphoria is symptomatic of the yet-unknown fact that his entire life—his success as a newspaper contest winner guessing where the little green men will land next, his bucolic American suburb, and his tepid affair with the neighbour's wife—is a lie. It is, as Fredric Jameson famously argued, all part of a "Potemkin village of a historical kind: a reproduction of the 1950s […] constructed in 1997, in the midst of an interstellar atomic civil war" (281) between the government that leads under the slogan of "one happy world" and

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the "lunatics" or lunar colonists. Gumm, we learn, worked for the military predicting where the lunar colonists' missiles would land until he had a mental breakdown and "withdrew into a fantasy of tranquility" based on his childhood memories (240). The government created this Potemkin village out of these memories to act as a screen, obfuscating reality, so that Gumm would continue to work as a human anti-missile defense system, while thinking that all he had to do was participate in a daily newspaper contest.

Time Out of Joint's fantastical pulp premise—the rise of Third World anti-colonial movements and United States global expansion, the seeming approach of nuclear war, the ghettoization of the city and the rise of the suburb, the expansion of state and corporate bureaucratic institutions, and the rise of mass culture and deployment of mass psychology—brings together the entire range of the social and political transformations and anxieties that marked the US during the 1950s. However, underpinning these more explicitly political concerns is the plot's primary focus on the psychodrama of Ragle's unconscious and its ability to protect him from what Sigmund Freud, referring to the threat of the modern world to the subject, terms the "excess of stimuli" (27). In *Time Out of Joint*, the bucolic fantasy of the suburbs acts as a shield that protects Gumm from this stimulus. At the same time, this suburban fantasy is only possible because the government has figured out how to capitalize on these excessive stimuli in order to penetrate and manipulate the unconscious for military and political ends. In short, *Time Out of Joint* is a novel about shock, the condition that Sigmund Freud theorizes in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Freud suggests that shock occurs when the "protective shield" of the subject's conscious brain is unable to protect the unconscious from "the excessive energies of the outside world" (27). While Freud theorized this state of invasion

as traumatic, soon after he first theorized shock, radical aesthetic movements such as Surrealism and early proponents of mass culture and communication took up the concept. These movements, located both in Nazi Germany and the US, began to consider the ways that shock, as a state of disruption, could be manipulated to produce and transform new subjects. In *Time Out of Joint,* shock becomes both the strategy the state uses to blind and manipulate Ragle, and the main aesthetic strategy that allows both Ragle and the reader to break through the ideological fantasy of the state. It is this struggle over the meaning and use of shock that my dissertation turns to.

Throughout the 1950s, novels approached the most pressing political and social questions of their moment through the language, imagery, and symptomology of shock. 1950s novels depict characters' experiences of surprise, tribulation, trauma, or discovery as instances of shock; they represent and invent imaginary technologies that shock characters, and in many cases the novels themselves attempt to shock their audience. The role of shock in the 1950s novel has for the most part been passed over, garnering at best a footnote in dominant readings of the 1950s that foreground the role of nuclear threats and the theoretical innovations of postmodernism.[1] *Novel Shocks* focuses on these largely neglected or effaced shocks and begins from the premise that these images, technologies, and scenes of shock function as metaphors for, and interventions into, the political, aesthetic, and psychological transformations of the 1950s. A careful reading of these scenes of shock, alongside an analysis of the role that shock has in the political, psychological, and aesthetic stakes of the

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[1]   See, for instance, Alan Nadel's *Containment Culture: American Narratives, Postmodernism, and the Atomic Age* (1995) or Daniel Grausam's *On Endings: American Postmodern Fiction and the Cold War* (2011).

1950s novel, opens up new ways of understanding the 1950s, which remains a notoriously difficult and over-determined period of interpretation. Reading the US novel through the lens of shock can help us reconstitute a whole series of twentieth-century fears about the social antagonisms that were always threatening to explode the political, aesthetic, and psychological "deals"[2] that underpinned both the pre-war New Deal and the post-war Fair Deal. Throughout the chapters of this dissertation, I examine how five seemingly disparate texts deploy literal objects of shock, metaphors of shock, and aesthetic strategies of shock in order to grapple with the rapidly changing political landscape in which they were written.

The similarity among these different novels suggests that shock is a more compelling concern in the 1950s novel than current theorizations allow. I begin with Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952), a novel I read as framing the problem of shock in the 1950s novel. Shocked characters and technologies of shock appear at key narrative moments in which social antagonisms that have been bubbling up threaten to explode. I argue that the presence of shock symbolizes the social threats that undermine the possibility of narrative resolution and represents an aesthetic struggle between the realist or naturalist and shock-based Surrealist impulses within the structure of the novel. The following chapters trace how three seemingly disparate novels—Flannery O'Connor's *Wise Blood* (1952), Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged* (1957), and William Burroughs' *Naked Lunch* (1959)—all offer narrative solutions to the problem of

[2] I draw my definition of the term "deal" from the Midnight Notes Collective, who use the term to refer to a system of compromise between capital and labour (1998). However, I expand their use of the term to encompass aesthetic or generic resolutions that I see as illustrating and upholding the political deals of their moment.

shock. I conclude by suggesting that after *Catch-22* (1961) a new novelistic regime emerges in which shock comes to shape the character, psychology and narrative form of the post-war US novel more broadly.

The discourses of shock we find across the 1950s literary landscape were born out of Freud's essays on shock, the death drive, and the uncanny. While Freud's theory of shock, much like his theory of hysteria, is first and foremost centered upon individual psychology, it is also historically rooted in two key events: World War I and the emergence of railway disasters. The term "shock" first emerged in the seventeenth century as a military term referring to "a sudden and violent blow, impact, or collision, tending to overthrow or to produce internal oscillation in a body subjected to it; the disturbance of equilibrium or the internal oscillation resulting from this" (Shock n.3). The term became popular in the twentieth-century in both economic and aesthetic discourse to describe an action or event that has a destabilizing or transformative effect. Within the field of economics, "shock" initially referred to unpredictable and often external events that affect the economy, but with the rise of neoliberalism in the 1960s and '70s, what had been initially understood as an external and often accidental or undesirable event became a cornerstone of economic and foreign policy. Yet, long before neoliberalism took hold, the Surrealists (and the Romantic trajectory from which they emerged) had already begun to conceive of shock as an aesthetic practice that could disrupt social norms and subjects that had become, in the words of Leslie Fiedler, "callused" (135). For the Surrealists, shock was a strategy for creating new societies and psyches.

The prevalence of shock within psychological, economic, and aesthetic discourse asks us to think about Freud's theory of shock not simply as a

technical diagnostic term that appears as a metaphor throughout the 1950s novel, but rather as an "ideologeme" within the novel. In *The Political Unconscious*, Jameson defines the ideologeme as the "smallest intelligible unit of the essentially antagonistic collective discourses of social classes" (76) that can be found and reconstituted within a text. Where Jameson reads "*ressentiment*" as the dominant ideologeme of the nineteenth-century (88), *Novel Shocks* suggests that shock is the dominant ideologeme of the twentieth-century and especially of modernism.[3] Drawing my definition of modernism from Jameson, who reads it as a delicate dance between the "arousal" and "management" of "historical and social, deeply political impulses" (266), I argue that shock is the mechanism that renders this dance legible. The prevalence of shock within modernist texts and its role within modernist forms becomes the discourse and language through which class and social struggle is coded. Whether the white flight fear of the newly enfranchised black urban masses resulting in their flight to the suburbs, the middle class fear of the deskilled masses that will steal their jobs, or the nativist fear of a foreign or communist mass invasion, it is through the ideologeme of shock that the modernist novel is able to make legible and manage these anxieties.

While modernism, and especially the novelistic genres of modernism, excelled at "arousing" and "managing" (266) political and narrative shocks throughout the early twentieth-century, by the 1950s, these shocks had accelerated and intensified to the point where they overwhelmed their

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[3] I am not alone in pointing to the centrality of shock to the modernist project. Both Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno located shock at the centre of the modernist aesthetic, which Benjamin dates to as early as 1857 when Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal* was published ("Some Motifs" 45).

modernist frame. The 1950s novel enacts a terrifying confrontation with a world where shock has so permeated the psychological, economic, and aesthetic spheres that it can no longer be managed, nor can it be deployed to disrupt or critique. I draw on Marxist definitions of genre as a form that, in Michael McKeon's words, provides "a conceptual framework for the mediation (if not the 'solution') of intractable problems" and renders "such problems intelligible" (20) and deploys the genre of bureaucratic surrealism to theorize 1950s novels, which attempts to find new aesthetic and narrative strategies to resolve the problem of shock. Part of what is at stake in this dissertation, then, is to show how a range of seemingly disparate novels are actually in dialogue as part of a single genre. We can say, perhaps, that bureaucratic surrealism is a genre—that is, it provides a "conceptual framework for the mediation of intractable problems"—that has multiple forms and iterations.

My focus on the numerous deployments of the "bureaucratic" within the 1950s novel highlights both the novel's concern with what Andrew Hoberek sees as the proletarianization and "Taylori[zation of] mental labour" (22) and its formal adaptation of bureaucratic structures and logics. Like the modernist aesthetic of montage, which Adorno saw as a formal "capitulation" to capitalism's processes of fragmentation and reification (154), the literary form of the 1950s began to surrender to the corporatization and bureaucratization of the US economy. The process of bureaucratization was integral to the development of the US economy and its rise to global hegemony. A key process of bureaucratization is vertical integration: a firm's integration of operations ranging from production to circulation and distribution. The economic geographer Giovanni Arrighi argues that this process was "the single most important feature of the US regime of accumulation" (282) and a

fundamental organizational technology that allowed US business to escape what Arrighi terms the "systemic chaos" of both internecine wars and the Third World and propertyless uprisings that contributed to the collapse the British empire in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries (63). Bureaucratization, or the expanding of the internal space of the corporation or of the state, was one strategy to prevent economic shock. As Arrighi explains, "The transaction costs, risks, and uncertainties involved in moving inputs/outputs through the sequence of these subprocesses [i.e. production, circulation, and distribution] were thus internalized […] and subjected to the economizing logic of administrative action and long-term corporate planning" (287). By internalizing more and more of the processes of production, transportation, and distribution, bureaucracy allowed corporations greater and greater control. Corporations were also able to reduce the risk of external and unforeseeable problems from market disruptions.

Surrealism forms the second term in my genre, both because Surrealist techniques and aesthetic strategies appear throughout these novels (although they are not often read that way) and because Surrealism is the aesthetic form of modernism most concerned with the problem of shock. Surrealism gives us a lens through which to read the crises within the modernist conjuncture. Reading dialectically the inter-relationships between bureaucracy and Surrealism and between the state and shock allows us to get at the specific crises, breakdowns, and potential solutions being formed in the 1950s novel.

Importantly, the genre of bureaucratic surrealism is one of failure. Unlike the genre of the bildungsroman, which Franco Moretti persuasively reads as offering "too perfect" a solution to the intractable social problems of its moment (72), the novels within bureaucratic surrealism are unable to solve the

problem of shock. Instead, they begin the project of imagining new solutions to, and aesthetic forms for, the post-war era. The multiple forms that the genre of bureaucratic surrealism takes engage in the most pressing political questions of their moment, questions that deal with the refiguration of public and urban space in the wake of desegregation, of the breakdown and reconstruction of the post-war Westphalian and global market system under US hegemony, of the expansion of the bureaucratic US state under the auspices of McCarthyism, and of red scare and yellow peril fears of foreign invasion. The aesthetic strategies that sought to manage or deploy shock were always political wagers. Reading the 1950s novel through the ideologeme of shock allows us to dismantle the aesthetics/politics divide that underwrote the liberal cultural discourse in the 1950s, produced by figures as diverse as Lionel Trilling, James Baldwin, and Irving Howe,[4] and which continues to frame conversations about the 1950s today. Through a careful exploration of shock within and across the field of 1950s aesthetics, culture, and politics, *Novel Shocks* attempts to reinvigorate our thinking about the 1950s novel and its attendant politics, and to wrest both the 1950s and the decade's literary forms from the problematic confines of Cold War thinking and assumptions of conformity, complacency, and decline.

[4] Lionel Trilling opened this debate in *The Liberal Imagination*, in his rewriting of American literary traditions as the tension between the naturalisms of Theodor Dreiser and the art of Henry James. Baldwin took this up when he separated the "political pamphlet" (14) from the "novel," in his essay "Everybody's Protest Novel," and even by Trilling's opponent Irving Howe, who ultimately reinscribed Trilling's oppositions in "Black Boys and Native Sons," where he accuses Ellison of being "literary to a fault" (21).

The Problem of the 1950s

Beginning in the mid-1980s, critics started challenging the Cold War consensus of New Criticism, baby boomers, and nostalgia, by critiquing the Cold War and American exceptionalist positions that upheld American literature and empire as the best of all possible worlds. Instead, these critics began to examine how 1950s cultural productions were located within, and often reflected, the Cold War culture of containment. Donald Pease's now canonical "*Moby-Dick* and the Cold War" argues that debates over, and constructions of, canonical American texts were always in dialogue with Cold War debates, while Thomas Schaub's *American Fiction in the Cold War* explains how the Stalinist chill moved both cultural critics and novelists into the realm of a "chastened," "disillusioned," and ultimately conservative "liberalism" (vii). Perhaps the most famous iteration of this argument is Alan Nadel's *Containment Culture: American Narratives, Postmodernism, and the Atomic Age*, which reads narratives of Communist containment and conformity as defining the entire cultural field of the high Cold War period (from 1946 to 1964). These readings of disillusion and decline cohered around a concerted effort to undo the New Critical and American exceptionalist narratives that had calcified around 1950s literature throughout the 1960s, '70s, and early '80s.

Where Schaub, Pease, and Nadel read the 1950s novel as expressive of a broader anomie that dominated the 1950s, a contemporaneous school of ideological criticism read the 1950s cultural field as a much more active and often insidious producer of the society of anomie. Barbara Foley, for instance, argues that a state-sponsored "Anti-Marxism" (5), which masqueraded in the more appealing guise of anti-Stalinism, was behind both the proliferation of anti-communist novels written by disillusioned communists in the 1950s and

the turn towards New Criticism. Similarly, Lawrence Schwartz argues that Faulkner was deliberately promoted as a distinctively American writer during the Cold War by coding anti-communism through the lauding of the "elite aesthetic" (4) of "avant garde modernism" (118), while Serge Guilbault (1985) attacks abstract expressionism as an "aloof" form that "helped to forge a native image of American art that responded to the cultural needs of the new United States that emerged from World War II" (2). Recently, Morris Dickstein's *Leopards in the Temple* has offered a critique of both these "ideological critics of Cold War culture" (11) and their less ideological kin (i.e. Schaub, Pease, and Nadel) for being blind to what he sees as the "*cultural* revolution" (16) that occurred in the 1950s, one that he approvingly connects to the emergence of 1960s radicalism. Dickstein traces how the explosions of African American, female, hipster, and Jewish authors are "like Kafka's leopards in the temple, the implosions of the irrational, children of the Freudian century, sharp-clawed primitives who would somehow be integrated into the once-decorous rites of American literature, who would become American literature" (4). Read one way, Dickstein is right. Writers as diverse as Ralph Ellison, Flannery O'Connor, Norman Mailer, Saul Bellow, and Allen Ginsberg were part of a cultural revolution, or rather several cultural revolutions, and did come to form the new canon of American literature. But, Dickstein's celebration of the "cultural" revolution of the 1950s that formed the new Americanism not only fails to discredit the ideological critics he is attacking, but actually bolsters their point by showing how even the novels and novelists who appear to be oppositional were ultimately absorbed into the contained culture of the Cold War US project.

Novel Shocks contends that the 1950s was not an era of containment, but an era of failed containments. I thus argue that we need to locate the project of Cold War containment not within the novels or even within the 1950s, but rather in the processes through which a later iteration of the US state succeeded in retroactively absorbing writers whose politics were oppositional, diverse, and in some cases distinctly *un*-American into a seemingly unified US culture. That is to say, the cultural diversity, difference, and even radicalism that Dickstein is so quick to celebrate is neither oppositional nor radical. Rather, as Walter Benn Michaels argues, the celebration of "culture" and "difference" emerges as a crucial part of neoliberalism's neutralization of "politics" and struggles for "equality" (17). Cultures, as Benn Michaels notes, "in theory if not always in practice, are equal; classes, in theory and in practice, are not" (17). Similarly, Jodi Melamed persuasively argues that the kinds of national expansion practices that Dickstein celebrates formed an integral piece of the "ideology and race regime" (4) of the Cold War, which went hand in hand with the project of "U.S. global ascendancy" (4).

Recently, a new generation of critics has turned our attention away from the lenses of disillusion–celebration on the one hand and resistance–containment on the other and called for a re-evaluation of the 1950s. This work re-examines the construction of categories of race, gender, class, and politics. For instance, Melamed expands and complicates our understanding of 1950s racial politics by reading black radicalisms in tension with the "racial liberalisms" (2) that enabled a specific regime of US hegemony and transnational capitalism. Deborah Nelson revisits the subject of gender and culture in the 1950s in a guest issue of *WSQ*, which inquires, "what new questions are asked when the dominant narratives and counternarratives of the

[1950s] no longer have the same influence" (13)? Similarly, Hoberek's *Twilight of the Middle Class* takes on the myth of the decline of economic or class interests, and shows that "economics and class remained central to postwar writing" (2), while Leerom Medovoi explores the contradictions and crises at the centre of the 1950s novel through the figure of the Rebel. In each instance, these scholars have shed Cold War narratives and counter-narratives to open up new avenues of research into the often-circumscribed period of the 1950s. While my dissertation builds on this important body of revisionist scholarship, *Novel Shocks* examines the broad social transformations occurring in the 1950s not by looking at changing constructions of identity within the novels, but rather by analyzing the changing construction of the novel itself through the ideologeme of shock.

Valences of Shock

The theory of shock received its most substantial development in Freud's 1921 essay *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Writing just after World War I, Freud articulated three situations that problematized his earlier theories, which assumed a rational subject governed by the pleasure and reality principles: the compulsive repetitions displayed in war neurosis, the children's game of fort/da, and patients' repetition of traumatic events. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, he finds the resolution to this problem in his conception of a drive that exceeds the pleasure principle: the death drive. This, Freud argues, is a conservative drive that seeks to keep external stimulus out and to return to an earlier, "inorganic" state (38). Freud imagines the unconscious as an internal space that is protected by the "outermost surface" of the "receptive, cortical layer," which has a "protective shield against stimuli [… and] functions as a

special envelope or membrane resistant to stimuli" (27). Building on this model, he theorizes trauma as "any excitations from outside which are powerful enough to break through the protective shield" (29). Freud speculates that when stimuli breach this shield and reach the unconscious, the pleasure principle, in turn, is put "out of action" (29) and the death drive moves to the fore. He concludes that the compulsive repetition of traumatic events in either dreams or waking life is an effect of the unconscious trying to help the subject "master the stimulus retrospectively, by developing the anxiety whose omission was the cause of the traumatic neurosis" (32). Inasmuch as Freud's theories of the notion of trauma has a trans-historical and universal perspective—such as the child who plays fort/da, or patients' tendency to repeat "unwanted and painful memories in the transference" (21)—he roots the theory of shock and the death drive in the distinctly late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century context of industrialization and specifically of "railway disasters" and World War I (12). While *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* suggests that conservative instincts exist across history and species, it is only once this breaching begins to occur on a mass historical scale, as a result of industrialization, that these conservative instincts become legible as forms of shock. Not only do war neuroses and mechanical trauma provide Freud with the cipher that allows him to make sense of, or interpret, the function of childhood games like fort/da or the psychoanalytic event of transference, but these traumas appear to retroactively create the very condition of possibility for the existence of shock and the death drive.

Freud's theory of shock quickly gained traction and popularity across Europe. Walter Benjamin, writing in 1939, argued that the experience of shock that Freud connected to discrete and often exceptional events had become a

generalized part of daily life within the urban metropolis. Shock, for Benjamin, governed the experience of working in a factory, of going to amusement parks, and of being part of a crowd ("Baudelaire" 329). By the 1950s, shock's acceleration and invasion into everyday life had far exceeded even what Benjamin could register when he looked back to the turn of the century in Paris. While Paris was the great city of modernism and industrial modernity, New York was the great city of twentieth-century modernity, represented by the dominance of Wall Street and financial capital on the one hand, and the rise of infrastructure barons like Robert Moses on the other. The Parisian crowds that Benjamin had theorized as a shocked mass before World War II became, in the words of US sociologist David Riesman, the mass of "outer-directed types" (xv). Writing in the context of the post-war US, both Riesman and Whyte began to theorize a radical shift in dominant personality type between the era of British hegemony in the late eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries and the era of US hegemony in the mid twentieth-century. In short, they contend that the nineteenth-century "inner-directed man [sic]" (Riesman xv), who was governed by the values of Protestant individualism, had been turned inside out. Not only was man completely subsumed into his large, bureaucratic organization such that he now lived for his organization (Whyte 5) and a sense of "belongingness" within it (7), but his entire self was also constituted by that organization and society more broadly.[5] While many critics, most notably

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[5] For both Riesman and Whyte, the transformation in character type is a direct result of the change in regimes of accumulation that occurs in the shift from the English to the American regime. For Riesman, the transition from the "inner-directed" to the "outer-directed type" is created both by factors specific to the US (i.e., its lack of feudal history and its outgrowth from England) and by larger factors such as the expansion of capitalism, industrialism, urbanization, and especially the rise of mass culture and mass communication. William Whyte focuses more on how the intensification of

Daniel Bell, read Riesman and Whyte's nostalgia for the "well-shod cowboy" or "the inner-directed subject" (Riesman lxvi) as a "romantic protest against contemporary life" (Bell 36), I want to suggest that their nostalgia is not simply a romantic protest, but rather a specific nostalgia for the broader nineteenth-century Freudian conception of a subject with an inside and an outside, of a subject who still contains the protective apparatus that can keep external stimulus out. In other words, it is not simply that the subject shifts from inner-directed to outer-directed, but rather that the subject is no longer able to separate his inner self from the world. The more properly Freudian shocks of World War II—the atomic bomb, increasingly mechanized warfare, and increasingly rapid and potentially destructive transportation technologies—added to the expansion of urban centres and crowds, the explosion of mass culture and the mass entertainment industry, and the literal invasions into the subject through personality testing, psychiatric intervention, and electroconvulsive shock therapy brought Freud's theory of shock and the death drive to its limits. These shocks, all of which Riesman and Whyte categorize with exacting detail, flood the pages of bureaucratic surrealist novels and appear to erode the protagonist's conscious-unconscious system, thus disrupting the promises of individual development (or the pathos of failed development) that structure the realisms and naturalisms of the nineteenth- and earlier twentieth-century novels. The novels of bureaucratic surrealism suggest not simply that man is susceptible to external opinion or pressures, but rather

bureaucratization in the US and across the Western world leads to "more and more lives [being] encompassed by the organization way of life" (5) as opposed to the "outstanding man" (198) of Romanticism.

that the very idea of an inner space has been systematically worn away by the processes of bureaucratization and the amplified shocks of modernization.

The failure of what Freud terms the "Pcpt.-Cs system" (24), or the perceptual-consciousness system, to protect the unconscious from shock raises questions about the continued applicability of Freud's "speculative" theorizations on shock and the death drive (24): what happens to the unconscious once the callus between it and the external world has been eroded and the unconscious can no longer be "*protected against* stimuli" (27, emphasis in original)? What happens to Freud's interlocking theories of shock, the unconscious, and the death drive once shock is no longer the exception, but the norm? This move beyond shock suggests that Freud's theory of shock and the death drive can be usefully understood as a theory of the subject under the historical moment of industrial capitalism. To clarify this point, it is worth returning to Freud's definition of the death drive. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud attacks the evolutionist views that dominated intellectual thought at the time and that understood man as driving towards perfectibility. He argues, to the contrary, that "all the organic instincts are conservative […] and tend towards the restoration of an earlier state of things" (38), and that every "modification" comes into being not because the organism is inherently forward facing, but because change is accepted by the "conservative organic instincts" (38). Expanding on his theory of the conservative instincts, he explains, "Everything living dies for *internal* reasons—becomes inorganic once again," and thus, "*the aim of all life is death*" (38, emphasis in original). Although Freud relies on broad and sweeping generalizations about all organisms and "animal life" (36), his concept of the death drive is also rooted in the materialist premise that "instincts are historically determined" (37). As long as history

operates in a cyclical and relatively stable register, the death drive is imperceptible because it functions alongside the pleasure principle: it is able to consume and adapt the external modifications imposed on it and prepare the subject for forthcoming traumas of separation and loss. While there are occasional disruptions or failures of the synaesthetic system, they are exceptions. It is only with the arrival of mechanical warfare, railway disasters, and industrial modernity more broadly, that the death drive ceases to be a silent partner and erupts as a dominant, contradictory and often violent force within the subject.

Responding to the increasing shocks of modernity, social and aesthetic movements throughout the early twentieth-century began to deploy the language and theory of shock as a strategy to bring forth a psychic, aesthetic, and political revolution. Of these movements, the most notorious was Surrealism. For the Surrealist leader André Breton, the model of freedom that could transcend what Benjamin termed "the sclerotic liberal-moral-humanistic ideal of freedom" (215) was to be found in the unconscious. Drawing on Freud's theory of shock and the unconscious, the Surrealists created a deliberate aesthetic of shock that attempted to release the unconscious into everyday life and, in turn, to effect a revolutionary kind of freedom. Throughout his speeches and manifestos, Breton continuously emphasizes the importance of Freud's discoveries for the Surrealist project. For instance, in his 1935 speech "Political Position of Today's Art," Breton claims the Freudian process of bringing "repressed elements into (pre)consciousness" (230) as both a Surrealist technique and a strategy of revolutionary thought. In this sense, Breton aligned with the dreamer, and especially the mad man, whom he saw as having more intimacy with the unconscious processes and therefore as better

positioned to break through what Georges Bataille terms "the clockwork regulation of thought" (97) and the dominance of industrial and bureaucratic society. "I could spend my whole life," Breton writes, "prying loose the secrets of the insane" (5). Breton positioned the unconscious as a necessary counterpoint to what he saw as the suffocating rise of bourgeois society and its bureaucratic institutions that were attempting to control and repress human creativity and freedom. Surrealism, he writes, "foiled the political forces that seek to make the unconscious incapable of any sort of violent eruption: a society that feels itself threatened on all sides, as bourgeois society does, rightly thinks that such an eruption may be the death of it" (232). Within the traumatic experience of war and industrialization, which Freud read as assaults on the perceptive system, Breton and the Surrealists saw the emancipatory potential of human liberation.

While Surrealism took up the emancipatory potential of shock, it was also, as Hal Foster argues, a response to historical traumas and caught up in the psychological structures of trauma. In his theorization of Surrealism, *Compulsive Beauty* (1993), Foster opens with the story of a young André Breton working in a neuropsychiatric clinic during World War I, where he meets a soldier who believes that World War I was really just a piece of theatre. "The soldier," Foster explains, "intrigued the young Breton: here was a figure shocked into another reality that was also somehow a critique of this reality" (xi). For Foster, this story functions as a repressed "origin story of Surrealism" (xi), a story that understands Surrealism not only as a "movement of love and liberation [… but] rather of traumatic shock" (xi). To tease out Surrealism's relationship to shock, Foster turns to the Freudian notion of the uncanny, which Freud describes as a psychological manifestation or effect of shock, defined as a

displaced imprint of the inner "compulsion to repeat" (238). Foster reads what he sees as the constitutive categories of Surrealism, "the marvelous, convulsive beauty, and objective chance" (21), as identical to the effects of the uncanny, namely "an indistinction between the real and the imagined, […] a confusion between the animate and the inanimate, […and] a usurpation of the referent by the sign or of physical reality by psychic reality" (7). To read the Surrealists alongside Foster is both to read the shocks and traumas of industrial capitalism as ripe with the revolutionary potential of "love and liberation" (xi) and to read Surrealism's liberatory desires as always haunted by the shocks and traumas of industrial capitalism.

But what does the history of European Surrealism tell us about the 1950s US novel? A great deal in fact. Recently, writers and critics like Robin D.G. Kelley, Franklin Rosemont, Amanda Stansell, Michael Richardson, and Krzysztof Fijałkowski have reframed Surrealism as not purely a European movement but one lying on the fault line of de/colonization. For these critics, Surrealism is a collaboration between the négritude movement of Martinique and Haiti, the anti-fascist and anti-colonial movements of French intellectuals and artists, the influx of African American jazz artists and writers to France during and after World War I and, later, American artists and novelists influenced by exiled French Surrealists. Indeed, although dispersed, the aesthetic of Surrealism has been identified across a range of 1950s novels. Southern literary critic Mab Segrest has even gone so far as to coin the term "Georgia Surreal" to characterize the 1950s Southern work of Flannery O'Connor and Carson McCullers ("Milledgeville"). *Novel Shocks* contends that Surrealism emerges in the post-war novel across the US in response to many of the same factors as in Europe: the post-colonial struggles occurring between

the North and the South, on the one hand, and between conservative working and middle class whites and African Americans on the other;[6] the rapid rise in industrialization and the emergence of increasingly bureaucratic institutions; and the explosion of mass and commodity culture. However, no work has grappled with the significance of the Surrealist thread that runs through the 1950s. The reason this thread has been effaced is because the Surrealism that appears in the post-war US is not identical with that which was produced in Europe or the colonies in the early twentieth-century. Instead, what we find threaded throughout the 1950s lies *beyond* Surrealism. Where the Surrealisms of the 1920s and '30s excelled at the modernist project of simultaneously arousing and managing "deeply political impulses" (Jameson 266), the Surrealism we find in the 1950s novel represents a moment when the shocks of modernity can no longer be deployed or contained, because they have become constitutive of society.

Shock, Keynesianism, and the Emergence of the Proto-Neoliberalism

If my first intervention is to read the 1950s through the Surrealist aesthetic of shock in order to repoliticize the intellectual turn "from Marx to Freud" (Podhoretz 122) that characterizes so many accounts of the 1950s, my second intervention is to shift our contextualization of the 1950s novel from the geopolitical narrative of the Cold War to the economic program of

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6   I am drawing here on the work of new Southern literary critics like Jennifer Rae Greeson who have persuasively noted the "characteristics that [the South] shares with formerly colonial, underdeveloped peripheries around the globe" (3) and of work like that of Kwame Ture and Charles Hamilton who in the 1970s argued that African Americans are an internal colony of the US (5).

Keynesianism, which coincides with the period that Jamie Peck in "Remaking Laissez Faire" terms the era of "proto-neoliberalism" (3). My use of the term Keynesianism draws on the work of economic geographers like Arrighi and David Harvey, and Regulation school theorists like Bob Jessop, Jamie Peck, and Adam Tickell, who understand Keynesianism or the "Keynesian Welfare National State" (Jessop, "The Transition" (13)) alternately as a mode of "regulation" that "tries to adjust demand to the supply-driven needs of Fordist mass production" (Jessop 17) and as a management strategy that was able to briefly contain "the inherent contradictions of capitalism" (Harvey, *Postmodernism* 148), but which ultimately failed. As one of the most wide-ranging and successful attempts on the part of the state to manage the economic and social shocks of the post-war world, recontextualizing the 1950s novel from the Cold War to Keynesianism highlights the importance of shock in the political, psychological, and aesthetic spheres of the post-war world. Whereas the Cold War frame accepts a certain set of ideological and geopolitical racial, classed, and national narratives, the language of Keynesianism understands 1950s economic and geopolitical policy (including the Cold War) as part of a broader struggle to manage the contradictory and crisis-prone nature of capitalism. Reading the 1950s novel through the lens of Keynesianism allows us to think about the novel's struggles to find an imaginary or ideological resolution both alongside, and in tension with, the US state's attempt to find policy solutions for real economic and ideological crisis.

These two interventions are interconnected. Many critics have noted the economic language that structures Freud's psychological thought. As Lawrence Birken writes, Freud's idea of a "'psychic economy' was no mere metaphor, but a fundamental set of axioms about the function of individuals and the world in

which they lived" (312). The relationship between psychoanalytic and economic language went both ways, and Freudian theory was soon absorbed into economics. For the economists, Freud's greatest intellectual contribution was his attempt to account for what Birken calls the "apparently non-rational (and thus non-economic) aspects of human behavior" (323). Freud's discovery of shock and the death drive were key milestones in this work. As Pedro Garcia Duarte and Kevin Hoover have shown, while shock was used throughout nineteenth-century economic texts to describe an external disturbance of the equanimity of the market, it wasn't until the middle of the twentieth-century that the "meaning of 'shock' sharpened and shock as a phenomena became the objects of economic observation" (2).[7] The term began to sharpen in reference to its psychoanalytic counterpart. For an example of its earliest technical usage, Hoover and Garcia Duarte turn to Ragnar Frisch, a noted Norwegian economist, who defined shock as both an "error" in the "rational behavior of individuals" (qtd. on 9) and an "event which contradicts the assumptions of some pure economic theory and thus prevents the variables from following the exact course implied by that theory" (ibid.). Like the psychoanalytic definition it drew on, shock came to be understood as an internal disruption of a rational economic system and the invasion of an external factor into a closed and contained economic system. The emergence of psychoanalytic thought within economic theory sheds light on the emphasis that twentieth-century US economic plans placed on cultural and social projects. For instance, the Work Projects Administration (WPA) focused as much on creating new national subjects through cultural and anthropological programs as they did on creating a new economy; the Keynesian deal focused as much on creating what Nadel

[7]   See Appendix 2.

has called a "containment culture" (1995) through CIA-funded cultural programs like the CCF (Congress for Cultural Freedom) and its American branch, the ACCF, as it did on economic expansion through programs like the Marshall Plan and the Point Four program, and, as Michel Foucault suggests, the construction of *homo oeconomicus* was an integral piece of the neoliberal project (225).

By resituating the 1950s novel from the frame of the Cold War to that of Keynesianism we are able to evaluate the hegemony of the so-called "containment model" in a very different light. By 1950, Keynesianism was well on its way to replacing neo-classical economics as the dominant ideology and practice within the US. Harvey, for instance, characterizes the 1950s in America as a period of "Fordist-Keynesianism" attempting to balance the powers of state and market through a negotiated "class compromise between capital and labor" (*Brief History* 10). Keynesian textbooks like Paul Samuelson's *Economics* became the standard in university classrooms; Keynesian graduate students who had been brought into government policy positions throughout the late 1930s and early 1940s climbed the ranks within government (Salant 47); and US policies and laws from the Employment Act of 1946 (which placed economic policies around inflation under the purview of the federal government) to the Marshall Plan fell increasingly in line with Keynesian ideals. At the same time as Keynesianism was emerging and gaining dominance within the US, the US was gaining dominance over the global market and nation-state system. In 1944, the Bretton Woods agreement was signed, effectively placing the US Federal Reserve System at the centre of the world economy. In 1945, the United Nations Charter was drafted and signed in San Francisco, formalizing Roosevelt's policies at the suprastatal level. By 1947, US gold reserves made up

seventy percent of the global supply, and its national income was that of "Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and the Benelux countries" combined (Arrighi 275). And in 1949, Truman launched his "bold new program" called Point Four, a technical assistance version of the Marshall Plan that targeted Third World countries by providing training and supplies for economic development. Truman claimed this bold program would move beyond "the old imperialism of exploitation for foreign profit" (Truman, "Inaugural Address" n.p.) by offering scientific and technical training assistance to underdeveloped countries susceptible to communism.[8]

For Keynesian policies to become effective, the US needed a larger global market to absorb its immense productive capacity, and none of these global initiatives were enough to adequately stabilize and stimulate the global economic system. As Arrighi notes, the asymmetries "between the cohesiveness and wealth of the U.S. domestic market and the fragmentation and poverty of foreign markets" (295) threatened to send both the US and the global market spinning into economic and social collapse. Economically, the war had left Europe bankrupt and on the brink of fiscal and geopolitical collapse, which, when combined with the military and technological innovations of World War II, created a tinderbox that if ignited could remake the world in the image of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. To stabilize the nation-state system and rebuild the global economy, the US government would require a much larger influx of capital. The problem facing the Truman administration was how to convince US citizens, who mistrusted the state, to authorize a

[8] Point Four involved thirty-four Third World countries, 3,000 US technicians disseminated abroad and 3,000 foreign trainees brought to the United States for study in technical fields (Black 2012).

massive expansion in state spending and state intervention both abroad and domestically. Arrighi contends that this problem was solved through the "'invention' of the Cold War" (295), which provided the US with the ideological force necessary (i) to implement and maintain initiatives like the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan that "built up" Western Europe and Japan in America's image (296); (ii) to effect a mass reorganization of the domestic political and economic scene; and (iii) to expand and stimulate the global market through rearmament and militarization projects. In other words, the Cold War discourses through which we so often read 1950s literature need to be understood as a secondary strategy that was part of a larger program of crisis management.

The discourses of shock we find in the 1950s US novel express this sense of intra- and international crisis that Keynesianism was trying to resolve, but they also anticipate the emergence of neoliberalism. While many scholars have pointed to the importance of economic programs like Paul Volcker's "shock therapy" in the economic liberalization projects of neoliberalism (Albo; Harvey *Brief History*; Newstadt), Naomi Klein's best-selling book *Shock Doctrine* is notable for the way it places psychological, economic, and political shocks at the centre of the neoliberal project. Klein argues that what connects events as geographically and temporally dispersed as the management of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans in 2005, NATO's attacks on Belgrade in 1999, Yeltsin's sending of tanks to the Soviet parliament buildings in 1993, the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989, the Falklands War in 1982, the coup of military dictator General Augusto Pinochet in 1973, and Friedman's "Chicago School" revolution is the neoliberal project of "shock" (9). But, Klein's narrative begins neither in Chile nor in the US, but in a laboratory at Montreal's

McGill university in the 1950s, where the CIA-funded doctor, Donald Ewan Cameron, began "to perform bizarre experiments on his psychiatric patients, keeping them asleep and in isolation for weeks, then administering huge doses of electroshock as well as experimental drug cocktails including the psychedelic LSD and the hallucinogen PCP" (31). Cameron was part of a CIA program named MKUltra, an extra-legal human experimentation program that funded psychiatrists to carry out forms of psychological experimentation in order to improve techniques for interrogating Soviet spies. Klein reads this laboratory as both the literal and metaphoric laboratory of neoliberalism writ large. While *Shock Doctrine* has received numerous, and forceful, critiques for a range of political and theoretical shortfalls,[9] Klein's insight into the processes through which the psychological theory and project of shock came to constitute an economic, political, and ideological system offers an invaluable frame within which to analyze and understand neoliberal processes and practices.

Most critics date the rise of neoliberalism to Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan's revolutions of the 1980s, to the Pinochet coup of September 11, 1973 (Harvey *Brief*), or to the abandonment of the Bretton Woods system in

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[9] Jonathan Chait, for instance, calls Klein a "conspiracy theorist," attacking her for ignoring the ideas and ideologies of the right and for ignoring the "banal and ideological fact" that "crises creat[ing] fertile terrain for political change [is] far from being a ghoulish doctrine unique to free-market radicals" (30). Alexander Cockburn further critiques Klein for effacing the contradictory nature of capitalism and attributing to capitalism a stability it does not actually possess. Disaster capitalism, Cockburn retorts, is not a successful mode of operation, even by capitalism's own measure: "A capitalism that thrives best on the abnormal, on disasters, is by definition in decline" (2007 n.p.). Finally, Paul Seabright accuses Klein of moralizing, cherry picking, and over-simplifying the neoliberal conjuncture. He contends that Klein's labeling of anyone "who has expressed any doubts about central planning, state ownership, or any aspect of the regulation of modern economies" as a "free-market ideologue" invalidates the term (2008 n.p.).

the late 1960s and early 1970s (Brenner and Theodore *Spaces*). Similarly, Peck and Tickell offer a dual periodization of neoliberalism, with 1971–1989 constituting the era of "roll-back neoliberalism," the initial phase of the "deregulation and dismantlement" of the Keynesian state (382), and 1987–2001 constituting the era of "roll-out" or "ascendant" neoliberalism, the phase of "active state-building and regulatory reform" (384). Nevertheless, critical attention has recently reached back to the 1950s to limn what Peck calls the "prehistories" of neoliberalism (3) and to demonstrate the "contradictory, contingent and constructed nature of the neoliberal present" (4). For instance, Peck's article "Remaking Laissez-Faire," as well as books like Peter Mirowski and Dieter Plehwe's *The Making of Mont Pèlerin*, turn to the lives of, and debates within, the Mont Pelerin Society—a group consisting of Fredrich Hayek, Ludwig von Mises, George Stigler, Milton Friedman, and other architects of the neoliberal projects—whose meeting at Mont Pelerin on April 8, 1947 led to the founding neoliberal "Statement of Aims." *Novel Shocks* builds on this body of work by providing a literary theory of proto-neoliberalism.

Neoliberalism emerges out of both a real economic crisis and a perceived crisis of the state in the wake of World War II. In *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Foucault argues that the anti-welfare statist sentiment that permeated the 1950s was symptomatic of a global fear of the state that collapsed Keynesianism, Stalinism, and Nazism into the same logic of statism. While Foucault makes clear that the problem with totalitarianism was never an excess of the state, but rather the subordination of the state's autonomy to the "governmentality of the party" (191), his point is that this collapse was emblematic "of the crises of [liberal] governmentality" (76). In the US context, the fear was as much of *too much* state as it was of *too little* state, as much a fear

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of the state interfering and clamping down on people's rights (whether the rights of those being hauled up before a House Committee on Un-American Activities, of freedom riders traveling into Mississippi, or of homeowners whose neighbourhoods or parks were being desegregated) as it was of the state's failure to adequately mediate the struggles between the interests of labour and capital on the one hand and between white conservatives who wanted protection from a rising urban African American population and an African American population looking for the enforcement of desegregation, on the other. In the novels examined in this dissertation, the state appears as both a big, Orwellian monster that stifles individual freedoms and invades the lives of its characters, and as a parodic and failed mediator between conflicting groups and characters that is ultimately unable to buffer society from a wide range of shocks.

The popular sociological texts of the time also speak to the profoundly ambivalent attitudes people held towards the state. For instance, Riesman suggests that the problem is not simply an excess of state involvement, but rather that:

> our government [is] at once much too powerful, being able to threaten the whole world, including Americans, with extermination […] while being at the same time too powerless in the face of the veto groups to move toward the control of this threat. (xxxvi)

Similarly, C. Wright Mills worries that the state is no longer "a visible mask for autonomous powers, but [rather], the powers of decision are now firmly vested within the state" (267). Throughout *The Power Elite*, Mills simultaneously argues that the post-war state has too much power and that it is not powerful enough

to maintain its autonomy against the onslaught of the "power elite" (4). It is this conflicting fear of too much and yet not enough state that neoliberal ideologists rectified through a radical reorganization of market-state relationships. In *The Illusion of Free Markets*, Bernard Harcourt argues that neoliberalism's solution was to replace the state with the market as the natural arbiter of all social relationships and to retask the state with the job of policing and punishing "behavior outside the space of the orderly market that seeks to circumvent free, voluntary, compensated exchange" (38).

While the novels that make up the genre of bureaucratic surrealism all offer different configurations of market-state reorganization, and their relationship to the individual, they all brush up against versions of the fantasy of a market-driven system backed by a law-and-order state. It is because of the genre's interrogations of, and interactions with, this emergent ideology that I read bureaucratic surrealism as the ideal genre through which to interrogate the moment of proto-neoliberalism. What holds together the novels of bureaucratic surrealism are (1) the complete rejection of the aesthetic, political, and psychological deals that marked the New Deal conjuncture and an antipathy to further state intervention (2) the struggle to imagine new kinds of resolutions to what Franco Moretti has identified as the twin problems, or "traumas" (234) that the novel faced in the period following World War I.[10] Moretti contends that these traumas introduced "discontinuities" in, and ultimately "dismantled," the temporality, subjectivity, and spatiality of earlier

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[10]   In *The Way of the World*, Franco Moretti argues that these two traumas are "the external world" invading the closed societies and subjects and the social "institutions [… run by] bureaucrats, or American managers" (234) that seem impervious to, or that even work violently against the subject.

novelistic forms. The novels of bureaucratic surrealism all attempt to create a literary form with new kinds of time, space, and subjectivity. Finally, the novels of bureaucratic surrealism are held together by (3) the attempt to reconfigure the relationship between the market and the state. The 1950s novel enacts the political crisis in the efficacy of the post-war state, the aesthetic crisis in the form of the modernist novel, and the psychological crisis in the efficacy of the synaesthetic system. It also begins the process of asking what next? What kinds of aesthetic, political, and psychological forms begin to emerge in the wake of such a crisis? In other words, the 1950s forms a hinge that allows us to look both backwards to the pre-war era and ahead to the neoliberal one.

Novel Shocks: The 1950s Novel and New Deal Modernism

We can discern the extent to which bureaucratic surrealism represents a break from earlier aesthetic forms by comparing the 1950s novel to the novels that compose what Michael Szalay terms "New Deal Modernism" (2000). Szalay analyzes how New Deal concepts like social security, insurance, and risk figure in 1930s and '40s literature and suggests that US Modernisms were always in close dialogue with the social welfare state. In this sense, *New Deal Modernism* forms a useful counterpoint to works like Michael Denning's *The Cultural Front* or Foley's *Radical Representations*, whose encyclopaedic coverage of

1930s and '40s history often overshadows their literary readings.[11] In *New Deal Modernism*, Szalay makes two observations about the relationship between literature and the state in the '30s and '40s, which sets up a useful foil for this relationship in the 1950s. First, he argues that during the '30s and '40s, writers from the left and the right, even self-proclaimed radicals, participated in specific state-funded artistic projects and "in the reinvention of modern governance" (3) more broadly. Second, he argues that the genre "New Deal Modernism"—a loose term that encompasses the writings of Ayn Rand, John Steinbeck, Richard Wright, Wallace Stevens, and Gertrude Stein—was crucial in constructing the ideology of welfare state and social security. Given the ascendance of Keynesianism on both domestic and international fronts throughout the 1950s, and given the image of that decade as an era of conformity and containment, we would expect the 1950s novel to continue in the New Deal novel's tradition of figuring the state as a powerful figure of

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[11] While *Radical Representations* is specifically about literary form and politics, in that Foley both historicizes the ideological or "common sense" belief in the incommensurability of a political and aesthetic agenda (4–5) and creates a genealogy of radical genres, she does not offer a rigorous account of the relationship between genre and politics, nor does she open up space in which to think through the radical and reactionary elements present across a range of texts. Denning's *The Cultural Front* reclaims this literary front by resuscitating the politics of the Cultural Front as a populist and potentially revolutionary politics that lasted into the 1970s (a period he later renames "the age of three worlds" (*Culture in the Age* 1)). Denning argues that the Popular Front is seen by the left as selling out the revolutionary project, and by the right as foolish sentimentalism; he challenges both these constructions by arguing that the Popular Front represented a reimagining of, rather than a retreat from, left politics. The question that Denning rightly asks is: how did cultural producers attempt to use the language of mainstream culture while linking it to the social and political causes they were continuing to fight for? However, *The Cultural Front* treats literature as one of many cultural artefacts and does not focus specifically on questions of literary form in any detail, or analyze the specific relationship between literary form and politics instead of between culture and politics more broadly.

mediation and resolution (even if it is a figure that the novels wish to critique or even overthrow).

Paradoxically, at the moment when the Keynesian state is beginning its ascendance, the novel seems to lose all faith in the state. In the 1950s, the state sheds its role as an effective mediator within the novel and instead becomes a figure of security and bureaucratic control. Exemplary here is the shift from Richard Wright's *Native Son*, published in 1940, to Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, published in 1952. While Wright is undeniably critical of the state, its ability to act as a mediating force between labour (or perhaps surplus labour) and capital is crucial to *Native Son's* structure. In *Native Son*, the majority of the action occurs in a courtroom where the landlord and "philanthropist," Mr. Dalton, and the Communist lawyer, Max, struggle over the fate of a poor black man, Bigger Thomas, who is on trial for murdering Mr. Dalton's daughter, Mary. The court setting is what allows Max to put capitalism on trial. As Szalay suggests, "Wright identified 'the reality of the state' as the only mechanism for securing the Black body from the abrasions of history" (22). It is not just that the state is able to mitigate the protagonist's experience of history's abrasions; the state is also able to mediate between labour and capital. While, for Wright, the state is not neutral and will side with capital every time, the novel depends on the state-created space of the courtroom to carry out its condemnation of the entire nexus of social, political, and psychological warfare committed against urban black subjects.

While *Invisible Man* also critiques the state's structural racism, the figure of the state in the novel lacks the capacity to act as a mitigating force. In fact, the novel no longer contains a space where the facts can be weighed and a society judged, and as a result the state cannot fulfill its role as the mediator of

capital and labour. The state is only visible within *Invisible Man* through the figures of the police. For instance, when the police murder the Harlem youth-leader, Tod Clifton—one of the most narratively symbolic moments of the text—the protagonist claims that it is an unrecordable event:

> All things, it is said, are duly recorded [… but] actually it is only the known, the seen, the heard and only those events that the recorder regards as important that are put down, those lies his keepers keep their power by. But the cop would be Clifton's historian, his judge, his witness, and his executioner, and I was the only brother in the watching crowd. And I, the only witness for the defense, knew neither the extent of his guilt nor the nature of his crime. Where were the historians today? (432)

In *Invisible Man*, there is no courtroom and no state-held space. Instead, the entire state apparatus is condensed into the figure of the policeman who becomes judge, witness, and executioner. As a result of this compression of the state, murder cannot hold the kind of narrative weight it can in *Native Son*. The murder occurs and the novel moves on to the next social explosion and the next act of violence. In novels like Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1906), Theresa Serber Malkiel's *Diary of a Shirtwaist Striker* (1907), Mary Heaton Vorse's *Strike!* (1930), or John Steinbeck's *In Dubious Battle* (1936), workers battle the police, the Pinkertons, or often both, and often win. Conversely, in *Invisible Man*, the police may be an arm of the state, but their only power is violence. There is no larger apparatus behind them—or rather, the only visible one is the security apparatus. Notably, the two other times we see the police are when the protagonist witnesses the police protecting the bank that is attempting to evict an old black couple in Harlem, and during the riot. The police's role as security in *Invisible Man* does not provide social security, but merely fans the flames of social unrest. The couple's eviction and Clifton's murder only contribute to the

explosion of the riot that concludes the novel. While the police fail to restore order, their violence also fails to trigger the kind of triumphant uprising we would find in earlier proletarian or radical novels. The concluding riot, after all, is nothing but the last in a series of Surrealist and violent explosions. This dissertation begins with a reading of *Invisible Man* for two reasons. First, because the shift from the state as a purveyor of social security to the state as an apparatus of militarized security, which *Invisible Man* highlights, comes to form a recurrent theme throughout the 1950s novel, and second, because the crisis of the state that we see in *Invisible Man* becomes the central problem that the genre of bureaucratic surrealism attempts to resolve.

In part, then, my dissertation could simply continue from where Szalay's *New Deal Modernism* leaves off in its analysis of the mutually constitutive relationship between the New Deal state and literary production, and ask: what next? What happens when the ground shifts from social security to security? What happens to modernism when the US state passes from the New Deal to Keynesianism and beyond? Indeed, this would be one very valuable way to move forward. However, whereas Szalay uses the designator "New Deal Modernism" to encompass *all* literature written during the '30s and '40s, with no other "acid test, [or] checklist of aesthetic distinction" (5), thus eclipsing all generic distinctions, my dissertation explicitly narrows its focus to the aesthetic form of the novel. I argue that the explicit themes or positions of these novels cannot be understood outside of the form in which these positions occur. The shifts in perspective and form that we find between *Native Son* and *Invisible Man* are not simply the reflection of a political break, nor do these shifts reflect the distinction between the sentimentalism of the pamphleteer and the art of the novelist that Baldwin so famously points to in "Everybody's Protest Novel." It

is not that Bigger "is Uncle Tom's descendant" (22), nor that Ellison is a more developed or "better" novelist. Instead, the radical shift that occurs between the 1930s and the 1950s is such that the entire range of narrative and aesthetic solutions that were possible within the framework of the New Deal are foreclosed. What we see in the transition between these two novels is a sweeping reorganization of the novel's understanding of aesthetics, the market, the state, and the subject. As Szalay points out, the novels in New Deal Modernism—whether revolutionary or reactionary, conservative or progressive—were always in dialogue with the state, and the state could, in turn, be symbolized and accessed within the frame of the novel. Like history in Gyorgi Lukács's *The Historical Novel*, the state in the 1930s and '40s novel is portrayed as accessible and transformable. By the time we arrive at the 1950s, this is no longer the case. Within the 1950s novel, the state is no longer able to provide amelioration, mediation, or compromise. Instead, the novel simultaneously represents the state as an oppressively bureaucratic security force that burrows into and blocks the lives of its characters and as an ineffectual apparatus that is unable to adequately protect these characters from the shocks of post-war life. Moreover, the possibility for resolution is entirely circumscribed. While every novel in this dissertation concludes with its protagonist successfully escaping the state (the protagonist of *Invisible Man* jumps down a manhole, the men of the mind in *Atlas Shrugged* literally blow up the state, Hazel Motes in *Wise Blood* dies, William Lee in *Naked Lunch* escapes the two state agents who are pursuing him by waking up from a dream, and Yossarian in *Catch-22* runs away to Sweden), these escapes lead to neither utopia nor a defined alternative, but rather to an indefinable abyss. It is precisely through these failed resolutions that the genre of bureaucratic surrealism, and the five novels that *Novel Shocks* examines, is able to register the

profound ideological crisis in the role of the state, a crisis to which Keynesianism and neoliberalism will offer very different solutions.

Part of my dissertation's aim, then, is paradoxically to resuscitate texts whose explicit conservatism has often led to their dismissal in broader conversations on the US novel. Taking my lead from Hoberek's *Twilight of the Working Class*, I show how novels whose ideas and interpretations appear conservative or even retrograde are often influential and formative in the construction of our current moment. Specifically, I contend that *Wise Blood*'s focus on security and individual freedoms helped shape what Kevin Kruse identifies as the shift in language "from the uglier race-based segregationism of the Old South and toward a more respectable, rights-based conservatism for a New South" (139). I further suggest that novels like *Atlas Shrugged* took up and popularized this linguistic shift in the white flight discourses of the North. Examined aesthetically, these conservative novels are important participants in a much larger struggle occurring in the 1950s over how to deal with the crises both domestic and international that marked the post-war era. I contend that reactionary or conservative novels like *Atlas Shrugged* or *Wise Blood*, far from being relics of the 1950s, are a necessary part of our archive if we are to make sense of the neoliberal and conservative ideologies that dominate our current moment. Linking conservative novels such as *Atlas Shrugged* and *Wise Blood* to more "subversive" texts such as *Naked Lunch* and *Catch-22*, and to what is perhaps the most canonical text of American literature, *Invisible Man*, through shock brings into relief a much broader and more divergent field of struggle and imagination than is granted in Cold War accounts of the period.

In Chapter One, I argue that *Invisible Man*'s formal structure, which vacillates between scenes of Surrealist shock and scenes of failing naturalist

bildungsromane, enacts an ideological crisis in post-war US society. In part, the novel's Surrealist scenes allegorize a series of social antagonisms all of which serve to disrupt and critique the developmental promises underpinned by New Deal and Keynesian social and racial policy. The shocks that structure *Invisible Man* are both rooted in the literal technological innovations that produce shock—war, factory explosions, and electroshock machines—and are deployed at key narrative moments when class and racial antagonisms threaten to erupt and spill into society at large. The electrified floor of the famous Battle Royale scene, for instance, emerges alongside the white philanthropists' fear that the protagonist's desire for social equality will challenge the racial order of the South. Similarly, the shell-shocked patients of the Golden Day pub begin to riot the moment that the protagonist attempts to rise above his class and racial position; the factory hospital straps the protagonist to an electrotherapy machine when tensions between the white union, the black boiler-room operator, Lucius Brockway, and the protagonist literally blow up the walls of the factory; and the Surrealist and shock-infused scene of the final riot occurs at the moment when tensions between the black and white working class (represented by the protagonist and the Brotherhood too) threaten to erupt into war. But, these scenes of shock are never able to become subversive or emancipatory; within the novel they come to represent a shadowy and unformed, yet emergent, logic of power. Ricocheting between bureaucratic naturalisms and Surrealist shocks, Ellison poses the question that the US novel will continue to grapple with for the rest of the decade: what kind of novelistic form can emerge that is able to make sense of, narrate, and contain the shocks of the post-war world?

Chapters two through four offer close readings of 1950s novels that each suggest a different formal resolution to the problem Ellison raises in *Invisible Man.* In Chapter Two I turn to the cultural-conservative Flannery O'Connor and her novel *Wise Blood* to illustrate the crisis the novel faces when it attempts to use shock as a strategy of aesthetic protest against a state and mass cultural system that is becoming increasingly governed by shock. *Wise Blood* attempts to resist the onslaught of the interventionist (and integrationist) state and Northern mass culture by out-shocking them with a turn to the grotesque or what Segrest calls the "Georgia surreal" (114). Specifically, *Wise Blood* uses shock to stage the struggle between the integrationist state of the North and its mass cultural apparatus, and the disaffected white, working class of the South. While *Wise Blood* does not deploy technologies of shock in the way that *Invisible Man* does, O'Connor orients her entire aesthetic strategy around shock. As she famously writes, "you have to make your vision apparent by shock—to the hard of hearing you shout, and for the almost-blind you draw large and startling figures" (34). But, throughout *Wise Blood,* O'Connor runs up against the problem that the violent shocks that she deploys to efface the nexus of the Northern state and mass culture simply tie the South to the emergent logic of the post-war US. The state that the protagonist, Hazel Motes, attempts to escape becomes the necessary vehicle for his salvation, while the world of mass culture, which O'Connor represents as masking reality, comes to form the ground of the novel's narrative reality. While *Wise Blood* ultimately succeeds in out-shocking culture and bringing Motes to grace, it does so by turning to the security apparatus of the state. I argue that O'Connor's ultimate reinscription of the logics of the state and mass culture through shock demonstrates how specific forms of conservative and anti-mass culture critique came to create the ideas and tenets that would underpin neoliberal thought.

In Chapter Three, I turn to a foundational text in the creation of contemporary conservative thought and culture, Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged*, and examine its attempt to create a radically new narrative of capitalism premised on a reconfiguration of the dominant understandings of shock. Challenging New Deal and emergent Keynesian narratives that figured the state as the mediator between the subject and the shock-prone marketplace, Rand refigures shock as a natural response to, and the inevitable result of, the contradictions created by the increasing intervention of the bureaucratic state (called the "looter-state" in the novel). *Atlas Shrugged* transforms the myriad of post-war shocks into the self-regulating processes of the market, which is destroying the vestiges of an already decaying bureaucratic state and helping form a rational and stable laissez-faire market society. In doing so, Rand creates a compensatory fantasy that turns the processes of post-war urban decline and middle and working class white disenfranchisement into a teleological narrative of victory and mastery. I suggest, however, that Rand's attempt to rid post-war capitalism of its contradictions ultimately creates an entirely new set of contradictions. At the same time as *Atlas Shrugged* embraces the tempestuous and tumultuous energies of capitalist modernity, and its attendant technological innovation and release of human passions, *Atlas Shrugged*'s narrative success is premised on a profoundly reactionary and nostalgic retreat from the flows of the market and into a protectionist and agrarian frontier fantasy. I conclude by suggesting that *Atlas Shrugged* offers a necessary lens through which to view the narratives and contradictions upon which our contemporary neoliberal moment is built.

Chapter Four turns to what appears to be the most Surrealist novel of the 1950s, William Burroughs's *Naked Lunch*, one of the most shocking,

graphic, and explicit novels of the decade. But the shocks within the novel and the Surrealist dream space the novel constructs through the Interzone no longer serve to critique or disrupt the state because the state is structurally generating the shocks. Where the previous novels in this dissertation register specific social contradictions and conflicts through the language of shock, in *Naked Lunch*, both shock and social antagonism—whether between the Liquidation Party, the Senders, the Divisionists, and the Factionalists, between imperialists and Third World revolutionaries, or between narcotics agents and addicts—appear as fantasies constructed and deployed by the state. The antagonisms and shocks that flood the pages of *Naked Lunch* do not disrupt its narrative, but compose its literary form. In this sense, I argue that *Naked Lunch* can be understood as a novel written "beyond" Surrealism. Drawing on Foster's argument that Surrealism is tied up with the problematic of shock, compulsion, and the uncanny, this chapter suggests that *Naked Lunch* enacts the journey into and beyond Surrealism proper, that it erodes the boundary between the conscious and unconscious, which is constitutive of the aesthetic project of Surrealism. That is to say, it marks the moment when the modernist project becomes unable to either arouse or manage the social and political impulses of its moment. While *Naked Lunch* concludes by pulling back from this abyss, claiming it was all a dream or else a drug-fuelled nightmare, even the boundary between dreaming and waking cannot be maintained. *Naked Lunch* brings us to the precipice of a world where Surrealism can no longer deploy shock in order to access a hidden unconscious, because the unconscious has already been shocked to the surface and is now a mappable and manipulable space.

My dissertation concludes with Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*. I argue that *Catch-22* pushes the novel over the precipice into a narrative mode in which the space between the unconscious and the conscious has dissipated, and where the novel must shift from representing a Freudian model of the interior unconscious to the Lacanian model of an unconscious that is always already external and rooted in the Other. I focus specifically on the novel's two recurring traumas: Yossarian's discovery of Snowden's wound and the "soldier in white." Reading these instances of shock against the expansion of Milo Minderbinder's consortium—a perfect symbol of the bureaucratic, vertically integrated, globalizing US corporation—I argue that *Catch-22* marks the high point of bureaucratic surrealism because of its ability to manage shock by fusing it together with the logics of bureaucracy and expanding its field of containment onto a global scale. But, *Catch-22* also marks the exhaustion of the genre. The process of expansion and recontainment that the novel undergoes also strips its form and its characters of interiority and subjectivity. The attempt to manage shock becomes untenable because shock has become constitutive of the novel form itself. In other words, *Catch-22* marks the moment when the novel seems to recognize that shock is no longer something external, but has fully come to constitute the psychological and economic field. I conclude by suggesting that after *Catch-22*, a new kind of novel emerges, one in which shock moves to the centre of the form. Looking ahead to the works of Thomas Pynchon, Kathy Acker, and William Gaddis, I close by suggesting that the neoliberal novel emerges, in a sense, from Snowden's wound.

Chapter 2.

Dispossession and Repossession:
Shock and Surplus in *Invisible Man*

The explosion will not happen today.
It is too soon . . . or too late.

—*Frantz Fanon*

The tension in Surrealism that is discharged in shock
is the tension between schizophrenia and reification.

—*Theodor Adorno*

Cutting through the dominant strands of Ralph Ellison criticism that cast him as either an American everyman or the Judas of residual leftists or emergent black power movements, Kenneth Warren's *So Black and Blue: Ralph Ellison and the Occasion of Criticism* (2003) makes the case that it is time for a recontextualization of *Invisible Man*. Specifically, Warren argues that we need to de-universalize Ellison by reading him as neither the theorizer of the human condition nor our soothsayer, but rather as a great author who captured "a bit of American reality […] as that reality was passing into history" (2). The reality Warren is speaking of is the era of Jim Crow, the passing of which created "a gulf between one historical moment and the next so that what was once experienced immediately becomes available only as antiquarianism" (5). Read in this light, the critiques Ellison levels at the hulking, impersonal, and bureaucratic Southern all-black school modeled on Tuskegee, at the union in New York, and at the Brotherhood in Harlem are as much about their

obsolescence as they are about the uneven and exploitative race relationships fuelling them. Setting the stage for the question that would underpin Warren's 2011 book *What Was African American Literature?*—that is, what were the possibilities for an African American literature in a post-Jim Crow America?— *So Black and Blue* asks, "What might it mean to regard Ellison […] as an extraordinary writer for the particular era […] of a legal Jim Crow society?" (3). This chapter takes its cues from Warren, but resituates the passing of Jim Crow within the broader transformation surrounding it: namely, the end of British hegemony following World War II, and the USs attempt to resuscitate and expand the faltering Westphalian and global-capitalist system. Globalizing Warren's argument, this chapter asks, what would it mean to read *Invisible Man* as the *ur* novel of its global transitional moment?

Invisible Man was written on the cusp of the passing of Jim Crow, of the pre- and post-war world, and of the USs emergence as a global superpower. Following the mass destruction of World War II and the ensuing crises of stagnating capital and geopolitical insecurity, the US state needed to stabilize and expand the global-capitalist system and secure its own role as global leader. Racial integration was a central tenet of this project. Under the banner of what David Harvey terms "Fordist-Keynesianism" (10), Giovanni Arrighi identifies three strategies the US deployed to solve these crises: expanding the capitalist system through the absorption of "non-Western peoples" and "the propertyless masses of the West" (63) into the capitalist system; restructuring Europe in the American image through the Marshall Plan; and redistributing capital globally, especially to the Third World, through "the invention of the Cold War" (295). Jodi Melamed has persuasively connected these international strategies to the establishment of the post-Jim Crow race regime she calls

"racial liberalism" (4). Melamed argues that "racial liberalism and U.S. global ascendancy [were] mutually constitutive" (4), and that the integration of African Americans into US society was a foundational strategy in establishing "the moral legitimacy of U.S. global leadership" (4), thus masking "the workings of [US] transnational capitalism" (5). Read within this broader geopolitical and economic perspective, traditional leftist critiques of Ellison that focus on his attacks upon the leftist institutions of the union and the Communist Party (through the thinly veiled Brotherhood) are not able to fully grapple with his political and literary project.[1] Rather, his project extends far beyond the Brotherhood or the Party, and instead challenges and interrogates the changing ground of post-war politics itself.

Whereas the Ellison of the Jim Crow era is recoded in the protagonist's endless failed attempts to enter the anachronistic institutions of the school, the union, and the Party, this transitional Ellison can be found in the intersection between the novel's obsession with shock and its myriad secondary characters. Written at a time when excluded African American bodies represented both a threat to, and a necessary part of, the US project of global economic stabilization and expansion, the novel's secondary characters come to stand in for the figure of black surplus, the African American population that must be integrated, contained, or expelled. In the same way, shock records the convergence of black surplus with post-war society. *Invisible Man* is full of

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[1]   While recent work like Barbara Foley's *Wrestling With the Left* (2010) offers indispensible archival research and analysis of the relationship between Ellison's own political struggles with, and ultimately against, the political Party that nurtured him, and the many drafts that led to his novel's red-baiting final version, her equation of Ellison's politics with his relationship to the Brotherhood rereads Ellison within the terms of the already foreclosed and pre-war New Deal era.

technologies of shock, shocked characters, and by the end has become a shocked novel. From the electric shocks the protagonist experiences during the Battle Royal to his siphoning of electricity from the Monopolated Light & Power Company to power his 1,369 light bulbs, the protagonist continually attempts to find strategies to deal with shock and mobilize its liberatory potential. Similarly, the novel is replete with secondary characters that often are shocked, in the Freudian sense, and also often disrupt or shock the failed bildungsroman narratives and bureaucratic institutions that belong to the pre-Jim Crow era. Finally, the form of the novel vacillates between bildungsromanae narratives of failed development that contain the protagonist's traumatic encounters with institutionalized racisms and the Surrealist shocks that disrupt these strategies of containment.

The problematic of Surrealism is both analogous to, and acts as a cipher for, the novel's preoccupation with the potentials and pitfalls of shock as an aesthetic and political strategy.[2] As Hal Foster suggests, "traumatic shock" has

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[2] In Ellison criticism, Surrealism appears repeatedly, but plays a secondary role to the jazz-based readings that dominate the field. Ellison's biographer, Arnold Rampersad, is exemplary here in his suggestion that Ellison's investment in Surrealism comes from "his absorption in jazz and the blues" (197). Indeed, the wide range of scholarly work reading Ellison alongside jazz specifically, or through a larger conception of what Andrew Weheliye has termed "Sonic Afro-modernity" (98), has produced some of the most socially engaged and compelling Ellison criticism. Weheliye argues that Ellison's engagement with jazz enables him to "sound [… a] black modernity" (100); Kenneth Bell offers jazz as a frame to think through the relationship between "subjectivity, aesthetics, and politics," "carrying even contradictory modalities or notions […] of freedom" (23) in Ellison; Stanley Crouch and Horace Porter bring Ellison and jazz into dialogue to think through the complex interplay of aesthetics, form, and 1950s civil rights politics (2002); and Berndt Ostendorf sees jazz mediating the novel's impulses towards a black folk vernacular that is populist and "egalitarian," and a modernism that is "hierarchical" and "beholden to a Western aristocracy of values" (116). In *Freedom Is, Freedom Ain't* (2004), Scott Saul reads post-war jazz and civil rights as pulling against the two "intellectual axioms" of US thought—that "'freedom' was umbilically joined to the

always formed one of the poles around which Surrealism orbits (xi). Surrealism, Foster argues, was always balanced on the fulcrum between twentieth-century utopian possibilities of worldwide revolution and the horrors of commodification, mechanization, and industrialization, between "love and liberation" and "traumatic shock, deadly desire, [and] compulsive repetition" (xi). Surrealism gives us a set of images and concepts with which to analyze the technological, psychological, and formal shocks that structure the novel.

In *Invisible Man*, shock allows us to think about this transitional (post) Jim Crow Ellison in a broader geopolitical context. Shock acts as the battleground upon which the struggle over the meaning of these figures of black surplus plays out. On the one hand, shock records the clash between the dispossessed or surplus black men and the Jim Crow society that has excluded them. Read thus, these scenes of shock—which are always associated with the eruption of surplus characters—function like the Gothic return of the repressed that unravels and refuses these exclusionary deals. On the other hand, shock records the emergent regime of power that is reabsorbing and commodifying black men into post-war society.[3] Hence, in the same way that shock shows the bildungsroman narratives underlying Ellison to be obsolete,

'free market' [… and] that a quiet, well-oiled consensus was the best consensus since utopian dreams about reconstructing society were doomed to painful failure" (12). Saul takes his book's title from *Invisible Man* and argues that the novel poses a similar challenge to Cold War ideology. Jazz readings of Ellison have both challenged conservative readings of *Invisible Man* and placed the novel at the center of post-war struggles over African American history, culture, and form. My dissertation is heavily indebted to the social and political thought contained in the above-mentioned works.

[3] While as Slavoj Žižek points out, the "logic of integrating the surplus into the functioning of the system is the fundamental fact [of capitalism]" ("The Structure of Domination" 403), and indeed in the United States the question of black surplus goes back to the emancipation of the slaves and their integration into US society, the specific regimes of excess differ based on the specific regime of capitalism.

paradoxically these scenes of shock also show Surrealism and its Gothic undercurrents to be obsolete.

The obsolescence of Surrealism, though, is not the result of its failure, but rather of its success. This is the point Theodor Adorno made in 1956 when he argued that Surrealism's failure was, paradoxically, a result of its success in capturing the shock-driven aesthetic, psychological, and political terrain that would follow: Surrealism ultimately "prepared" Paris for both the horrors of World War II and its own destruction (87). Similarly, in *Invisible Man*, shock not only loses its efficacy, but ultimately prepares the protagonist for exploitation by a shock-driven political regime, one driven equally by the horrors of state violence and by the commodity form, which by the end of the novel has become dominant. Unable to contain shock like the bildungsroman, nor to deploy shock with the efficacy of the Surrealism, *Invisible Man* instead records the struggle to make sense of, and create, a novel form adequate to this emergent shock-based political regime.

The Surplus, the Preterite, and the Dispossessed

Invisible Man both calls on and moves beyond critiques that challenged the racist exclusions of Jim Crow-era institutions and social promises. On the one hand, Ellison portrays the systematic exclusion of his protagonist by the bureaucratic structures of the black school, the union, and the Brotherhood, which represent a politically diverse range of pre-war, Jim Crow-era institutions. On the other hand, Ellison portrays this range of Jim Crow institutions not as powerful yet exclusionary, but rather as a decaying ruin that is obsolete and defenseless against an emergent regime of shock, one that is not

excluding but redeploying black men. *Invisible Man* stages the transition from the older corporatist exclusionary regime to a new, shock-based, post-war regime that is simultaneously absorbing and dispossessing the black male body. In this sense, *Invisible Man* both looks back to the foreclosed era of Jim Crow and the New Deal and looks forward to the crises that will eventually undo the post-war Keynesian conjuncture.

There are, then, two novels and two Ellisons: a major one and a minor one. The major Ellison offers a comprehensive critique of the exclusion of black men from the developmental promises offered by the literary and institutional forms of the Jim Crow era. Ellison structures the protagonist's acceptance into, and expulsion from, the bureaucratic institutions of the school, the union, and the Brotherhood as a series of failed bildungsromane, following in what Claudine Raynaud identifies as a long tradition of African American bildungsroman critiques that "subvert—and negate—[…] the American dream in terms of race relations" (109). Read this way, Ellison offers a broad and multi-faceted critique of the dehumanizing effects of the two sides of the coin, North and South, of Jim Crow-era US politics. However, while *Invisible Man* does offer a scathing critique of the developmental and narrative possibilities contained within these institutions, and while it clearly articulates the ways in which these promises both render black men surplus and are built on the backs of black labour, the Jim Crow world that the protagonist repeatedly attempts to enter has already vanished and the Jim Crow institutions and narratives within *Invisible Man* appear as satiric anachronisms. The developmental promises denied to the protagonist are already parodies of themselves; their promises have been foreclosed and the deals underpinning these promises no longer hold in society writ large. It is in this light that we should read Warren's claims

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that Ellison's picture of Bledsoe is "an indelible image of the Negro college president-*cum*-race leader before that figure had been 'checked out' from history's vanguard" (2). These promises, like the figures making them and like the protagonist himself, belong to another period that is long passed and unattainable. The protagonist's journey, then, cannot be thought of as developmental or even as temporally linear, but rather as a survey of the systemic and repetitive failures of the narrative and political deals that underpinned the Jim Crow era.

Out of these crises and failures, the second Ellison emerges, the minor Ellison who does not offer a liberal critique of exclusion, but rather a critique of inclusion. In this sense, Ellison ties the passing of the Jim Crow era to the post-war crises that turned on the absorption of excluded populations both within the US and globally into the US market system. Ellison refigures the condition of black surplus into a generalized condition of the post-war era and places the management of excluded and dispossessed black men at its centre. This Ellison levels a scathing critique, not of the exclusion of black men, but rather of their (re)deployment and (re)commodification. Where the major Ellison is located in the repeated and failed bildungsroman narratives of *Invisible Man*, this minor Ellison is brought into relief through its secondary characters and the interregnums that disrupt the institutional and bildungsroman narratives. I turn towards this minor Ellison, first by following Alex Woloch in shifting our "narrative focus away from an established center, toward minor characters" (19) and second, by moving away from bildungsroman readings of the novel and focusing on the Surrealist interregnums that disrupt these failed narratives. Read through minor characters such as Trueblood, the vets at the Golden Day, Peter Wheatstraw, the Yam Vendor, Brockway, Tod Clifton, and

the Surrealist interregnums often associated with these characters, *Invisible Man* no longer appears as a novel about the failure of the left in the pre-war era, as Foley suggests. Instead, the novel appears as a meditation on the economic, political, cultural, and psychological crises underpinning the post-war, and the role of surplus and dispossessed black men within this moment of crisis.

The concept of dispossession is central to the political and aesthetic stakes of *Invisible Man*. Not only are most of the characters dispossessed, but the term also recurs throughout the novel, appearing at some of its most crucial moments—most notably during the Harlem rally following Clifton's death. At this rally, the protagonist picks up on the crowd's chant of "*No more dispossessing of the dispossessed*" (340) and places dispossession at the centre of his famous speech:

> 'Dispossession! *Dis*-possession is the word!' I went on. 'They've tried to dispossess us of our manhood and womanhood! Of our childhood and adolescence […] Why, they even tried to dispossess us of *our dislike of being dispossessed!* And I'll tell you something else—if we don't resist, pretty soon they'll succeed! These are the days of dispossession, the season of homelessness, the time of evictions. We'll be dispossessed of the very brains in our heads! And we're so *un*-common that we can't even see it […] Think about it, they've dispossessed us each of one eye from the day we're born. So now we can only see in straight white lines. (343, emphasis in original)

This remarkable speech, which refers to the violences experienced by the protagonist and the myriad secondary characters, recasts the entire novel within the terms of dispossession. Ellison's choice of phrase is not accidental. The Oxford English Dictionary tells us that the term dispossession has two meanings: first, the "deprivation of or ejection from a possession" (1a) and

second, "The casting out of an evil spirit; exorcism" (2). Ellison's focus on dispossession plays on both these meanings. It simultaneously references the systematic dispossession of African Americans of their material wealth, labour, and skills,[4] and references the figuring of African Americans as a supernatural or, in psychological terms, a repressed threat that needs to be exorcised from the US imaginary and state.

The minor characters in *Invisible Man* have already been dispossessed in both senses of the word. Economically, they are surplus: they have been dispossessed of their land, their labour, and their sense of identity; culturally, they are what Jonathan Arac terms "preterite," that is, one whose "*dispossession* specifically means being (un)seen" (215). Throughout *Invisible Man*, these minor characters are repeatedly excised from the novel. The Golden Day veterans have already been removed from society and locked up in an asylum, and one of them is then transferred again when he gets into trouble speaking to Mr. Norton, the Northern philanthropist who visits the protagonist's school; Brockway, who is already confined and contained in the boiler room, disappears and is possibly killed in the boiler room explosion; and in the most extreme example, Clifton, who has already been cast into the underground economy, is gunned down by the state. It is no coincidence, then, that these

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[4]   Ellison's focus here on the process of systemic economic dispossession anticipates Harvey's theory of "accumulation of dispossession (145). In *New Imperialism*, Harvey applies Marx's theory of primitive accumulation to the contemporary capitalist moment. He argues that accumulation by dispossession is not a one-time event (i.e. the founding event masked by the myth of primitive accumulation), but is ongoing and he shows the "crucial role" that the state, through its "monopoly on violence and definitions of legality" (145), plays in reproducing and maintaining neoliberal processes of land commodification and privatization, of asset and natural resource appropriation, and of labour commodification.

minor characters are associated with the Surrealist shocks that act like a repressed unconscious, exploding the bildungsroman narratives and failed political ideologies in which the protagonist operates. Like the Golden Day veterans, who give the lie to the promise of success through education, like Brockway—the "machine inside the machine" (217), who gives the lie to the promise of development through factory work—and like Clifton, who lays bare the exploitative and manipulative relationships underlying the Brotherhood's promise of black emancipation, these minor characters represent explosive threats to these institutions, threats that must be contained.

While the dispossessed characters of *Invisible Man* are the repressed unconscious, haunting and exploding these social deals, they are also becoming recoded as sites of opportunity. The novel's opening gambit makes it clear that *Invisible Man* is not simply a novel of the return of the repressed. In the opening pages, the protagonist explicitly claims that he is not "a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allan Poe [… but] a man of flesh and bone" (3). By bringing *Invisible Man* into sharp contrast with the Gothic tradition of the nineteenth-century, Ellison makes clear that the characters of his novel are not the imps and phantoms of the earlier Gothic—what André Breton later read as symbols of the "violent eruptions" of the unconscious that would be the death of bourgeois society (232) and pave the road to "human becoming" (233). For Ellison, this disruptive or utopian potential is already foreclosed because these dispossessed characters are no longer excluded repressions like they were for Poe or Breton, but rather new sites of market expansion. Read within Kwame Ture's and Charles Hamilton's argument that African Americans represent an internal "colony" (5) of the US, we can understand these surplus characters as symbols of Arrighi's "non-Western peoples" and "propertyless masses of the

West" (64), the population necessary for the expansion and recontainment of the Westphalian and capitalist system. Because these minor characters represent a threat and an opportunity, they cannot play the purely disruptive role, but rather represent much more ambivalent figures of struggle.

These dispossessed figures are the new frontiers of economic and political expansion. Houston Baker, for instance, anticipating the new Southern studies work of Martyn Bone and Scott Romine, argues that Trueblood's story must be understood as a commodity. And not just any commodity, but one rooted in the "image of himself that is itself a product—a bizarre product of the slave trade" (840). This seemingly peculiar situation, where a slave, who was a commodity, is now selling the commodity-image of himself as a slave, is not, Baker argues, actually all that strange, but is rather "perfectly in harmony with its social ground" (841). That is to say, this shift of the primary commodity from labour to the image is simply one instance of the transformations of the social, political, and economic scene of the post-war South. Trueblood's economic dispossession as a poor, black sharecropper, and his subsequent reabsorption into the economy through the commodity of his story,[5] emblematizes the trajectory of the figure of black surplus who is at once economically dispossessed and superfluous, then revalorized and commodified.

In the same way that Trueblood provides us a lens through which to view the commodity structure of the new South, Wheatstraw, a blueprints pusher the protagonist meets soon after arriving in New York, offers us a view

[5]   We are informed that white people from far and wide, including the Sherriff and "big white folk […] from the big school way cross the State" (53), come to hear Trueblood's story of incest.

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of the post-war Northern city. Wheatstraw's blues form a "photographic negative" (90), to borrow from Adorno, of the official blueprints and plans for the emergent configurations of post-war power. Wheatstraw is a man in "Charlie Chaplin pants" (174) who sings the blues[6] and who transports carts "piled high with rolls of blue paper" (175) to the garbage. In other words, Wheatstraw disposes of blueprints. In linking another blues-singing, surplus character with both the figure of the hipster and the regime of planning, Ellison points to a transformation in the dominant regime of power. Culturally, it marks a shift to the regime of the hipster, and what Michael Szalay terms the "white fantasies about hip" more broadly that have "animated the secret imagination of postwar liberalism" (2). Politically, it marks a shift from the older white industrialist tradition of Norton to the urban and social planning regime of a figure like Robert Moses, a city planner and parks commissioner who, as his biographer Robert Caro points out, became *the* "power broker" of the era (5). Wheatstraw's blueprints both echo Le Corbusier's poetic proclamation,

> The plan is the generator.
> Without a plan, there is disorder, arbitrariness. […]

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[6] Almost of all *Invisible Man*'s surplus characters are associated with the blues. Trueblood tells Norton that he was "sing[ing] me some blues that night" that he slept with his daughter (51); when the protagonist runs into Wheatstraw, he is singing the "blues" in a "ringing voice" (172–3); when he runs into the evicted couple, he sees their blues records out in the snow (278); and Mary, the woman who takes him in briefly, sings the "Back Water Blues" (297). Ellison famously argued that the blues were a form of black vernacular that had to be "transcended" (qtd. in Baker 828). However, while not a model, the blues offered an aesthetic form able to "translate" economic, political, and personal trauma into the "electrifying expression of his narrative" (838). The blues, then, offer a negative of the dominant structures of power in the post-war world, and the minor characters associated with the blues offer the clearest articulation and representation of the political forces operating in that world.

> Modern life demands, awaits, a new plan for the house and for the city (116)

and point to its limits. After all, Wheatstraw is not the generator of plans, but rather the disposer of excess or surplus plans. As he explains, there are so many blueprints that he has to "throw 'em out to make place for the new plans. Plenty of these ain't never been used" (175). The image of Wheatstraw and his blueprints, then, serves two functions. First, it clearly locates Ellison not in the pre-war era of Jim Crow, but rather in the post-war regime of urban planners and development that emerged alongside the twilight of Jim Crow. Second, it reveals the role of black men within this post-war regime. Wheatstraw's job, after all, is to manage the surplus and waste generated by the emerging Keynesian state, which created plans for everything from the complete reconstruction of the US urban landscape under the Federal Housing Act of 1949 to the complete restructuring of Europe and the Third World through international initiatives like Point Four and the Marshall Plan.

Read in this light, the problems *Invisible Man* is grappling with must be read not solely within the context of the US, but rather within the context of what Paul Gilroy and others have referred to as the "black Atlantic."[7] Specifically, *Invisible Man*'s concerns resonate with those of Third World and anti-colonial political and literary movements that posed a similar problem:

[7] Paul Gilroy's foundational text *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993) argues against "volkish popular cultural nationalism" (15) and suggests that we should take "the Atlantic as one single, complex unity of analysis […] to produce an explicitly transnational and intercultural perspective" (15). Other foundational works include Houston Baker's *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance* (1987), Hazel Carby's *Cultures in Babylon* (1999), and Anita Patterson's *Race, American Literature, and Transnational Modernisms* (2008). This last work connects modernisms in the United States, Europe, and the Caribbean.

how to carry out an anti-colonial, national liberation movement without becoming an economic colony of the US. Aimé Césaire's Discourse on Colonialism, which directly mocks Point Four, provides the clearest expression of this problem of the false choice of colonialism on the one hand and the "non-imperialism" of Harry Truman on the other:

> And indeed, do you not see how ostentatiously these gentlemen have just unfurled the banner of anti-colonialism? "Aid to the disinherited countries," says Truman. "The time of the old colonialism has passed." That's also Truman. Which means that American high finance considers that the time has come to raid every colony in the world. (77)

From the World War I veterans who are stripped of their skills, their accomplishments, and their sanity, to Brockway who becomes the "machine in the machine" and Clifton who is entirely consumed and destroyed by the Brotherhood and the state, *Invisible Man* records the process by which high finance and the state systematically "raided" the "internal colony" of African Americans in the post-war era. Within *Invisible Man*, those characters that are either too radical or otherwise incompatible with the regime of post-war capital are contained or executed, and those who are compatible with models of post-war capital, like Trueblood and the Yam Vendor, are redeployed and transformed into their commodities. At the centre of *Invisible Man*, then, is the struggle over the meaning, future, and political possibilities of the figure of black surplus, and this struggle is recoded through aesthetic, psychological, and literal forms of shock.

Shocked States and States of Shock

Shock in *Invisible Man* functions as both a traumatized response to dispossession and an ideologeme that expresses the collision between these dispossessed characters and the society that must now manage them. Ellison draws heavily on Sigmund Freud's theories, which understood shock as a psychological response to previously unimaginable traumas, such as railway disasters and mechanized warfare, which were in turn caused by the new and unprecedented technologies of industrial modernization. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud writes that such technologies create an "extensive breach" in the subject's "protective shield against stimuli" (25), which in turn create an anxiety in the subject about their "lack of any preparedness" for such an event (25). Whereas Freud understood shock as a consequence of exceptional events, and whereas Walter Benjamin later expanded to the experience of daily life within the urban metropolis, Ellison depicts shock as a consequence of the systemic and racialized violence in the US. Although many of Ellison's characters are exposed to the traditional Freudian shocks of World War I, industrial explosions, and the urban experience, Ellison clearly attributes the shocked states of his surplus characters not to these traditional shocks, but to their systematic economic and psychic dispossession, which is carried out at the hands of a racially violent and exploitative system.

Most notable in this regard are the World War I veterans-turned-inmates whom the protagonist and Norton encounter at the Golden Day Tavern. To understand the importance of their shocked states, we need to first take a brief detour into the history of black World War I veterans. In *Harlem in Montmartre*, William Shack retraces the history of the "Harlem Hellfighters," a black infantry unit that formed in 1916 in Harlem at the urging of black leaders like

W.E.B. Du Bois, who saw African American enlistment as a strategy to achieve the double freedom of "freedom abroad; freedom at home" (11). The men chosen to fight in this unit were not working class, but members of Du Bois's talented tenth. In addition to becoming "the most decorated American fighting unit in the American Expeditionary Force" (12), their regimental orchestra, led by the famous bandleader James Reese Europe, became renowned across Europe. Sceptical of Du Bois's claim that equality and appreciation would meet these veterans upon their return home, many soldiers stayed on in Paris after the war, working as musicians.[8] In *Invisible Man*, too, the veterans are elite: "doctors, lawyers, teachers, Civil Service workers; there were several cooks, a preacher, a politician, and an artist. One very nutty one had been a psychiatrist" (74). And, like many of the real black soldiers who came home, Ellison's veterans return to the racist vigilante violence of disaffected Southern whites who understand their desire for upward mobility all too well.

Like Freud's veterans who introduce his theory of shock, Ellison's veterans too are from World War I and suffering from a similar form of what Freud terms "traumatic neurosis" (2). But Ellison emphasizes that the veterans' shock is a result not of the war, but of racial violence encountered when they returned from the war. The Golden Day veterans are not shocked by their experience in World War I, but rather by the racial violence of Southern vigilantism. One veteran, for instance, explains that he hoped to return to the

[8] Following World War I, Paris was filled with jazz musicians, dancers, and performers from Harlem: Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, Gwendolyn Bennett, Jessie Fauset, Josephine Baker, and Claude McKay (Shack xvi). The musical and literary forms they brought left a deep and lasting imprint on Parisian culture, so much so that Franklin Rosemont and R.D.G. Kelley argue in *Black, Brown, and Beige: Surrealist Writings from Africa and the Diaspora* that this initial exchange would come to influence and shape the emerging Surrealist revolution.

US and work as a doctor, but when he tried, "[t]en men in masks drove [him] out from the city at midnight and beat [him] with whips for saving a human life" (93). Moreover, the veterans' confused, garbled, circular, and chaotic thoughts, which are all effects Freud attributes to shock, are explicitly connected to the imperial histories of the US. Not only do the inmates confuse Norton for Thomas Jefferson, John D. Rockefeller, and the Messiah (78), but they also describe history as a "roulette wheel. In the beginning, black is on top, in the middle epochs, white holds the odds, but soon Ethiopia shall stretch forth her noble wings!" (81). On the surface, the veterans' mistaking of a living figure for a founding father, for nineteenth-century magnates, and for Jesus Christ, read alongside their recasting of history as a roulette wheel, seems to support their being shell-shocked and in need of institutionalization. But their theory of history is not so different from the model offered by, for instance, Jefferson. In *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson offers an equally haunting and cyclical view of history: "I tremble," he writes, "for my country when I reflect that God is just: that his justice cannot sleep forever: that considering numbers, nature and natural means only, a revolution of the wheel of fortune, an exchange of situation is among possible events: that it may become probable by supernatural interference!" (qtd. in Greeson 54). Like the Golden Day veterans, Jefferson has a cyclical view of history premised on both supernatural and natural forces. In both the veterans' and Jefferson's analysis, the dispossessed come to represent a threat to US empire, both as a specter haunting its exceptionalism and as a material problem.

In linking shock and trauma to the systemic, economic, and cultural dispossession of black men, Ellison refigures his characters' pathologies as both the result of social trauma and as a threat to that very system. In this sense,

Ellison takes his lead from the "social" model of psychiatry (Mendes 5), like that of European émigré Fredric Wertham, who argued against dominant American psychiatric models that attempted to fix and reintegrate the pathological subject back into society. In contrast, Wertham, like many other social psychiatrists such as Frantz Fanon, viewed mental health as a social issue, arguing that a "patient must be understood first and foremost as a member of a socioeconomic class who had a distinct social relation to the means of production and thus has specific concerns and problems that were based on this relation" (Mendes 145). Not only did Ellison write about psychiatry and mental illness, but he also actively advocated for institutions of social psychiatry. Beginning in 1946, Ellison joined Richard Wright, Wertham, and other community organizers in Harlem to create the Lafargue Clinic, which both followed Wertham's principles of social psychiatry and was also the first desegregated clinic in the US. In "Harlem is Nowhere," an essay Ellison wrote to support the work of the Lafargue Clinic, he first theorized the relationship between dispossession and shock that would underpin *Invisible Man*.[9] "The Negro," Ellison writes, "cannot participate fully in the therapy which the white

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[9] Ellison's depiction of the Harlem riot in *Invisible Man* draws heavily from "Harlem is Nowhere," where the streets of Harlem transform into a Surrealist riot. "The most surreal fantasies are acted out upon the streets of Harlem" (297), Ellison writes, and his examples are Surrealist to the letter. A man throws:

> imaginary grenades that actually exploded during World War I; a boy
> participates in the rape-robbery of his mother […] two men hold a third
> while a lesbian slashes him to death with a razor blade; boy gangsters
> wielding homemade pistols (which in the South of their origin are but toy
> symbols of adolescent yearning for manhood) shoot down their young rivals. (297)

The World War I ephemera that are both fetishes and weapons in a new race war, the oedipal violence of the boy, the lesbian murder fantasies, the refunctioning of a Southern image in a Northern context are all examples of what Benjamin termed Surrealism's "profane illuminations" (217). In other words, these images of a degraded capitalist world "illuminate" the masked world and thus open up a space for transformation.

American achieves through patriotic ceremonies and by identifying himself with American power. Instead, he is thrown back upon his own 'slum-shocked' institutions" (300). Throughout the essay, Ellison follows the diagnostic tradition of American literature we find in novels such as Wright's *Native Son* (1940) and Chester Himes's *If He Hollers Let Him Go* (1945) that draw a parallel between individual and social lunacy. *Invisible Man* marks a break. It is not just that, as Shelley Eversley suggests, Ellison addresses "patients' symptomology not as 'lunacy' but as [a] reasonable psychic response to the lunatic obsessions of US white supremacist culture" (447). He additionally turns lunacy, which is an individual condition even if it is created by social ones, into the social condition or problem itself. Through shock, in other words, the individual condition of lunacy transmorphs into an ideologeme of social unrest. Thus, it is important that all of the surplus or minor characters in Ellison appear in some way as shocked, and these characters, in turn, become an unsettling and destabilizing force that disrupts the fabric of both US society and the novel.

Yet, at the same time that the novel's shocked characters, such as the veterans in the Golden Day pub, represent a clear threat to the prevailing systems of thought and power, shock also becomes a tool used by the state to carry out programs of social and psychological control. Not only are the Golden Day veterans institutionalized because they are shocked, but moreover their institutionalization and state of shock also serves to neutralize their politically explosive rage. In the factory hospital scene that follows the equally shock-driven and explosive eruption of the Liberty Paint Factory, Ellison provides a more explicit instance of shock being used to neutralize black anger than the instance of the Golden Day veterans. When the protagonist wakes up from this explosion, he finds himself in an "old, white, rigid chair" (231) of a

factory hospital, where he is immediately shocked for "therapeutic purposes" (231). These therapeutic purposes are not meant not to help the protagonist, but rather to control him and protect society from him. Echoing Wertham's critique of American psychiatric society's obsession with integration, the factory doctors state that their goal is to integrate the protagonist back into society by creating a new person who will cause "society [to] suffer no trauma on his account" (236). Like the Golden Day veterans, the protagonist's threat to society comes from his "murderous rage" (236). Whereas the state controls the veterans' rage by institutionalizing them, the state controls the protagonist's rage by shocking it out of him. The protagonist comments that he becomes literally unable to feel his rage because of the "pulse of the current smashing through [his] body" (237). Shock not only strips him of his anger, but also turns him into an instrument, underlining the controlling role that shock comes to play as he is "pounded between crushing electrical pressures; pumped between live electrodes *like an accordion between a player's hands*" (232, emphasis added). What we find in *Invisible Man*, then, is a profound ambivalence. In the case of the Golden Day and the factory hospital, and throughout the novel, shock functions as both a symptom of social antagonism that results from the US's racist history, and an emergent form of state management. That is, the novel traces the transforming valences of shock from a subversive disruption to a constitutive part of the emerging post-war regime.

Mannequins, Dolls, and Death

Shock transforms from a critical aesthetic practice into a tool for controlling or containing the novel's surplus figures or, in some cases, for valorizing the economic and social opportunity they represent. *Invisible Man* is

confronted with a problem. These surplus characters are not just the dispossessed figures haunting and shocking the racist, white society that has expelled them. Rather, as is illustrated through the protagonist, who is turned into an object "like an accordion," shock becomes a strategy for the reabsorption of surplus back into both society and the market as a commodity. While the commodification of men, and especially black men, is not a new trope in US literature—we can think, for instance, of Charles Chesnutt's *The Conjure Woman and Other Conjure Tales* (1899), where magic turns slaves into the commodities of grapes and wood, and even leads a man to mistake himself for a ham—the commodification of men in Ellison reaches a new register. Whereas the relationship between men and commodities in Chesnutt is based on the simile that men are *like* commodities, the figure of surplus in *Invisible Man* is indistinguishable from the commodity. Although there are numerous similes and metaphors of commodification in *Invisible Man*, as the novel progresses the model of commodification becomes increasingly fetishistic. Thus, while Trueblood is associated with his story-commodity, and Wheatstraw and the Yam Vendor are identified by their commodities—blueprints and yams, respectively—many of the other surplus characters become indistinguishable from the commodity form.

These surplus characters take on the form of dolls, which represent both the mythical or fetishistic aspect and the economic or commodity aspect of dispossession. *Invisible Man* is filled with dolls: there are piggy banks in the shape of Sambo dolls, dancing Sambo puppets, lynched white mannequins, and the protagonist and many of the surplus characters are compared to dolls. These dolls straddle the line between the fetishes of black hoodoo folk culture and the commodity culture of industrial capitalism. In this sense, Ellison is

continuing in the tradition of the Surrealists, who also were obsessed with dolls, especially mannequins. Foster has suggested that mannequins, for the Surrealists, represent the ultimate form of the commodity fetish, giving human form to that "other yet not-other, strange yet familiar—'dead labour' come back to dominate the living" (129). Moreover, Foster continues, the fetishistic power of these dolls as expressions of dead labour, or in other words capital, is such that they begin to appear not as our creations, but as our "demonic master" (129). Foster concludes that mannequins, as the commodity form of industrial capitalism, assume "our human vitality […while] we take on [the commodity's] deathly facticity" (120). The alignment of surplus characters with dolls in *Invisible Man* underlines how the figure of surplus is understood as a threat that must be contained and a tool that must be deployed.

The character who both understands and critiques the pitfalls of redeployment and commodification, and whose arc enacts the stark options of redeployment or containment, is another figure of surplus: Clifton, whose name, Tod, means death in German. Clifton, the Brotherhood's most talented and committed organizer in Harlem, leaves both the Brotherhood and Harlem in what is ostensibly a protest against their exploitation of him and race issues more broadly for their own agenda.[10] He becomes, notably, a puppeteer in midtown Manhattan, selling racial stereotypes. Clifton's puppeteer performance acts as a cipher through which we can read the complex regime of commodification and fetishism playing out upon his body. Most obviously, with a nod to Marx's dancing table, Clifton's role of puppet master enacts the

[10] Ishmael Reed recently wrote, "stripped bare, Ellison's book is about the left's abandonment of the issue of housing foreclosures" (2010, n.p.), an issue that overwhelmingly affected poor and racialized neighbourhoods.

Brotherhood's use of him (and the protagonist) as a puppet. By emphasizing the incredible vitality and human likeness of the puppet, Clifton suggests that he too, like the narrator, may appear to be lifelike and independent, but is really just a puppet. Not only does the puppet move with an "infuriatingly *sensuous* motion" (431, emphasis added), but the protagonist is so transfixed by the doll that when he picks it up, he half expects "to feel it pulse with life" (434). The dolls' "inanimate, boneless bounding" (431) always straddles the line between the sensuousness of human life, the inanimacy of the commodity, and the ghostly in-between spaces of the fetish form. But, even the work of de-fetishization that Clifton achieves by literally revealing the strings of control that move the puppet is interrupted in the novel when the police step in and quickly reinterpolate Clifton into the subject position of the doll.

While *Invisible Man* draws an analogy between the puppet's relationship to Clifton and Clifton's relationship to the police, the novel replaces the magical or hoodoo-inspired language of possession that suffuses Clifton's puppeteering with the jolting and mechanical language of industrialism. In other words, the novel enacts the transformation of shock from an effect of the dispossessed black man (again, we can think of the return of the repressed) to a tool of social policing and control. Where the puppet takes on the warm and "sensuous" movements of a human body beneath Clifton's invisible strings, Clifton takes on the jagged movements of a machine beneath the police's highly visible force. The police "jolt him forward" (435) and push him, "sending him in a head-snapping forward stumble" (436). Even Clifton's attempts to resist the police become mechanized, as when he attacks the cop and his arm is described as swinging, "like a dancer [… in a] short, jolting arc" (436). When the police finally murder him, the language returns to that of the

puppet, with Clifton "suddenly crumpling" (436). There is no magic here, only the "rapid explosion" (436) of gunfire. The mechanized and militarized language of this scene[11] both emphasizes the militarization that underpinned market expansion programs within the underdeveloped markets of both the US and abroad, and points to the subsumption of the older, subversive shocks of the Romantic and Gothic genres within the emergent political regime of shock. This scene represents the stark choices available to African American men in the post-war world: commodification or death.

While Clifton's death provides the most naked enactment of this choice, his mechanization echoes two other famous scenes within the novel, both of which occur much earlier: first, the opening Battle Royale scene when the black boys scramble for coins on the electrified floor, and second, the electric therapy that the narrator undergoes at the factory hospital. When the protagonist first dives for the scattered coins, he receives a shock and explains: "I tried frantically to remove my hand but could not let go […] My muscles jumped, my nerves jangled" (27).[12] The protagonist again becomes a Sambo doll, moving mechanically under a force not his own. *Invisible Man* emphasizes this Sambo-ness through both the language of mechanization and the allusions to dance (recall that Clifton swings around "like a dancer") that occur when one of the other boys slips and falls "upon the charged rug" and the protagonist

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[11] Alan Nadel, for instance, has pointed out that the dressing of the police in black, as opposed to blue, as well as their jack-booted movements "evoke connotations of fascism" (1988, 157).

[12] The image of the grinning doll echoes the Sambo-bank-doll the protagonist finds at Mary's house, whose "enormous grin" (319), the protagonist notes, looks more like "strangulation" because it is "filled to the throat with its coins" (319). This scene highlights the connection the novel draws between African American bodies, the commodity form, and death.

sees him "literally *dance* upon his back; his elbows beating a frenzied tattoo upon the floor, his muscles twitching" (27, emphasis added). Similarly, in the factory hospital, Ellison describes the electric shocks that pulse through the protagonist's body as being "swift and staccato, increasing gradually until I fairly *danced* between the nodes" (237, emphasis added). In part, the repeated images of men as dolls emphasize the disempowerment and dispossession of black men throughout the novel. Yet, shock in all of these instances functions not as a result or effect of the dispossession of these already dispossessed black men, but rather as a tool utilized to control and redeploy them.

The novel's slow subsumption of surplus characters into dancing dolls concretizes the process through which shock is deployed to commodify and mechanize the subject. The role of the doll as a mediating point between the commodity and death comes into full relief in the concluding riot scene, where we find both the most sustained Surrealist scene of disruption in the novel and another doll, this time a white one. Running aimlessly through the riot, the protagonist encounters a "body hung, white, naked, and horribly feminine from a lamp post" (556). This and other hanging bodies turn out to be "mannequins—Dummies" taken from a "gutted storefront" (72).[13] Approaching the boundary of symbolic and actual violence, these lynched dolls act as a shot across the bow, announcing the threat that the culture of dispossession represents to society at large. Indeed, by concluding *Invisible Man* with a literal and a stylistic explosion, Ellison points to the failure of both the

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[13] Drawing on this scene, Sara Blair argues that Ellison's work is partially influenced by the Surrealist photographer Henry Cartier-Bresson's photos of mannequins (72), and in "Ralph Ellison's Unfinished Second Skin," Michael Szalay notes, "Ellison once worked in a men's store, dressing window dummies in bespoke suits" (805).

Roosevelt and Truman-era racial policies, and the literary genres of New Deal Modernism, to contain the political turmoil emerging from the colour line. The riots that raged in Northern industrialized cities underlined the limits of what Scott Saul terms "rights-talk" discourse (16), and bespoke the invisible but equally insidious forms of economic segregation and violence operating in the North. Thirteen years after *Invisible Man* was published and just five days after Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act, which ended all discriminatory voting practices and signalled the victory of the Civil Rights movement, the neighbourhood of Watts in Los Angeles exploded into five days of violence. The Watts riots belied the promise that formal equality would translate into real equality. In linking *Invisible Man*'s concluding riot in the North to that of the Golden Day veterans in the South, Ellison too seems to be suggesting that the end of legal segregation did not necessarily bring about political or economic parity.

But, here too *Invisible Man* differs from earlier novels like Wright's *Native Son* and Himes's *If He Hollers Let Him Go* that showed how even under formal equality, white wealth was built on the backs and labour of systematically excluded black bodies. While Ellison draws on these analyses, he goes even farther by showing the exclusion of black bodies to be a threat to the very tenability of the US economic and political project. By 1952, the freedom and integration of African Americans was neither just a race issue nor a domestic issue; the US colour line, as Melamed points out, was the hinge on which US global hegemony swung (4). That is to say, the absorption of African Americans was a necessity for the economic and ideological project of the Cold War. Economically, the absorption of African Americans was key to the stability and expansion of the US system. Ideologically, African American

integration was necessary for the US to, in the words of Howard Zinn, "counter the continuous Communist thrust at the most flagrant failure of American society—the race question" (448). Thus, the novel's concluding riot, which offers a scathing critique of both Northern race regimes and the civil rights struggles for formal equality, also condemns the US global project as a failure.

However, this concluding riot lacks the symptomatic and destructive force it initially appears to contain; after all, the riot, like the Surrealist style in which it is depicted, has already been captured and neutralized within an expanding regime of control and commodification. As Szalay shows in "Ralph Ellison's Unfinished Second Skin," the riot, and the figures of Rinehart and the Brotherhood who are inextricably connected to it, are rooted in the "promise of consumerism" (804). Szalay explains that the 1943 Harlem Riots, which became the model for *Invisible Man*'s concluding riot, were termed the

> "zoot-suit riot," after the pitched battled fought in Los Angeles earlier that year between Latino youths and white sailors and Marines. The zoot suit was political, but it was so as a marker of conspicuous, unchecked consumption. Fuelling the racism that caused the riots was the perception among whites that the large amount of fabric required to manufacture the clothes violated rationing guidelines set down by the War Production Board. (804)

Szalay draws our attention to the complicated calculus occurring between desires for greater access to political spheres, and to consumptive spheres, and the question of where the line between them could be drawn. While the novel is ostensibly set in 1943, it was written in 1952, by which time the demand for greater access to conspicuous consumption was squarely inline with the needs and strategies of a post-war state that was depending on an expanding sphere

of consumption for survival. In other words, by the time Ellison is writing about the zoot-suit riot, its demands had been absorbed into the post-war compromise.

Indeed, the explosive rage and dispossession that is expressed in the arsons, lootings, and other acts of violence in the novel's concluding riot are all based on commodities and consumption. Not only does the protagonist watch crowds of men and women loot the stores, "carrying cases of beer, cheese, chains of linked sausage, watermelons, sacks of sugar, hams, cornmeal, fuel lamps" (55), but he goes so far as to define the riot not as a social struggle, but as a struggle between men and commodities. He explains that the riot "was primarily the crash of men against things—against stores, markets" (553). While he recognizes that the riot "could swiftly become the crash of men against men" (553), this crashing does not occur between black and white men, but between black men who often appear indistinguishable from commodities. After all, the final showdown between the protagonist and Ras ends with Ras impaled upon his own spear, which then, in a nice touch on Ellison's part, "pierc[es] one of the hanging dummies" (557). Black rage never actually damages or threatens white bodies or society; it either manifests as symbolic violence against white commodities and bodies or is deflected into further violence against black bodies. In the same way that the protagonist only symbolically rapes Sybil a few pages earlier, he finds not lynched white bodies, but lynched white mannequins. Hence, while dolls may steal the human vitality of black men, who in turn "take on its deathly facticity" (Foster 129), dolls seem to absorb the deathly facticity of white bodies, thus preserving at least a

piece of their human vitality.[14] Not only is the demand of the riot one that the state is all too ready to accommodate, but the violence and social disruption never expands beyond the boundaries of Harlem and the black body.

There is therefore a second way of reading Ellison's riot, which reads the riot not as a disruption of the post-war system, but as a tool for the deconstruction and reconstruction of the black subject within a twinned regime of commodification and shock. Read through the lens of the protagonist's realization that the Brotherhood deliberately planned and created the riot, and that he "had been [their] tool" (553), both the riot and the aesthetic style of Surrealism used to depict it, appear as constitutive of an emerging order based on the deployment of shock as a tool of control. The concluding riot, in other words, cannot be read as either a critique or a symptom, the way its original iteration in "Harlem is Nowhere" could, because the eruption and ignition of Harlem was always already the plan. By the end of *Invisible Man*, shock has turned the novel's characters into commodities and the novel's structure has become consumed under the logic of shock.

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[14]   Read against the numerous instances of often grizzly violence upon black bodies in *Invisible Man*, the symbolic nature of all violence against white bodies leaves us with some uncomfortable questions. What would it have meant for the protagonist to run into actually lynched bodies? Or for him to have actually raped Sybil? Could those violences be read as acts of resistance, such as in *Native Son*, or later when Eldridge Cleaver proclaimed that "rape was an insurrectionary act" and that he "delighted [… in] defying and trampling upon the white man's laws, upon his system of values" (qtd. in Hooks 52)? The fact that we cannot even imagine such violence against white bodies within *Invisible Man* in any capacity, let alone as an act of resistance (in spite of the numerous violences carried out against black bodies) both tells us a lot about the values placed on different bodies and speaks to the limits of shock's efficacy of resistance within the novel and the ways that African American resistance becomes caught within the limits of the symbolic.

The protagonist's struggles to control, deploy, or contain shock all fail because shock is no longer an external force that can effectively disrupt the narrative or political logic. Instead, it forms the emergent political logic itself. Not only does the riot appear to be part of the Brotherhood's plan all along, but even the protagonist's initial controlling of the electrified floor, and perhaps even his siphoning of electricity—another instance of conspicuous consumption—appears to be part of a larger plan that ensured he received the suitcase, which keeps him running throughout the entire novel. What the protagonist learns on an individual level, the novel enacts on a formal level. While the bildungsroman threads of Horatio Alger novels, naturalism, social realism, and the social protest novel, which weave through the text are critiqued as racially suspect and ultimately anachronistic and obsolete, the Surrealist shocks, which disrupt those narratives of development and the ideologies behind them, also fail to provide an emancipatory alternative and instead bring these surplus characters and the novel into a new regime of control.

Conclusion

Shock both represents the struggle between the figure of surplus and the society that has dispossessed him and becomes a strategy for the commodification of that figure. The central problem, then, that *Invisible Man* takes up is that of reabsorption and commodification. *Invisible Man* poses the question of how to bring the dispossessed into (or back into) history without simply subjecting them to a new regime of commodification, appropriation, and exploitation. While Ellison offers no answers, he finds a place of tentative possibility in the commodities and cultural objects that too have been

dispossessed. In the pages leading up to his involvement with the Brotherhood, the protagonist, in typical fashion, "stumbles" across a jumbled pile of "junk" on the sidewalk, "waiting to be hauled away" (267). This pile belongs to an old black couple being evicted from their home. The protagonist stops and itemizes the objects, lifting them out of the rubble of history and bestowing narrative and sentimental value onto them as a kind of artifactual exhibit.

These objects form a genealogy of African American history and struggles for freedom, and their displacement onto the sidewalk emblematizes this central problem of what to do with the surplus and dispossessed. Among the artefacts the protagonist itemizes are African "knocking bones" that function like "castanets" (271), and domestic objects such as gardening pots, a curling iron, baby booties, and a breast pump. There are the ephemera of various political struggles for freedom ranging from an "Ethiopian flag, a faded tintype of Abraham Lincoln" to a newspaper article about the deportation of Marcus Garvey, and free papers (272). There is also American cultural ephemera: an image "of a Hollywood star torn from a magazine" (271), a baseball "scoring card" (272), and a "plate celebrating the St. Louis World's Fair" (271). These objects, which constitute a panorama of African American life, have been dispossessed of their meaning and value and have been effectively transformed into garbage. However, it is precisely in their status as detritus that the protagonist sees potential.

Discarded and ready for the dump, these objects parallel the evicted couple and all of the other surplus characters that fill the text. Importantly the protagonist does not try to valorize or revalorize these objects. Instead, he transforms them into a lens through which he is able to illuminate and refigure African American history. It is precisely through the dispossession of this

couple and all of their belongings, that these previously private and innocuous mementos are refigured as powerful and transformative documents of social history. In Ellison's attention to the hidden power, both mythic and material, located within dispossessed objects and lives, we can also read Benjamin's hope that capitalist modernity will bring not just a "demythification and disenchantment [… but] a reenchantment of the social world" (Buck-Morss 254). Like Benjamin and the Surrealists who saw in obsolete and out-of-date objects the potential for "profane illumination" (56)—that is, they find within the degraded objects and cultures of capitalism the seeds of illumination and transformation—Ellison's protagonist experiences these surplus objects as transformative. He emphasizes this transformative experience when he explains that, "with this sense of dispossession came a pang of vague recognition: this junk, these shabby chairs, these heavy old-fashioned pressing irons, zinc wash tubs with dented bottoms—all throbbed within me with more meaning than there should have been" (354). Indeed, these dispossessed objects inspire him both to rethink African American history in terms of dispossession and to deliver his famous dispossession speech, which he later recalls as the one instance when he "had uttered words that had possessed me" (354). While Ellison offers no easy answers, and while this speech too is ultimately subsumed within the stifling order of the Brotherhood, *Invisible Man* resituates dispossession as neither the emancipatory hope nor grist for the machine of commodification, but rather as the battleground of post-war struggle. And, as the ideologeme that codes both the dispossession and reabsorption of surplus population, shock becomes its aesthetic expression. *Invisible Man*, then, provides us with, if not the solution, at least the problem. Written on the fault line between dispossession and disenchantment and revalorization and reenchantment, *Invisible Man* places the problem of shock at the centre of the

post-war US novel as the ideologeme through which the struggles over the reorganization of the post-war world will be staged.

Chapter 3.

Wise Blood and the Shock Doctrine of Flannery O'Connor

> *You have to make your vision apparent by shock—to the hard of hearing you shout, and for the almost-blind you draw large and startling figures.*
> *— Flannery O'Connor*

> *The most extreme shocks and gestures of alienation of contemporary art—seismograms of a universal and inescapable form of reaction—are nearer than they appear to be by virtue of historical reification.*
> *— Theodor Adorno*

> *Economics are the method, but the object is to change the soul."*
> *—Margaret Thatcher*

In the aftermath of World War II, US intelligence agencies began to take an increased interest in the techniques Nazi scientists had deployed to manipulate human behaviour. Beginning with Operation Paperclip and continuing with a ream of other oddly named operations, like Bluebird and Artichoke, throughout the mid to late 1940s, the CIA started to treat psychological warfare as a key weapon in the emerging Cold War. Psychological warfare, the high-ranking Richard Helms argued to CIA director Allan Dulles, would allow the US to gain "knowledge of the enemy's theoretical potential, thus enabling us to defend ourselves against a foe who might not be as restrained in the use of these techniques as we are" (qtd. in "Select Committee" 390). In 1953, these projects congealed under the mega-umbrella project MKUltra. Over its ten-year life span, MKUltra included over 150 projects and

sub-projects that expanded its scope from national defense to population control. Projects in prisons, hospitals, university psychology departments, and psychiatric hospitals in Canada and the US helped developed a wide array of techniques meant to alter human behaviour, amongst these "radiation, electroshock, various fields of psychology, psychiatry, sociology, anthropology, graphology, harassment substances, and paramilitary devices and materials" (qtd. in "Select Committee" 398). The experiments carried out under its tenure marked a shift not only in US intelligence and foreign policy, but also in the state's very conception of social governance. Under MKUltra, accessing and manipulating the unconscious through various means of shock became a touchstone of foreign and domestic policy. Even those psychiatric hospitals not operating under MKUltra began increasingly to use behavioural modification as a form of social control. For instance, the Milledgeville Central State Hospital, which housed the largest asylum in the US (its population peaked at 12,000 patients in 1960), regularly paired electroconvulsive therapy with psychotropic drug therapy, not only as a form of treatment but, as its superintendent T.G. Peacock explained, to "insure good citizenship" (qtd. in Whitaker 94).

Flannery O'Connor resided just miles away from the Milledgeville Hospital. Recent work by Mab Segrest has connected the famed Southern novelist's writing to the asylum, arguing that her "mad prophet/preachers seem to have a lot of company in the state hospital" (126). However, while Segrest argues that "O'Connor was on the side of the lunatics" (127), treating them as redemptive figures, her novels also place her in the role of the superintendent, both managing the lunatics and freaks who populate her work and deploying their lunacy for her own ends. Like Peacock and like the US state which,

through the CIA, was using shock to attain social and political control, O'Connor in *Wise Blood* (1952) utilizes shock to intervene in the psychological, social, and religious life of the US. Shock disrupts the surface world of the profane that surrounds her characters and brings them to an encounter with "grace," a term O'Connor uses to describe a religious "illumination" (115) or divine truth. As O'Connor famously claimed in her essay "The Fiction Writer and his Country," "you have to make your vision apparent by *shock*—to the hard of hearing you shout, and for the almost-blind you draw large and startling figures" (34, emphasis added). For O'Connor, violence is synonymous with shock. Defending her use of violence in the essay "Southern Fiction," O'Connor explains: in a "modern" world that is full of "distortions which are repugnant to [the Christian]" but which have become naturalized, the Christian "may well be forced to take even more violent means to get his vision across to this hostile audience" (46). Both here, and throughout her writings, O'Connor sets up violence as both a destructive and recuperative force. As Thelma Shinn suggests, violence "destroys the body to save the soul" (62) and it destroys the false comfort and ease that commodification and modernization bring, which obfuscates the necessary work involved in the salvation of the soul.

Segrest aligns the violent shocks of O'Connor's writing with "Milledgeville patients, the Gothic landscape of the modern asylum, and the tropes of twentieth-century Georgia writers and revolutionaries" (114) as part of a genre she terms the "Georgia surreal" (114). Read within the context of Hal Foster's claim that Surrealism is a movement "of traumatic shock" (xi) and the stated importance of shock to O'Connor's own aesthetic, the genre of the "Georgia surreal" underlines the complex and contradictory role that shock plays in O'Connor's novels as both a response to trauma and the destruction of

the South and Southern ways of life and as an aesthetic strategy of social transformation that can recuperate a certain model of the South. The Georgia Surreal, like its European counterpart, is fuelled by and responds to historical trauma. For instance, Segrest shows how O'Connor and other Georgia Surrealist writers, like Carson McCullers, Americanize Surrealism by shifting its founding traumas from World War I and industrialization to "the highly racialized (un)conscious) […️ of] the slave and post-slave South" (124). Segrest is not alone in her account. Her concept of Surrealism is rather a newer, and more transnational and cosmopolitan, iteration of the "repressed unconscious" thesis that lies at the centre of Gothic and grotesque readings of O'Connor. Most notable here is Patricia Yaeger's "Flannery O'Connor and the Aesthetics of Torture," which also places race and racialized violence at the centre of O'Connor's fiction. While *Wise Blood* expresses the violence committed against black bodies throughout the regime of Jim Crow, the violated and shocked bodies of the novel are not just a wound, but also a strategy. Specifically, these bodies represent a strategy for refiguring the social and theological landscape of the postwar South and the US more broadly. Like *Invisible Man*, *Wise Blood* was written as the era of Jim Crow was passing into history. But, unlike *Invisible Man*, which moves North and turns away from the "checked out" (Warren 2) figures of the South, O'Connor places the struggle over the South at the *centre* of the post-Jim Crow era. In fact, *Wise Blood* wages a cultural war against the industrial North's expansionist culture of commodification, and locates the possibility of redemption in the grotesque monstrosity of the South.

Wise Blood opens with World War II veteran Hazel Motes taking a train to the town of Taulkinham, a fictionalized Atlanta; the story then stages Motes's struggle to exert power over the characters he meets through shock,

and frames the battle over Motes's soul as a struggle between the shocks of mass culture and those of divine grace. Even as O'Connor attempts to use shock to disrupt and transform an increasingly commodified society, she is all too aware that shock has also become the strategy of the commodified culture that she is trying to undo. As Joseph Murphy points out, in "Learning From Atlanta," O'Connor's own claim that you must "shock" an audience that won't listen (24) is eerily similar to Marshall McLuhan's argument (with which O'Connor was intimately familiar) that advertisers see their job as "break[ing] through [the consumer's] protective shell [by] shocking, teasing, tickling, or irritating him" (qtd. in Murphy 24). While *Wise Blood* ultimately succeeds in out-shocking culture and bringing Motes to grace, it does so not by escaping society altogether or finding an outside, but by turning from one side of post-war society to the other, from the mass culture that marks civil society to the security apparatus of the state.

Wise Blood requires the force and shocks of the emerging security state to buffer Motes from mass culture's powerful promises of freedom, to prevent Motes from seeking a model of false freedom by fleeing the city in his car, to protect him from the grip of his landlord Mrs. Flood, and to administer the final shocks of deliverance that bring him to grace. What appears as Motes's theological struggle uncannily coincides with, and rubs up against, the struggles and fantasies of the post-Jim Crow white working and middle class who were also attempting to escape the emergent mass cultural urban space by fleeing to the promise of their own homes in the suburbs. While Motes is unable to physically leave the city or become a homeowner, his ultimate escape from the commodified social space of Taulkinham into his own atomized grace ultimately replicates the emergent grassroots conservative fantasies of

privatization. At the same time, *Wise Blood* also reveals the paradoxical role the state played in this historical conjuncture as both the problem—that which must be escaped—and as that which the subject materially requires in order to enact such an escape. Margaret Thatcher once quipped, "Economics are the method, but the object is to change the soul" (qtd. in Harvey *Brief History* 23). In *Wise Blood*, the struggle over the soul enacts the contested and contradictory relationship of the white middle and working class subject to mass culture, the state, and the emerging white conservatism in the post-Jim Crow era that would underpin, and come to form, the tenets of neoliberal thought.

The Southern Unconscious

The eschatological forces that threaten to condemn both the town of Taulkinham and Motes's soul are drawn from the cultural transformations taking place in the post-war south: most notably, the new confluences between mass culture, materialism, and Protestantism. Because of this alignment, many critics have drawn a parallel between O'Connor's religious critiques and a critique of capitalism. For instance, John Lance Bacon argues that, for O'Connor, Catholicism is a more efficacious resistance to consumer capitalism than that offered by the Agrarians ("A Fondness" 39) while Steven Pinkerton sees in O'Connor an alignment of capitalism and religion with "consumer capitalism [cast] as the preeminent American religion" (450). But, as other critics have pointed out, O'Connor's concern with either capitalism or the South was always only a vehicle for her religious project: as Martyn Bone puts it, O'Connor's "social geographies [are] irrelevant when compared to the 'true country' of spiritual faith" (152). Similarly, Murphy has reversed the valences of Bacon's claim, arguing that the South offers a more efficacious form of

religious thinking: "The elaborate manners of social hierarchy; the collective trauma of defeat in war and Reconstruction; the existence of a peasant class and, previously, slavery; and the shared *mythos* of Scripture—all these made the South a mirror of the individual soul whose experience of grace she sought to dramatize" ("The Smile" n.p. 2002). What underwrites these seemingly opposing positions is the shared assumption that the religious and the political remain "separate countries" that may act as allegories or operate on different levels, but which remain discrete. [1] This chapter suggests that, instead, we read her political and religious countries as porous and leaky: that we read her religious novel as intersecting with, and intervening and even participating in the most relevant political struggles of the post-war, post-Jim Crow South.

This intersection is present in O'Connor's very conception of the roles and possibilities of Christian literature in contemporary society. In "The Nature and Aim of Fiction," O'Connor calls for the reinsertion of a medieval, and specifically Dantean mode of writing called the "anagogic," which is able to read "different levels of reality in one image or one situation" (72) into the largely secular and commodified form of the novel. O'Connor explains:

> The medieval commentators of Scripture found three kinds of meaning in the literal level of the sacred text: one they called allegorical, in which one fact pointed to another; one they called tropological, or moral, which had to do with what should be done; and one they called anagogical, which had to do with the Divine life and our participation in it. (72)

[1]   One notable exception, which I will return to later is Susan Edmunds's article "Through a Glass Darkly: Visions of Integrated Community in Flannery O'Connor's *Wise Blood*" (which developed into a chapter in her book *Grotesque Relations: Modernist Domestic Fiction and the U.S. Welfare State*) which offers a compelling attempt to think the relationship between the historical and the eschatological.

At the centre of O'Connor's project is a struggle to bring the eschatological back into the contemporary and profane world. But O'Connor makes clear that Dante and the anagogic cannot provide the "ready model" (Murphy, "The Smile" n.p.) that it could for agrarians such as Alan Tate, but must be refigured to grapple with the drastic differences between Dante's Italy and the modernizing post-war South. In another essay that draws on Dante, "Southern Fiction," she argues that while Dante was able to divide "his territory up pretty evenly between hell, purgatory, and paradise" (49), such a balance is no longer possible because the post-war era lacks the "balance [that] was achieved in the faith of his age" (49). Whereas Dante's *Divine Comedy* moves equally between the separate spheres of the inferno, purgatory, and paradise, O'Connor's anagogic must focus primarily on representations of hell and purgatory.

In this vein, H.R. Stoneback offers a suggestive schema for reading O'Connor's anagogic. Stoneback interprets the rural settings in O'Connor as forming the actual "hell" or inferno (qtd. in Bone 151) and the urban setting of Atlanta forms "a kind of Purgatory, the required displacement [from the false rural Eden] in the right of passage to grace" (ibid). Drawing on Stoneback, Bone suggests that O'Connor is less interested in the actual space of Atlanta than she is in using "Atlanta to undermine the foundational Agrarian conception of place" (152). He concludes that "O'Connor's stories only obliquely reveal the material reality of 1950s Atlanta" (152) and, by extension, do not actually have much to tell us about Atlanta or the space he terms the "post*South*," that is the South that continues to exist after the agrarian fantasy has been "destroyed by capitalism" (48). While Bone might be correct about both the obliqueness of Atlanta and the priority of the religious in O'Connor's short stories, *Wise Blood* cannot be similarly categorized. The settings and place

of post*South* Atlanta are at the centre of the novel and inextricable from its religious struggle over Motes's soul. The religious journey that Motes's soul takes from the inferno, to purgatory, and ultimately into paradise (or at least into grace) cannot help but also produce a sociohistorical model of the transformation of the Southern subject and his or her relationship with the transforming urban spaces of the post*South*. Specifically, like Fredric Jameson who locates a "political unconscious" even within the cultural forms of the most privatized and reified societies, so O'Connor's religious narrative ultimately inscribes a Southern unconscious within the mass cultural world of the post-war South.

For instance, in *Wise Blood*, the buildings where the struggle over the soul of Taulkinham and Motes takes place are based on two of the most historically important sites in the new Atlanta: the museum in Grant Park and the Fox Theater. We are introduced to the museum when Enoch Emery, a cartoonish vision of the materialist Protestantism and New South, leads Motes through the park to the big, grey building: "He pointed down through the trees. 'Muvseevum,' he said. The strange word made him shiver" (92). Compared to the shining marquee of the theatre that is "so bright that the moon, moving overhead […] looks pale and insignificant" (99–100), the darkness of the museum appears to reflect the sense of mystery, the *selva oscura*, that lies at the centre of O'Connor's religious project.[2] But O'Connor refuses such easy comparisons. Instead, the events that occur in and around these two buildings

[2] As Pinkerton notes, "For O'Connor, the central dynamic of Christianity, as well as the element she finds lacking in modern religious observance and in society generally, is mystery. Time and again she strikes this chord in her letters and lectures, where she insists that the Christian writer's faith is not a limitation but a source of that mystery requisite to a profound fictional exploration of the world" (457-8).

come to emblematize two materialist profanations of religion, a point she signals by describing the buildings as identical (both are "large" and "grey" with "columns" (44, 92)). These two buildings also represent two models of what Scott Romine calls a "fake South" that "is increasingly sustained as a virtual, commodified, built, themed, invented, or otherwise artificial territoriality" (9): the vaporous new South of commodity culture and the South of agrarian nostalgia, respectively.

While not detailed within *Wise Blood*, the history and architectural features of both these actual buildings are important for understanding their role in O'Connor's religious schema.[3] The theatre in *Wise Blood* is modeled on the large, glitzy theatres that came to emblematize the new South. Chief among

[3] Reading the architecture in *Wise Blood* also emphasizes the importance of resisting the urge to cast O'Connor as a postmodern writer. Following Jameson's definition of postmodern architecture as expressing a "'virtually unmediated' relationship to economics" (16), critics such as Murray have argued that "to define the built landscape of *Wise Blood* as postmodern is structurally and, in the broad view, historically accurate" (16). Such claims are not entirely accurate and often misleading. While, as Murray suggests, "the genesis of postmodern space [lies] in the roadside billboard […] developed in the United States after World War I" (16), the landscape of Taulkinham is more akin to Benjamin's Paris than to Jameson's (and Venturi's) Las Vegas. In *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Jameson is careful to distinguish the bewilderment registered by Walter Benjamin in "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire" and his own bewildering encounter with the Bonaventure hotel. Whereas, Jameson argues, the modernism of Benjamin's Baudelaire emerges "from a new experience of city technology which transcends all the older habits of bodily perception" (45), the postmodernism of Jameson's Bonaventure stands "as the symbol and analogon of that even sharper dilemma which is the incapacity of our minds, at least at present, to map the great global multinational and decentered communicational network in which we find ourselves caught as individual subjects" (44). One of the main differences Jameson articulates between modernism and postmodernism, then, is that whereas the symbols of modernism—the locomotive, the plane, the factory—may "represent motion," new postmodern technologies, like the processes of capitalism that they are connected to, can only be "represented *in motion*" (45). The kinds of industrial symbols that surround Motes and those with which Motes interacts—most notably the train and the car—are still firmly embedded within modernist representations of motion.

these was the famous Fox Cinema (built in 1929)—a sprawling monument to the new South, complete with over 4,500 seats and numerous ballrooms— inspired by "Mayan relief decoration, Egyptian friezes, and Mediterranean foliate patterns and abstractions" (Craig 63). As Robert Michael Craig explains, the Fox Cinema reflected an "Egyptomania" that seized the US following the unearthing of pharaoh Tutankhamen's tomb: "Apartment buildings, commercial retail stores, institutional buildings, and movie theaters began to form their facades as great pylon gateways […] with Egyptian ornament" (66). The fetishization and refunctioning of ancient civilizations into mass cultural ornament represents the artificiality and falsifications that, for O'Connor, blinds characters to the workings of the divine. Although she does not directly link her blindingly bright cinema to the Egyptomania craze, O'Connor does connect this craze to the seemingly ancient museum, which is ultimately indistinguishable from, and forms the uncanny double to, the cinema.

Enoch's discovery of a new Jesus in the basement of the museum directly draws on the Egyptomania of the post-war era. The novel describes this new Jesus as "about three feet long […] and a dried yellow color" (94), as tall as a man until "[s]ome A-rabs [shrunk] him in six months" (94). He is, in short, a mummy. Enoch's idolation of the mummy is often, and rightfully, read as enacting "the novel's religious and anti-materialist critiques" (Pinkerton 458). The novel's transformation of the mummy from a "mystery" (77) to a fetish, and ultimately to dust, follows O'Connor's argument about the need to face towards the mystery of Jesus and not towards concrete and knowable material objects. Enoch's Jesus, though, also serves a second function. Located within the pseudo-mysterious museum, the mummy crucially participates in her political critiques of agrarian attempts to find a hidden centre or material South

(the museum is, after all, located in the centre of a park that is, the novel tells us, "in the center of the city" (96)). The problem, which *Wise Blood* highlights through Enoch, is not just his fetishization of an object, but rather the ways in which *all* nostalgic attachments to objects or places can be—and indeed already have been—absorbed by the commodifying power of mass culture.

Importantly, the actual museum in Atlanta that *Wise Blood* references, the 1921 Atlanta Cyclorama and Civil War Museum, is as interconnected with commodity culture as is the movie theater. Located in the centre of Atlanta's historic Grant Park, the Civil War Museum was built to house "The Battle of Atlanta" (1885–6) a 42 x 358-foot painting depicting the 1864 Civil War battle. By the time O'Connor was writing in the 1950s, the Civil War Museum had become as much of a mass cultural mecca as the movie theatre. In 1936, as part of a WPA project, the Cyclorama was augmented with a three-dimensional diorama of the battle, and in 1939, the stars of the film *Gone With the Wind*, who were in Atlanta for a film, visited the Cyclorama. According to Jennifer and Philip Cuthbertson, Clark Gable "asked to be included in the diorama [and] a Rhett Butler figure was added to accommodate his request" (60). The image of the South found in both the Cyclorama painting and the Clark Gable figure made the museum as much of a commodity—or what Michael James Zarafonetis calls a "kitschy theme park only loosely related to historical figures or events" (2)—as the cinema. O'Connor's critique of the movie theatre and the museum as simultaneous examples of a perverted South and a perverted religiosity separates her from both the emergent models of the New South and the agrarian nostalgias, and places *Wise Blood* in the middle of post-war struggles over the future of the South.

Culture Shock

Read as an eschatological novel, the central enemy, that which the novel must defeat, is the rise of mass culture whose promises of ready-made happiness and salvation obscure the work of the soul. O'Connor forefronts this struggle between mass culture and grace as soon as Motes gets off the train in Taulkinham: "he began to see signs and lights. PEANUTS, WESTERN UNION, AJAX, TAXI, HOTEL, CANDY. Most of them were electric and moved up and down or blinked frantically" (25). When he attempts to seek a moment of escape from the bombardment of crowds and culture, he heads to the bathroom, but the stalls are covered with writing. The word "Welcome" is inscribed, alongside "Mrs. Leora Watts / 60 Buckley Road / The friendliest bed in town!" (26). Referencing the writing on the wall that forecasts the end of Belshazzar and his Babylonian kingdom, O'Connor's writing is on the bathroom wall, and soon on every highway sign, store sign, and architectural surface in sight.[4] The question this proliferation of writing raises is, with so much sin, and so much writing on so many walls, how do we know which writing to read? And how do we read it?

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[4] In the Book of Daniel, the writing on the wall appears during a feast held by Belshazzar, the king of the Babylonian empire. After Belshazzar uses a holy vessel to praise "the gods of gold and silver, brass, iron, wood, and stone," a disembodied hand appears and writes "Mene, Mene, Tekel, u-Pharsin" on the wall. Daniel, an exiled Israelite, interprets as this as "numbered, weighed, divided": "This is the interpretation of the matter: mina, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end; shekel, you have been weighed on the scales and found wanting; *half-mina*, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians" (Daniel 5:25–28). This is the writing on the wall that, for O'Connor, must break through to the surface of affirmative mass culture.

For O'Connor, shock is the hermeneutic tool that makes the writing on the wall both legible and interpretable by disrupting the smooth surfaces of mass cultural society that foreclose the possibility of the anagogic. Shock is both a metaphor for Jesus's mediating acts of grace and O'Connor's privileged aesthetic strategy. *Wise Blood* is full of sharp and jagged objects that break up the smooth, reified surfaces of Taulkinham's architecture and Onnie Jay Holy's preaching. In "Learning from Atlanta," Murphy insightfully notes that O'Connor uses the term "ragged" to describe both the highways, which are "*ragged* with filling stations and trailer camps and road houses" (qtd. in "Learning" 74, emphasis added), and Jesus, who is a "wild *ragged* figure motioning [Motes] to turn around and come off into the dark" (qtd. on 73, emphasis added). The raggedness of the roadside with all of its detritus and debris, like the raggedness of the figure of Christ, disrupts the world of mass culture, and restores vision.

Wise Blood reframes the failure of her characters to find meaning in Protestantism's culture of affirmation as a replication of Belshazzar's advisers who are unable to find a deeper, divine or anagogic meaning; only, in post-war Atlanta, the failure lies in seeing the writing on the wall in the advertisements on the bathroom wall. That is to say, because Protestantism does not believe in the necessity of divine mediation, it lacks the interpretive skills necessary to read the writing. Enoch reads the writing at its surface level and as such comes to represent the dangerous hubris of a religious system that believes it can internalize the divine. Enoch literally believes that his blood communicates divine messages to him, that, in a reference to the Book of Daniel, it "wrote doom all through him" (129). While Enoch's wise blood tells him that he has an important role to play in some divine drama as the deliverer of a new Jesus

into the world, *Wise Blood* makes clear that what Enoch perceives as God speaking to him is really just mass culture interpellating him. As Murphy points out, "What Enoch understands as [… wise blood] appears on inspection to be an almost total receptivity to commercial appeals" ("Learning" 22). Enoch's turn to his blood ultimately transforms him into a vehicle of mass culture. Whenever he attempts to follow his blood, he ends up at another mass cultural event. For instance, on the day when Enoch wakes up with a vision that "[s]omething's going to happen to me today" (137), he finds himself drawn to a triple-header at the movie theatre, and later, when he is heading to Motes's to deliver the new Jesus, he becomes distracted by children waiting in line to see a man dressed up in a gorilla suit. Enoch's wise blood ultimately leads him to the snack counter, to the "frosty bottle" (which is covered in advertisements "for ice cream, showing a cow dressed up like a housewife" (84)), to see the animals at the zoo, to the picture show, to a museum exhibit, and inside a fake gorilla. In short, Enoch's "wise blood" appears to be nothing but the demands of mass culture filtered through his unconscious.

Enoch's comic misinterpretations simultaneously carry out O'Connor's overlapping critiques of the Protestant belief in unmediated access to God and the capitalist process of commodity fetishism, where, as Marx put it in *Capital*, "the products of the human brain appear as autonomous figures endowed with a life of their own, which enter into relations both with each other and with the human race" (165).[5] When Enoch's blood finally leads him to the museum to procure the new Jesus, the novel makes clear that the new Jesus, like the

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[5]   This is also another space where the political and the religious cross over, where Marx must turn to "an analogy" in the "misty realm of religion" (165) in order to explain a political and social phenomenon.

museum in which it is located, is a fetish, another product of mass cultural consumption, brought there to reflect a new cultural fad. Read one way, when Motes throws the Jesus against the wall so hard that "[t]he head popped and the trash inside sprayed out in a little cloud of dust" (188), he is attacking both what Brian Ragen terms the "vaporous" (161) theology of Protestantism and the capitalist process of the commodity fetish that ascribes magical power to an object.

But the novel also disrupts this reading. There is, after all, nothing within the fetish. While Enoch, like his fetish, is nothing but the empty, repetitive shells of mass culture, Motes's violent destruction of the Jesus does not bring either Enoch or Motes towards grace. In the same way that Motes tears off Asa Hawkes's glasses to reveal the falsity of his blindness, so too he reveals the nothingness of Enoch's fetish and in doing so, Motes simply resinscribes the fetishistic logic O'Connor is writing against. Motes is striving to show both the falsity of these two models of religiosity and the brutal nothingness of all theological thought. In denying the very possibility of the anagogic, of the divine in the material world, he creates a disenchanted world, which is simply the dialectical other of mass culture.

Motes's war against models of false religiosity becomes deeply ambivalent because his attacks never land on those who actually have power, on those who control or benefit from the mass culture of this new Protestant South, but only on those figures who only ever exist on the fringes of either the formal economy or Taulkinham society. His attempt to disenchant Taulkinham ultimately succeeds less in shocking the smooth surface of the post-war South than it does in carrying out the destructive work of modernization. The four individuals whom Motes successfully shocks are representations of neither the

new South nor the transcendentalist Protestantism O'Connor was writing against. Rather, they are the degraded parodies of the "freaks" (44) that for O'Connor make up the South and its theology. Hawkes, Solace Layfield, Sabbath Lily Hawkes, and Enoch, are all Romantic or Gothic figures: the religious fanatic (Hawkes), the consumptive worker (Layfield), the femme fatale (Sabbath), and the sensitive, inspired artist (Enoch). In another time, these four pathetic characters would have been the protagonists or Romantic heroes, and even in O'Connor's short stories, she is able to maintain a glimmer of their redemptive power. But, in *Wise Blood*, there is no place for them. As a result of Motes's violence, Hawkes disappears, Layfield dies, Sabbath is put in a home, and Enoch crawls into a gorilla suit and vanishes. By ejecting these Romantic figures, Motes clears the South of its freakish and grotesque figures, ultimately carrying out the work of modernization.

We see this ambivalence most clearly in Enoch who is both a jester character whom we are encouraged not to take seriously, and the Virgil of Taulkinham. Enoch is both Motes's and the reader's guide. Motes meets Enoch almost immediately after he arrives in Taulkinham, when he crosses the street after a light has turned red. When Enoch observes Motes being stopped by a policeman who comments, "Maybe you thought the red ones was for white folks and the green ones for niggers […]. You tell all your friends about these lights" (41), Enoch quickly offers to take care of him. Like Mr. Head in "The Artificial Nigger," Enoch is Taulkinham's native guide. Not only does he work for the city, but he is also the only character in the novel who was born there: he is its one true product. Enoch's connection to mass culture is a key piece of his connection to Taulkinham. It is precisely because of the ways in which

Enoch is entirely interpellated into mass culture that he is able to play the role of Virgil, guiding both Motes and the reader through Taulkinham.

While Enoch plays the role of the jester when it comes to *Wise Blood's* religious narrative, when it comes to the fate of the South and of Taulkinham, he takes on a much more serious role in the novel than is often suggested. To understand this role, we must reconsider the mass cultural sites that his blood leads him to such as the triple-header film. These films are not just further evidence of Enoch's materialism, as Connie Ann Kirk suggests, nor do they simply further develop "O'Connor's motifs" (25), as John Darretta suggests. Rather, these films act as a remarkably acute and under-theorized guide to the issues and anxieties of the post-war South. In a world full of dark mirrors, blinding lights, and obfuscations, Enoch's trip to the movie theatre provides one of the brightest and clear-eyed visions of the post-war South. The three films—*The Eye*, *Devil's Island Penitentiary*, and *Lonnie Comes Home Again*—reflect the whole range of anxieties underlying both the 1950s South and *Wise Blood*: anxieties about technological control and the invasion of the body, the legacy of colonialism, the increasingly carceral state of the South, and the role of African Americans in what was becoming a more racially integrated world.

For instance, we learn that *The Eye* is about a "scientist named The Eye who performed operations by remote control. You would wake up in the morning and find a slit in your chest or head or stomach and something you couldn't do without would be gone" (138). *The Eye* both eerily evokes the kinds of invasive and penetrative experiments the CIA was performing on the bodies and minds of people throughout the 1950s and echoes the novel's obsession with sight, illuminating the kinds of profane and degraded visions of the post-war world that arise when vision is aimed not above, in the search for meaning

within the divine, but in the technology that finds meaning deeper and deeper within the physical body.[6] The second film, *Devil's Island Penitentiary*, is described as a documentary of daily life at Devil's Island, a French penal colony off the coast of French Guiana, which gained notoriety for its detention of political prisoners. *Devil's Island Penitentiary* brings together two thematic concerns of *Wise Blood* and the South more generally: the South's role as what Jennifer Rae Greeson terms a "quarantine" for "the persistence of the familiar American colonial attributes" (13) and the increasing militarization of US society after the war.[7] The final film, *Lonnie Comes Home Again*, takes the plot of the film *Lassie* (1943), but substitutes a baboon "named Lonnie who rescued attractive children from a burning orphanage" (138). Given its resonance with the blackface Gorilla outfit that Enoch dons shortly thereafter, this film evokes the anxieties of a Southern society that simultaneously positions African Americans as caregivers and saviours, and as invaders of the white domestic scene.[8]

While the novel ostensibly critiques both Enoch and the tawdry pulp films he views, the theatre and its films also offer a model of shock that disrupts the affirmative promises of mass culture. In *Wise Blood* the cinema

[6] We can think not only of Enoch's obsession with the divinity of his blood, but also of Motes's obsession with a piece of shrapnel that he believes is still lodged in his body, which we are led to believe is metonymic for the soul he denies he has (18).

[7] While Pinkerton does not mention this film specifically, he picks up on a thematic of "confinement and incarceration" throughout *Wise Blood* (454).

[8] The inclusion of *Lonnie Comes Home Again* provides another possible reason for O'Connor's antipathy toward film. In "Disturbing the Peace," a study of cinema and censorship in post-war films in Georgia, Margaret McGehee points out that at the same time that Georgia's movie censor, Christine Smith, was "enforcing segregation's boundaries and […] maintaining white power and privilege […], Hollywood's studios and producers began to challenge the social 'norms' written into the Production Code, 'dos and don'ts' related to the intertwined categories of race, gender, and sexuality" (25). McGehee specifically mentions the films *Lost Boundaries* (1949) and *Pinky* (1949).

both represents the problem of the image-saturated new South and paradoxically, acts as a space where vision becomes possible. On the one hand, the cinema *is* that wholly unnatural, artificial surface that needs to be shocked and on the other hand, the films also provide a source of shock. Like the violence that overwhelms her characters and brings them illumination, these films literally overwhelm Enoch's defenses. As the films progress, Enoch gets more and more uncomfortable first pulling "his hat down very low" (138) and drawing "his knees up in front of his face" (139), and then gripping "the two arms of his seat to keep himself from falling over" and finally, the movies are "more than Enoch can stand" (139) and lead him to race "out of the red foyer and into the street" (139). The anxiety these films provoke in Enoch, which symbolically leads him from the wholly commodified theater to the slightly less commodified street, also inevitability shock the reader into seeing the violent traumas beyond and beneath the affirmative culture of post-war life. Here, the sociohistorical and the eschatological O'Connor intersect. The ability of these films to disrupt the smooth surfaces of the new South and reveal its underside is the precondition that allows O'Connor to turn Enoch and even that most commodified space of the cinema into a purveyor of what Benjamin would term "profane illumination" (217) for her readers.[9] While O'Connor

9   Indeed, on the surface, there are many aspects of O'Connor's project that appears to map onto a Marxist one. In addition to the consonance between O'Connor's and Benjamin's models of illumination, O'Connor's use of the anagogical bears striking similarities to the anagogical method Jameson develops in *The Political Unconscious*. For instance, both deploy the anagogic to move beyond the false surfaces of modernity. What separates O'Connor from the Marxist tradition, however, is that where for the Marxist tradition the rise of mass culture and modernity brings with it utopian and profoundly social possibilities for the future, for O'Connor the goal of the anagogic and illumination is to turn away from society towards God, and to turn away from the future and towards a foreclosed and forgotten South.

deliberately orchestrates these shocks to shatter the surface of mass culture, these shocks unwittingly illuminate a whole set of social and political traumas of the post-war South. The violent traumas that overcome Enoch, which include the traumas of integration, technological control, and colonialism, are the very traumas that *Wise Blood* is responding to. O'Connor's attempt to transform the commodified space of the cinema into a vehicle of God reveals the deeper ways in which *Wise Blood's* religious project functions as a version of what Freud terms repetition-compulsion, that is the replaying of a traumatic situation to create a new version of it, in which he or she is now the master and not the victim.

However, there are aspects of mass culture that are immune to both Motes and O'Connor's shocks, aspects that maintain their seamless untouchability. Or, put slightly differently, there are aspects of mass culture whose shocks are more powerful than those that Motes or O'Connor are able to deploy. Most notable here is Onnie Jay Holy/Hoover Shoats, who is able to take the negative critique and disruption of Motes and reabsorb it back into consumer culture for his own financial gain. Of all the models of false religion O'Connor offers, Holy most deeply embodies the commodity culture of affirmation and positivity. Replicating Motes's Church Without Christ, Holy creates the Holy Church of Christ Without Christ, a name that plays on the associations of holy as religious and "wholly" as proprietary (it is *his* church). But, unlike Motes's church of nihilism, Holy's church aligns with what Bacon terms the "cult of reassurance" that blossomed in 1950s culture (64). Holy takes the trends and sentiments of the Cold War and mass culture and fuses them into his religious program. Politically, he sutures his church to American nationalism by advertising that his religion has "nothing foreign connected with

it" (152), and by connecting Jesus Christ to Abraham Lincoln (155). Culturally, Holy sells himself as both a preacher and a rock star. He plays rock music, commenting repeatedly that he wishes he had his "gittarr here" (149, 153); he turns his church into a casino, where the "cards are on the table" (153), but the "dollar" cost of joining is no gamble—the dollar ante guarantees that members of the congregation can "unlock that little rose of sweetness inside you" (153); and he preaches not only on cars, but on his radio show, "Soulsease, a quarter hour of Mood, Melody, and Mentality" (156). In Shoats-Holy, O'Connor's political and religious critiques come together. O'Connor underscores her critique through his two names, Hoover Shoats and Onnie Jay Holy. His first name, Hoover Shoats, references President Hoover, one of the architects of the New Deal welfare state and a "shoat" or newly weaned pig, which emphasizes this connection to the nanny state, while Hoover also references the vacuum company that became a symbol of the prosperity of the American century. His second name, Onnie Jay Holy, echoes the gorilla, Lonnie who saves children from the orphanage in the film. The connection between Holy and fears of miscegenation is a significant one. Holy, importantly, is associated with the hipster culture of the 1950s that drew so heavily on African American idioms and aesthetic forms (see Szalay's *Hip Figures*).[10]

[10] Throughout *Wise Blood*, O'Connor aligns mass culture with African American culture. While I do briefly discuss the racialized dimension to O'Connor's critique of mass culture and the market, there is much more work to be done here.

Holy is a remarkable portrait of the conjuncture of US exceptionalism, mass culture, and Protestant theology.[11] He is, in fact, such a remarkable portrait, so emblematic a figure of the power of the new South, that he exceeds the scope of the novel's shocks. While O'Connor is able to bring almost every other character into her religious schema, and while Motes is similarly able to inflict his brand of violence, Holy is entirely immune and unshockable—he becomes the limit point for both Motes and the novel. For instance, unlike his attacks on Enoch, Hawkes, and Sabbath, which always hit their mark, Motes's violent attack on Holy can only be carried out against his exploited worker, Solace Layfield. Holy hires Layfield to dress up as Motes and do the preaching for him. Unable to attack Holy, Motes turns his rage against Layfield, a man with "consumption and a wife and six children" (203), and backs his car "over the body," killing him (206). While this violent act echoes his destruction of Enoch's new Jesus and his tearing off of Hawkes's glasses, Motes is only able to touch Holy's worker, never Holy. It appears, then, that Motes's shocks can only affect the "freaks." Onnie Jay Holy, and by extension the mass cultural conjuncture of the post-war US, remain immune.

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[11] O'Connor was not the only one drawing connections between Protestant theology and the development of national character. At the same time that she was writing, the critic R.W.B. Lewis was arguing that through the transcendental severing of historical and religious ties, there emerged a "new personality," which he defined as "an individual emancipated from history, happily bereft of ancestry, untouched and undefiled by the usual inheritances of family and race; an individual standing alone, self-reliant and self-propelling, ready to confront whatever awaited him with the aid of his own unique and inherent resources" (5). This new man, he argued, was based on an identification of the American man as "Adam before the Fall" (5). In *Our South*, Greeson further connects this Adamic Americanism to the founding myth of the United States as an Adamic state: an eternal, self-originating entity that had sprung "into being, fully formed and standing alone on the face of the earth as the exceptional republic" (3). The construction of the South as backward and colonial was a foundational part of this empire-building project (3).

Not only are Motes's shocks inadequate to break through Holy's façade, but his failed violence against Layfield also brings Motes into uncomfortably close proximity to Enoch. The murder of Layfield uncannily echoes Enoch's murder of the man in the gorilla suit. When Holy drives Layfield (in costume as Motes) to the movie theatre to preach, Motes comments to a woman who mistakes them as twins, "If you don't hunt it down and kill it, it'll hunt you down and kill you" (168). In the same way that Enoch kills to *become* the gorilla, Motes kills to become himself. After all, the novel opens with a traveller in Motes's car being "irked" by the price tag of $11.98 that hangs from his newly bought suit. Motes's suit is, from the beginning, understood as a costume, something that is never quite attached to him. Both Enoch and Motes, in other words, mistake a commodity for an identity.

In "Through a Glass Darkly," Susan Edmunds offers one of the most compelling readings of the fraught relationship between Enoch and Motes through her attempt to explain the anagogical structure of *Wise Blood*, and specifically its relationship between "social equality and God's acts of redemption at the end of time" (580). Edmunds suggests that in Motes's "murderous rejection of all signs and images which mimic God's truth [namely Enoch's paths], Motes seems to destroy the logic of the text itself, breaking the mirrors it sets up between contemporary history and the Second Coming of Christ" (578), between Enoch's "sociohistorical" and "mundane" path and Motes's "eschatological" and "otherworldly" one (578). In Edmunds's reading, the novel ultimately attempts to repair this schism by "subtly reasserting" the link between social equality and redemption (580). What is at stake in this reading is a recuperation of a more politically-correct and integrationist O'Connor from critics who either castigated O'Connor for her lack of

participation in the civil rights movement or who disavowed the importance of the political in O'Connor's novels entirely.

While Edmunds is right to insist on the importance between the sociohistorical and the eschatological, we lose something when we try to reclaim a more liberal O'Connor and create room within her anagogic vision for the civil rights movement. In other words, while Edmunds is right to foreground the politics of O'Connor's writing, she misreads the nature of its political stakes. At the same time that O'Connor is assuredly one of the few authors who truly captures the reality of Jim Crow as, in the words of Kenneth Warren, "that reality was passing into history" (2), the reality she captures is that of Southern white society which has everything to lose with this passing. O'Connor's attempt to reassert the link between the eschatological and the sociohistorical is a dangerous one for her precisely because of the ways that mass culture in O'Connor is always highly racialized. Whether it is the gorilla suit that Enoch crawls into, or the films about colonization and blackness that he watches, or the black vernacular (and presumably music) of Holy's radio show, the mass culture that threatens to obscure O'Connor's anagogic is always connected to fears of blackness and miscegenation. The central anxiety of *Wise Blood*, ironically, then is not that the religious and the mundane are split apart, but that the two paths will begin to bleed irreparably into each other. The novel's fear that the religious shocks it can provide will not be strong enough to overcome the shocks of the new mass culture of Atlanta is also a racialized one.

In part, then, the success of *Wise Blood* depends on an ability to maintain the distinction between Enoch and Motes's paths, which is difficult, because as Edmunds herself asserts, their paths tare "twinned" (578). For instance, when

Motes gets into his car and attempts to leave Taulkinham in his search for a false kind of freedom, mass culture calls him back:

> He drove very fast out onto the highway, but once he had gone a few miles, he had the sense that he was not gaining ground. Shacks and filling stations and road camps and 666 signs passed him and deserted barns with CCC snuff ads peeling across them, even a sign that said, "Jesus Died for YOU," which he saw and deliberately did not read. (209)

Like the mass culture that invades Enoch's "blood" or unconscious system, these highway road signs intervene in Motes's relationship with fate and faith, this time echoing his grandfather's earlier curse that even "for [Motes,] that mean sinful unthinking boy […] Jesus would die ten million deaths before HE would let him lose his soul" (16, emphasis in original).[12] Unlike the film advertisements that Enoch mistakes for divine signs in his blood, the road signs that line the highway *are* divine signs, communicating the truths that Motes cannot hear. In a nice twist of irony on O'Connor's part, the mass cultural advertisements that, as quoted above, McLuhan saw as "break[ing] through [the consumer's] protective shell [by] shocking, teasing, tickling, or irritating him" (qtd. in "Learning" Murphy 24), become the signs that bring Motes to his fated encounter with grace. While this plot point enables O'Connor to subsume mass culture within the faith and fate of a religious hermeneutic, the problem of the twinning of Enoch and Motes remains. Given Motes's own intense reliance on

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[12]   The relationships between Ralph Ellison's unnamed protagonist and his grandfather in *Invisible Man* and Motes and his grandfather in *Wise Blood* are uncannily similar and worthy of further exploration, especially given their identical publication dates and the numerous formal and thematic similarities (questions of blindness and sight, mass culture, the end of Jim Crow) even as they approach these questions from very different perspectives.

the commodity of the car and the mass cultural signs that light up the novel to carry him towards grace, we are still left with the question: how do we distinguish between Motes's and Enoch's journeys? We return, in other words, to the question that opened this section: with so much writing on so many walls, how do we know which signs to read? And how to read them?

States of Freedom

The narrative solution that O'Connor arrives at is a surprising one: she transforms the emergent bureaucratic state into the arbiter of grace, into the force that distinguishes between the mundane and the divine. Indeed, the only thing separating the profane signs Enoch receives from the divine ones Motes receives is that the latter are filtered through the state. Thus, the eschatological and the sociohistorical are not separated, but are sutured together and then split. On one side of this split is the sphere of consumption, represented by Holy and the culture of entertainment and mass culture, which aligns with a vaporous Protestantism, and on the other side, is the post-war security state, which aligns with Catholicism and the possibility of grace.

Brian Ragen offers a useful model for seeing one side of this equation, how the sociohistorical functions a metaphor for the eschatological, but not the other side, how the eschatological is implicated in the sociohistorical. In *A Wreck on the Road to Damascus*, he argues that the automobile comes to stand in for O'Connor's attack on the Protestant, and especially transcendental, "myths that promise us absolute freedom: freedom from the past, from responsibility, and from the love of an Incarnate Savior" (9). Indeed, from Motes's grandfather to Onnie Jay Holy to Motes himself, cars are intimately associated

with false religious promises. Yet, Ragen neglects the flipside of this automobile-Protestantism pairing, that of state and Catholicism, which in part explains his inability to see how O'Connor's religious program necessarily intervenes in the political. In the famous scene where Motes attempts to leave Taulkinham in his broken-down Essex car, it is the state, and specifically the police, that prevents Motes from leaving town and attaining this false model of freedom when they push his car over an embankment and make him walk back into town. Removing Motes from his car also strips him of another layer of bodily protection and makes him suitably vulnerable to be overtaken by violence and brought to grace. Moreover, it is the police that are, in the novel's final pages, able to transform the car from a symbol of false freedoms to a carriage of grace. The police respond to Motes's landlord, the aptly named Mrs. Flood, who calls about her negligent boarder who has not paid his bills and find Motes in a ditch. They deliver the final blow by hitting "him over the head with [their] new billy" (235) and bringing him into the car/coffin that completes his fate: his deliverance into the final "pin point of light" (236) that stands in for the blinding light marking Saul's conversion to Paul.

The state that is able to bring even the car, that symbol of Protestant mass culture, into the orbit of grace is not the residual New Deal welfare state,

which Edmunds reads as a foil for Christian scripture,[13] but rather the bureaucratic structures of the emergent post-war state whose primary purpose is policing, security, and containment. In *Wise Blood*, state money is located exclusively in the police salaries, Enoch's security guard salary, and Motes's Veteran's pension, and the state's primary purpose is policing and security. The state appears to orbit around the project of containment: the state polices the borders of Taulkinham, never allowing Motes to stray far; and it offers compensation for the protection of the US's borders internationally through Motes's Veteran's pension and locally, through Enoch's work as a security guard. The state, in short, forms a foil to the false freedoms of Ragen's automobile.

The state in *Wise Blood* simultaneously solves the religious problem of the battle over Motes's soul and the social problems that underpin the novel. Moreover, our pleasure in Motes's deliverance from mass culture comes largely from the almost naturalist descriptions of the social horrors underpinning Holy's world. While O'Connor's theological critique of Holy is that his sweet promises of guaranteed salvation obscure the work of the soul, the novel also shows that the real horrors of modernity lie not in its ease or pleasure, but

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[13] In *Grotesque Relations* Edmunds argues that the New Deal state's social programs function as a "corruption of charity's biblical meaning" that "springs from the false positing of human innocence, a refusal of the necessity of human suffering, and a consequent faith in the duty and power of human beings to perfect themselves" (183). Thus, Edmunds sees O'Connor pitting "the newly consolidated US welfare state" against "Christian scripture" (187) and connects O'Connor to an active post-war tradition of trying "to bring U.S. federal policy into transformative alignment with a Christian version of undivided community […] defined at one end of the spectrum by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles's Cold War precepts of 'free-world unity' and nuclear brinkmanship and at the other by Martin Luther King's nonviolent leadership of the civil rights movements" (187).

rather in the inequalities, violence, and destruction that lurk beneath its smooth and shiny surfaces. Buried within Holy's false promises are the material effects that modernity has on the characters of Motes, Enoch, Hawkes, Sabbath, and Layfield. Specifically, *Wise Blood* exposes what Marshall Berman calls the relentless "maelstrom" (121) of modernity and the world market: "its pitiless destruction of everything and everyone it cannot use […] and its capacity to […] feed itself on its own self-destruction (121). Motes, Enoch, Hawkes, Sabbath, and Layfield are all surplus figures that are wracked by the forces of modernity. Layfield both suffers from consumption and is easily eviscerated by an automobile, Motes all but dies from exposure, Enoch is unable to protect himself from either the movies or Motes's rage, the man in the gorilla suit dies for his costume, and Sabbath is unable to find stability or a family in Motes and is put in a "detention home" (20). *Wise Blood* tracks the inability of the fragile human body to stand up to destructive maelstroms of modernity that loom beneath the seemingly benign amelioration of mass culture.

Moreover, it is not just the bodies and psyches of its characters, but rather generational time itself that modernity fragments and fractures. In Motes's family, the "natural" order of death is entirely disrupted. Motes's return to his deceased mother's empty house in a dead and empty town triggers his memories of burying, in order, his two brothers, grandfather, and mother. His younger brothers die before his grandfather and mother, disrupting the natural order of family life. Similarly, Enoch does not know who his mother is and tells Motes how he was taken from his father by a "Welfare woman" (42), while Sabbath has no mother and is all but prostituted to Motes by her largely negligent father, Hawkes. O'Connor's fracturing of generational time and space brings into collision the Freud of the Oedipus Complex that address theorizes

the relationship between the unconscious and the family (or society more broadly) and the Freud of shock that theorizes the relationship between the unconscious and industrial society specifically.[14] O'Connor famously rewrote *Wise Blood* after reading the Oedipus myth, reworking Sophocles's tale of inevitable fates into one of faith and the coming of Jesus Christ.[15]

O'Connor's fascination with the Oedipus myth, and indeed the fissured and broken family lineages of Motes, Enoch, Hawkes, and Sabbath, also speaks to the novel's own anxiety about the eradication of the lineages of the South. From the ruin of Motes's house in Eastrod, to the shrapnel buried within him, to the constantly expanding and "ragged" (70) scene of the Taulkinham roadside, Motes's entire history begins to appear as an example of the "one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage" at the feet of Benjamin's angel of history ("On Some Concepts" 392). *Wise Blood* transforms the myth of Oedipus into an allegory of the role of tradition and lineage in a

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[14]   The case of Sabbath is especially interesting in the context of the Oedipus myth. Not only is Sabbath without a mother, but she attempts to become a mother by adopting the new Jesus that Enoch finds in the museum. Motes's destruction of the new Jesus also serves to shatter the false fetish of a nuclear family that Sabbath attempts to construct between her, Motes, and the new Jesus. Motes's rejection of Sabbath here, and the novel's larger isolation of people from their mothers, simultaneously acts as a narrative device that shifts the Oedipal focus from the level of the family to the eschatological and functions as a compensatory fantasy that masks the traumas of the loss of history and tradition.

[15]   O'Connor's writing process for *Wise Blood* has been extensively discussed. Robert Fitzgerald explains how O'Connor attempted to take the protagonist, Hazel Motes, who had initially been imagined for a short story, and turn him into the protagonist of a novel: "In the summer of 1950, when she had reached an impasse with Hazel and didn't know how to finish him off, she read for the first time the Oedipus plays. She went on then to end her story with the self-blinding of Motes, and she had to rework the body of the novel to prepare for it" (xvi). The addition of Oedipus served to fuse the Oedipal myth onto the story of Saul's conversion to Paul on the road to Tarsus, which had initially underpinned the novel. *Wise Blood* is thus essentially structured as Motes's Oedipal development through a series of attempts to avoid a Jesus who is his fate.

world where the landscape is destroyed and remade within the space of a generation, and where the forces of US exceptionalism and modernization have fractured generational time itself. While the false freedoms of the automobile and Protestant theology form the theological problem of the novel, the violent and brutal underside of these false freedoms forms its sociohistorical side.

Not coincidentally, it is the state that ultimately raises and protects all of the characters from these forces of modernization: it is the monthly VA cheques that keep Motes fed and housed, the state that first adopts Enoch and then feeds and houses him through his salary as a security guard at the park zoo, and eventually the "Welfare people" (220) that take Sabbath away from Motes and place her in a home. This doubling is necessary. O'Connor's evocation of the deeply human tragedies of modernization are the "historical and social, deeply political impulses" that, to borrow from Jameson, must be "aroused" if they are to be "managed" (256) and redeployed to religious ends. But even here there is an uncomfortable ambivalence in O'Connor's seemingly anti-capitalist gestures. Within the context of the post-war South, her evocation of these human tragedies is deeply racialized. These tragedies express anxieties around *white* lineages, the role of the *white* body under mass culture, and the moral degradation of *white* subjects, anxieties that are inextricably connected to national and municipal policies around integration.

The religious journey of Motes towards grace is indistinguishable from these sociohistorical anxieties about the position of white Southerners in a period of declining Jim Crow. The real distinction between the respective paths of Enoch and Motes, then, is that whereas Enoch's journey through mass culture leads to a vision of the anxieties underpinning post-war white Southern society, Motes's journey to grace leads to a fantasy of escaping from those

anxieties and spaces. Motes's deliverance to grace at the hands of the state embodies all of the contradictions of the post-war white, working, and middle class fantasies about the state that position it both as the problem and the solution. The state's role as a translator between mass culture and religion, and between anxiety and fantasy, highlights the profoundly ambivalent role that it comes to play in the post-war US novel, and in dominant post-war culture more broadly, as both a necessary material support and that which must be disavowed.

Conclusion

While as a religious allegory, the violence of Motes's death might act as an example of the shocks that O'Connor claims will return a character "to reality and prepare them to accept their moment of grace" (112), Motes's own acts of violence throughout the novel are much more fraught. In O'Connor's short stories, grace arrives through a series of divine and unpredictable convergences that bring her protagonists into the violent hands of grotesque and otherworldly characters. For instance, in "The Lame Shall Enter First," a short story about Sheppard, a benevolent atheist and rationalist who invites a juvenile delinquent, Rufus Johnson, to live with him and his son, grace comes to Sheppard when he discovers his son hanging from the rafters, having been murdered by Rufus. Similarly, in "A Good Man is Hard to Find," a short story about a wrong turn on a family vacation in Florida, the grandmother is brought to grace through a series of fortuitous accidents that lead them to "The Misfit," an accused killer who has just escaped from prison and who subsequently kills

the entire family.[16] The fundamental motor of these short stories is the presence of a character that is able to embody the divine and inflict the necessary violence that will bring the subject out of his or her physical self and towards grace. However, in *Wise Blood*, Motes must occupy both the role of the divine figure who inflicts violence and of the subject who must have violence inflicted upon him, who requires a divine figure, to bring him to grace. His indeterminate position, in part, explains both why his acts of divine violence are never able to transcend the sociohistorical and why his ability to deliver grace is so profoundly limited by his own sociohistorical circumstances.

Motes's acts are unable to disrupt those figures that represent the new post-war conjuncture and instead only impact those other victims who represent the era of the Gothic and Romanticism, which have long been foreclosed. In short, the shocks and violence that Motes inflicts on the figures of Taulkinham are disruptive of an order that has already passed and they carry out the destructive work of the very post-war order that O'Connor's novel is attempting to critique. Like *Invisible Man*'s riot, which both illustrates the final erosion of the New Deal and is brought under the purview of a different kind of order, Motes's violent death is both a destructive and an enabling act. His death announces both the end of the order of the old South of the grotesque and the emergence of a new South of conservatism, privatization, and urban flight.

[16] In "On Her Own Work," O'Connor argues that it is the brief glimpse where "the Grandmother recogni[zes] that the Misfit is one of her children" that represents the "acceptance of grace" (116) in "A Good Man is Hard to Find."

In *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism*, Kevin Kruse argues that the "court-ordered 'desegregation' of public spaces brought about not actual racial integration, but instead a new division in which the public world was increasingly abandoned to blacks and a new private one was created for whites" (106). While this process was only beginning to occur by the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s, when *Wise Blood* was being drafted, Motes's own isolation from the public spaces of Taulkinham, and his attempts to escape the city by car, prefigure a distinctly post-segregation narrative of white escape. Motes's trajectory enacts both this middle and working class white fantasy of escaping public space and also the irony of the ultimate dependence on the state to enact this privatization. While in *Wise Blood*, the state prevents Motes from fleeing the city (instead of funding his housing purchase in a suburb), it does him one better and aids him in becoming a fully isolated, self-contained subject who no longer depends on any of the vestiges of public space or mass culture. Because the fantasy of salvation aligns with the post-segregation fantasy of white flight, both the shocks that Motes inflicts on the freaks around him and the shocks the novel ultimately inflicts on him enact nothing so clearly as an escape from society.

O'Connor's turn toward the grotesque and the Surreal serves not to unearth the shocks and traumas of "colonial violence of the United States in which chattel slavery had been reconfigured into white supremacy" (123), as Segrest suggests, but rather to set up the white Southern subject as the colonized figure, the repressed figure that will return again and again. The violent shocks that bring O'Connor's characters to grace offer an implicit analogy with the violent shocks of the South that will save the US, but which are being erased through the process of modernization and, implicitly,

integration. Only, in *Wise Blood* the trope of Surrealism no longer works. The Georgia surreal instead appears as a eulogy for the potential of the grotesque, the Gothic, or the shocking—in short, the Surreal—as a form of critique. *Wise Blood* demonstrates how utilizations of the Surreal in the post-war era no longer serve to disrupt the commodified surfaces of post-war life and bring us, or its characters, into contact with the anagogical, whether in the form of the eschatological for O'Connor or the form of the unconscious for the European Surrealists. Rather, in *Wise Blood*, the Georgia surreal—and especially its evocations of the mad and the grotesque that Segrest wants to move "to the foreground of southern literary terrain" (114)—has been foreclosed before the novel even opens. In part, this is a result of the processes of modernization absorbing and neutralizing the madmen and freaks that compose O'Connor's eschatological project. But in part, it is also a result of the ways that the shocking and the surreal in O'Connor have become intimately connected with a specifically classed and racialized struggle for privatization, security, and property ownership.

The shocks and grotesqueries of *Wise Blood* serve not to disrupt what Benjamin calls the "sclerotic liberal-moral-humanistic ideal of freedom" (215), but rather to bring the post-war subject deeper into the orbit of the bureaucratic state. As *Wise Blood* surrenders society, and indeed all social and public space, to the power of the commodity and mass culture and shifts its focus to the individual soul of Motes, its Surrealist impulses are stripped of their social or collective vision. O'Connor's retributive attack on modernizing Southern society serves to withdraw the subject from society and bring him or her into isolation. In its process of desocialization and individuation, Surrealism here functions as an ideological preparation for the reformation and

privatization of post-war Southern society. By the end of *Wise Blood*, the logic of shock has been transformed into an ambivalent and eerie replication of the processes of the destructive creation of the emergent neoliberal subject.

Chapter 4.

Shock Therapy: *Atlas Shrugged* and the Incomplete American Revolution

> *The striving of the great realists to remain true to the realities of life has for its inevitable result that when they portray life under capitalism and particularly life in the great cities, they must turn into poetry all the dark uncanniness, all the horrible inhumanity of it.*
>
> > *– Gyorgi Lukács*

> *Phenomena which cannot otherwise be accounted for are commonly attributed to nervousness;—but to what is nervousness attributable? The world may rest on Atlas, but on what does Atlas rest?*
>
> > *– James Manby Gully*

Eddie Willers, the assistant to *Atlas Shrugged*'s protagonist Dagny Taggart, strolls through New York City at night and makes three seemingly disconnected observations. First, that the skyscrapers look "like an old painting in oil" (12); second, that he hates the new electronic calendar, which "the mayor of New York had erected last year" (12); and third, that the plenitude of commodities in the store windows on Fifth Avenue comfort him, as "he liked to see […] objects made by men, to be used by men" (12). These full windows, however, also arouse a feeling of the uncanny in him, triggering an uncomfortable childhood memory of an oak tree struck by lightning. Looking around at his city, he recalls the childhood "shock [that] came when [he] stood very quietly, looking into the black hole of the trunk" (13). What is this shock and why does his flâneur-like walk through the streets of New York City trigger

this memory? Furthermore, why is this intrusion—a memory of nature's awesome and destructive power—into the urban landscape of New York's department stores and skyscrapers so deeply troubling for Willers? Why is this single "shock" able to disturb his otherwise "sunlight" filled memories of childhood (13) and his love of New York? Willers's memory of staring at the oak tree's hollowed-out trunk forces him to confront the limits of human power in the face of nature's destructive potential. This shock unsettles Willers's already tenuous belief in the solidity, stability, and structure of human creation and in the ability of the human subject to exert mastery and control over the world; most notably, it undermines his faith in the post-war US city and the economic system underpinning it.

The blasted oak tree of Willers's childhood bears an unmistakable resemblance to the oak tree in Mary Shelley's classic novel of modernity, *Frankenstein*, whose subtitle is *The Modern Prometheus*. Ignored in *Atlas Shrugged* criticism, Rand's gesture towards *Frankenstein* is crucial to properly situating the novel within the genealogy of modernist novels about man's struggle to master nature through technology. At the beginning of *Frankenstein*, Doctor Frankenstein recalls his own experience when, as a child, he witnessed a storm that reduced "an old and beautiful oak" to a "blasted stump" (57). He explains, "we found the tree shattered in a singular manner. It was not splintered by the shock, but entirely reduced to thin ribands of wood. I never beheld anything so utterly destroyed" (57). When he asks his uncle, in awe, what force had just reduced a magnificent tree to ribands, his uncle responds, "Electricity!" (57). This story of creative destruction marks the "primal scene" of Doctor Frankenstein's obsession with technology. However, like Marx's sorcerer, who "is no longer able to control the powers […] he has called up" (*Communist*

226)[1], this myth also foreshadows Frankenstein's downfall. While both of these novels focus on the particular relationships between nature, man, and his technological creations, *Atlas Shrugged* is no *Frankenstein*. Whereas *Frankenstein* projects the horrific consequences of man's attempt to master nature, *Atlas Shrugged* celebrates and aims to complete this mastery by displacing the Promethean shocks that haunt Willers from the shoulders of modernity onto those of the bureaucratic state. Rand tries to resolve the problems of post-war capitalism by rewriting modernity's metaphor from Prometheus to Atlas: from the instability of fire to the strong and stable man who can carry the world, from a Romanticist reaction against modernity to a romantic attachment to it.

Atlas Shrugged attempts to undo these shock-based modernist narratives of capitalism by structuring the novel, and implicitly capitalism itself, according to Aristotle's three laws of thought: non-contradiction (nothing can both exist and not exist), either-or (something either exists or does not exist), and A is A (everything is the same as itself). *Atlas Shrugged* offers an allegory of the journey of Dagny and US society from a degraded New Deal liberalism to an exalted laissez-faire utopianism that aligns with the transition from a world full of contradiction and inconsistencies into a world of rational order and mastery. When the novel begins, Dagny is trying to save her family's railway, Taggart Transcontinental, from two threats: the "looters" and an elusive "destroyer." The "looters" refer to the entire economic, cultural, and bureaucratic apparatus

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[1] This passage in Marx alludes to the sorcerer in Goethe's "The Sorcerer's Apprentice," a similarly Frankensteinian fable where a lazy apprentice who does not wish to sweep, casts a spell on a broom to sweep for him, which spins out of control.

that is in charge of the US. A thinly veiled satire of the Truman administration[2] and his programs of post-war recovery ranging from the domestic "Fair Deal" plan to the international Marshall plan, the looters in the novel are attempting to destroy capitalism and the free market through a series of anti-monopoly bills that centralize and collectivize control over industry, while placing limits and quotas on consumption. The "destroyer" refers to an elusive figure who is disappearing the most innovative and competent industrialists, artists, and thinkers in the US and allowing US industry to fall into the hands of the looter states both in the US and internationally who are systematically destroying capitalism. As the novel develops, Dagny discovers that the "destroyer" is actually an engineer named John Galt who is leading a strike among these capitalist elite, whom the novel terms the "men of the mind," in an attempt to save capitalism. The novel follows Dagny as she realizes that the "destroyer" is actually the "redeemer" and that she must join the men of the mind and give up her past attachments to her company and her beloved city of New York in order to create a new capitalist, industrial utopia, and to transform herself into one of the "men of the mind."

Dagny's development acts as an allegory on three levels, symbolizing the development of a new capitalist system, a new capitalist subject, and a new capitalist genre, all of which are stripped of their shocks and contradictions. Politically, the novel attempts to "complete the Revolution—that is, to complete the unfinished work of 1776" (193), as David Mayers argues, by

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[2]   Rand, for instance, calls Mr. Thompson, who is based on Truman, the "Head of State" instead of the President because, as she explain in her journal, she wished to "avoid the honorable connotations attached to such a title as 'President of the United States' by another era and a different principle of government" (453-4)

turning the shocks of capitalism into a symptom of, and response to, the state's interventions into the market, a response that ultimately is working towards the creation of a strong and stable capitalist utopia.[3] Psychologically, the novel constructs a subject who is free of the bureaucratic state's contradictions and shocks and takes on the non-contradictory character of Rand's laissez-faire market utopia. Narratively, the novel participates in Rand's creation of a new literary genre, 'romanticism,'[4] which challenges what she sees as the contradictory and conformist genre of naturalism, and which, she argues, brings the "freedom" of capitalism together with "Aristotelianism, which liberated man by validating the power of his mind" (103), effectively creating a new version of the epic. In short, *Atlas Shrugged* "solves" the crises of the post-war era through a series of displacements. All of the shocks and contradictions of capitalism become a symptom of the bad policies of an irrational and illogical state that intervenes in capitalism, of the subject who conforms to and embodies the looter-state, and of the literary genres that valorize and naturalize this looter-state and subject.

As with *Wise Blood*, *Atlas Shrugged* attempts to isolate and deploy one part of the post-war conjuncture against the other in an attempt to resignify and master the historical shocks of the period. While *Wise Blood* uses the emergent

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[3]   In this sense, Rand's form of US exceptionalism bears out the myth of primitive accumulation—that is, the erasure of the founding violence of capitalism, which Karl Marx locates at the centre of the project of colonial and market expansion, which I discuss on page 52.

[4]   For the rest of this chapter, I use capitals to distinguish "Romanticism" as the nineteenth-century aesthetic response to capitalism that includes writers like Shelley, Keats, and Wordsworth, from "romanticism," the literary aesthetic that Rand invents. Rand is clear that her literary definition is hers alone and "not a generally known or accepted one" (*The Romantic Manifesto* 102–3).

post-war security state as a weapon against the market where *Atlas Shrugged* uses the market as a weapon against the state, their operations are the same. Moreover, both novels create compensatory fantasies for the disenfranchised alienated white middle and working class by creating enclaved spaces. Where *Wise Blood* ultimately upholds the South, and the regional police force as the force of containment and protection for this embattled class, *Atlas Shrugged* creates an enclave in the Midwest mountains, which the Men of the Mind use to turn the entire US into a protected enclave of market capitalism, fusing together the fantasy of a laissez-faire market with a protectionist nationalism.

It is here, in this attempt to suture together the revolutionary energy of modernity and its innovations and technological developments with the fantasy of protectionism and stability, that we see the contradictions underpinning *Atlas Shrugged*'s project. On the one hand, the novel embraces the tumultuous energies of capitalism by transforming its shocks and crises from a necessary ill of the market that must be managed by the state into the rational tools and procedures of the market and laissez-faire capitalism for getting rid of the state. In *Atlas Shrugged,* shock becomes a force of reason that is ridding the world of the vestiges of the social welfare state and clearing the ground for revolution, largely through a series of failed or self-destructive looter technologies and inconceivably brilliant technologies introduced by Galt and the men of the mind. But, while the novel in part embraces this revolutionary energy, it also offers a profoundly reactionary and nostalgic retreat away from the flows of the market into a protectionist and agrarian state. The men of the mind's systematic destruction of the ships transporting wealth from the US to the "People's State's of Europe" (535) through the "Bureau of Global Relief" (464) serves to staunch the globalization of capitalism while Willers's opening

anxieties about the changes he sees to New York City reflect a fear of the expansion of urban space, both of which were signal events of the state's attempt to expand and resolve the problems of capitalism. *Atlas Shrugged* attempts to displace the crises that were constitutive of capitalism's process of valorization onto the state. For instance, where Giovanni Arrighi argues that the global post-war economic crisis was a result of the "fundamental asymmetry between the cohesiveness and wealth of the US domestic market and the fragmentation and poverty of foreign markets" (295), which necessitated the US to stabilize and expand the global market place (something the looter-state attempts to do in the novel), *Atlas Shrugged* narrows and simplifies the problem to an overreaching bureaucratic state. It is this displacement that allows Rand to construct a narrative solution based on a long tradition of American Exceptionalism. This solution is enacted through a retreat into a nostalgic fantasy of return to the nationalist and exceptionalist fantasy of the American frontier.[5]

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[5] In this sense, Rand belongs to a long line of American exceptionalists who have attempted to construct an originary, ideal American empire that was subsequently eroded through state policies that abandoned its Revolutionary impulse. Contemporary US scholarship has articulated and critiqued these American fantasies of exceptionalism in psychoanalytic terms as being constructed upon a series of projections and displacements. Amy Kaplan, for example, argues that the opening gesture of American studies was Perry Miller's displacement of the US's imperial histories onto Africa (1). Similarly, Houston Baker and Dana Nelson argue that the unity of the US has always been "constructed through the abjected regional Other, 'The South'" (236). The most extended argument along this line is Jennifer Rae Greeson's *Our South*, which argues that the creation of the South allowed the first U.S. authors to "transmute American coloniality into an externalized place, rather than an internalized inheritance" (62). In other words, the South allowed the US to displace both the violences and the circular temporalities of empire (temporalities, which as Thomas Cole's painting "Course of Empire" suggests, always end in ruin) onto the South while creating a new temporality of eternal empire.

Given its influence in both the post-Reagan neoliberal regime and the emerging post-war conservative right in the 1950s, *Atlas Shrugged* provides us a glimpse into the underlying contradictions and fantasies that underpinned 1950s conservative culture and which would blossom into neoliberalism. To offer just a few concrete examples: the former Chairman of the Federal Reserve, Alan Greenspan, contributed an essay to Rand's 1966 book *Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal*; the Supreme Court judge Clarence Thomas hosts a yearly watching of *The Fountainhead*; the recently failed vice presidential candidate Paul Ryan credited Ayn Rand with inspiring him to get involved in public service; and the Tea Party is built on a Randian nostalgia for a largely invented fantasy of the laissez-faire principles of the American Revolution. Rand's legacy within our persisting Reaganite moment emphasizes the lineage between the emergence of grassroots conservative movements of the 1950s and the rise of neoliberalism, which historians such as Kevin Kruse, Matthew Lassiter, Lisa McGirr, and Thomas Sugrue have all pointed to in various local contexts.[6] As Andrew Diamond puts it, the "'Reagan Revolution' […] was hardly a revolution at all, but rather the culmination of a grassroots conservative ascendancy that originated as far back as the 1940s [… which] developed, to a great extent, out of the politics of housing and neighborhood" (924). Specifically, these critics point to the connection of white flight, the privatization of the suburbs, and the hollowing out and defunding of the urban core with the laissez-faire processes that would underwrite this Reaganite revolution. Despite the important and wide-ranging work done by historians

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[6] See, for instance, Kevin Kruse's *White Flight: Atlanta And the Making of Modern Conservatism*, Matthew Lassiter's *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South*, Lisa McGirr's *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right,* and Thomas Sugrue's *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit.*

and urban theorists, literary scholarship has not been as adept at connecting the cultural conservatism of 1950s novels, and especially the rise of suburban novels, to the neoliberal turn of the 1980s and 90s. Rand's role in this transition, and her current prominence, suggests that we ought to take seriously the political and ideological stakes of her novels.[7]

Not only does *Atlas Shrugged* deal directly with the questions of urban decay, white flight, the ascendency of property ownership as identity, and the role of the post-war state in the construction and transformations of urban and suburban space, it also tackles the transformation of the subject (or at least fantasies of the subject's transformation) within this conservative political revolution. In Rand's profoundly peculiar embrace of shock in the service of rationality and stability, we get a glimpse into the contradictions that underwrite Rand's literary and political project: a simultaneous push towards unleashing the revolutionary potential of modernity's tempestuous energies and a nostalgic attempt to return to a pre-industrial fantasy of agrarian order, stability, and security. This contradictory impulse highlights the profoundly contradictory nature of the ideology underwriting our current neoliberal moment. *Atlas Shrugged* provides us with a necessary touchstone to understand the relationship between the actual grassroots conservative struggles being waged over local

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[7] Aside from a few notable studies of her work, such as Andrew Hoberek's path-breaking chapter on *Atlas Shrugged* in *Twilight of the Middle Class* and Slavoj Žižek's Lacanian reading of *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged* in his article "The Actuality of Ayn Rand," most of the work on Rand's novels has been either exegetical, as in the *Journal of Ayn Rand Studies*, or cursory, such as Stacey Olster's "Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed, Something (Red, White, and) Blue: Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged* and Objectivist Ideology," Robert Hunt's "Science Fiction for the Age of Inflation: Reading *Atlas Shrugged* in the 1980s," and more recently Michael Szalay's chapter on "The Politics of Textual Integrity," in his book *New Deal Modernism.*

issues of integration, housing, and consumer rights, and the national, revolutionary fantasies that underpinned them, fantasies that today appear as common sense.

Unnatural Realisms and Prosthetic Gods

In its attempt to offer a new narrative of capitalism, *Atlas Shrugged* rejects the modernist, and especially naturalist genres, which Donald Pizer suggests, take up the stories and perspectives of the "lower middle class or the lower class" (10) and represent their lives as being "conditioned and controlled by environment, heredity, instinct, or chance" (11). To challenge such modernisms, Rand creates a new literary genre that she terms 'romanticism.' In her aesthetic opus, *The Romantic Manifesto*, Rand castigates naturalism for representing the schisms between individual desire and the forces of history; for denying men volition over the forces of history; and for recording the processes of industrialization and urbanization from the point of view of the losers: of those who have to work in the factories, whose towns are swallowed up by railway lines and expanding urban centres, and who are seduced and destroyed by the bright lights and promises of fame and success. In contrast, Rand's new genre, romanticism, is able to "recognize the existence of man's volition" (99), largely because it records these processes through the eyes of the victors: the robber barons, the factory owners, and the self-made men. Drawing equally on "Aristotelianism, which liberated man by validating the power of his mind—and capitalism, which gave man's mind the freedom to translate ideas into practice" (103), romanticism believes in man's mastery over

history and his own mind, and creates a framework in which the reader is able to identify with this position of mastery.

In Rand's novels, the question of man's volition over the entropy of history is interconnected with the relationship between the subject and technology. Rand's relationship to the work of her *ur* naturalist, the Russian novelist, Leo Tolstoy, is emblematic here. The novels of Tolstoy, and specifically *Anna Karenina*, form a foil both for Rand's aesthetic theory and her novels. Not only is *Atlas Shrugged* structured as a response to *Anna Karenina*, but in *The Romantic Manifesto* Rand argues that Tolstoy represents a distillation of the "naturalist" belief that "man has no volition, but society, somehow, has" (116). She further condemns *Anna Karenina* as "*the most evil book in serious literature*, [which] attacked man's desire for happiness and advocated its sacrifice to *conformity*" (116, emphasis added). A brief glossing of *Anna Karenina* is useful here to explicate Rand's critique and transformation of Tolstoy's novel. *Anna Karenina* is a novel about, and haunted by, modernity's transformation of Russian life and character. Specifically, Anna Arkadyevna Karenina's personal dilemma between her husband and her lover brings into relief the suffocating inevitability of industrial modernity. Anna's attempt to escape the bureaucratic modernity represented by her husband, Alexei Alexandrovich Karenin, leads her straight into the arms of the tempestuous and ultimately fatal modernity represented by her lover, Alexei Kirilovich Vronsky, whom Anna notably meets on a train. The train, which is both associated with Vronsky, and which ultimately takes Anna's life, is metonymic of the entire nexus of social forces tied up with the modernization of Russia: the shift from the country to the city, the erosion of Russian feudalism, the speeding up and fracturing of time, and the penetration and fragmentation of the body and psyche. While the novel

condemns Anna for abandoning her family for Vronsky, it ultimately emphasizes Anna's lack of agency. Anna does not get to choose between the Promethean violence of modernity and the stability of the agrarian world. Instead, her "choices" are simply the two sides of modernity: either the dehumanizing rationalization of modernity, as represented by Karenin who is systematically transforming into what Gyorgi Lukács calls a "bureaucratic machine" (188), or a Romanticist revolt through Vronsky, which leads to social isolation, atomization, and death. As Tolstoy's twinning of their first names suggests, both choices are kinds of death by shock: the choice is between a symbolic death that results from fully becoming the "dead" and "inorganic" matter of Freud's shield (27) or the death that results from the traumas of industrialization fully penetrating the body's shield.

For Rand, Tolstoy's solution of conformity and social integration, in other words the abandonment of individual volition, represents the bureaucratic impulse of naturalism that Rand abhors. The narrative solution of conformity is symbolized in *Anna Karenina* in a secondary plot that follows the character, Constantine Dmitrich Levin. Levin is a young and impassioned friend of Anna's brother who moves from fighting against modernity and modern society by, as Lukács puts it, attempting to "restore a Homeric relationship between man and nature, between man and the objects now turned into commodities" (157), to accepting the forces of modernization and modern society and making a good, if not passionate, marriage within his own class. Levin's marriage, and the subordination of his passions to social norms, forms a buffer between him and modernization and stands in stark contrast to Anna whose commitment to personal passion places her at the mercy of modernity and ultimately sucks her under the literal train of progress.

For *Atlas Shrugged*, too, the train is metonymic of the forces of modernity; however, for Rand, the meaning of the train follows an entirely different logic. It is tempting to think about the "tensile strength" (647) of Galt, and the men of the mind more broadly, as part of the modernist tradition of constructing what Freud terms "prosthetic Gods," that is men who have donned their "auxiliary organs" of technology (38-9). Indeed, the closer Dagny moves towards becoming one of the men of the mind, the more mechanized she becomes. For instance, when Dagny crashes into Atlantis (the home of the men of the mind) and is taken to see a doctor, she approvingly notes: "She felt as if her body were an engine checked by an expert mechanic" (657). But *Atlas Shrugged* avoids casting technology as either a fetish of damnation or salvation. Whereas technology becomes an all-powerful and implacable force in *Anna Karenina*, in *Atlas Shrugged* technology becomes strikingly human. We see in this double movement the tension between revolution and nostalgia that underwrites *Atlas Shrugged*. On the one hand, Rand wants to break free of nostalgic attachments to older ways of life and attempts to engineer an entirely new future. But, on the other hand, the novel is continually attempting to write modernity in the codes of an older, agrarian way of life. Rand's factories cry out for protection, and that "Homeric relationship […] between man and nature, between man and the objects now turned into commodities,'" which Lukács sees Levin and Tolstoy struggling to restore (157), becomes transcoded in Rand into a struggle to restore harmony between man and technology. In one particularly extreme example, a looter manager accidentally breaks a boiler in the steel magnate, Hank Rearden's, factory: Rearden's fight to save the factory is described in human terms as he responds to "the shriek of agony […] as of a wounded body crying to hold its soul" (424) and fights "not to let her bleed to death" (426). Similarly, Rand rewrites the vertiginous and deathly affair of Anna

and Vronsky, which is enabled and ultimately destroyed by the train, into the masterful affair between Rearden and Dagny, which emerges out of a shared attempt to rescue an entire railway.[8]

Rand's humanization of technology serves to sever the relationship that Freud drew between machines of industrial technology and what Hal Foster calls the "modernist fiction" of the "'protective shield,' the exterior layer that an organism extrudes as protection against excessive stimulus" (168). In *Prosthetic Gods*, Foster argues that in the "first decades of the twentieth-century, the human and the industrial machine were still seen as alien [...] The two could only conjoin ecstatically or torturously, and the machine could only be a 'magnificent' extension of the body or a 'troubled' constriction of it" (109). In both of these instances, technology formed a shield that served to isolate the human body from experience. While Rand undoubtedly fetishizes technology, and especially the technologized body, Rand saw machines not as a protection from the world, but as a tool for shaping the world, and even a model for how to engage with the world. The "protective shield" that Foster associates with technology, and which Freud develops largely in opposition to technology becomes, in Rand, disconnected from technology and linked to the bureaucracy

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[8] Rand's refiguring of the railway is crucial for understanding her transformation of shock. By the end of the nineteenth-century, both trains and the railway industry had become synonymous with the Promethean powers of industrial modernity that threatened to destroy the subject and society and which needed to be contained and controlled. In 1890, the state took the unprecedented move of intervening in business and passed the first massive antitrust act, the Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890, which in part targeted railroad magnates whose control over the arteries and veins of transportation gave them extraordinary economic power. Transforming the railway into a virtual child of Dagny and Rearden's affair positions the train as a neutral and even needy technology, which in turn serves to undermine the anti-trust ideology that aligned the state's intervention into the railway industry with the subject's need to be protected from the train and industrial modernity more broadly.

of the looter-state. Rand, in short, splits apart the theory of the death drive, placing its two parts—shock and shield—in opposition with the shield becoming the main problem of the novel and shock becoming its solution.

In her critique of this shield, Rand is not alone. As Susan Buck-Morss suggests, by the 1930s, it was not shock itself, but rather the shield that had become the central problem of industrial modernity. Drawing on Walter Benjamin's discussion of the worker's cognitive experience within the factory, Buck-Morss argues that once the modern subject became totally ensconced within the shield, the subject became entirely anaesthetized and lost the ability to perceive:[9]

> Being "cheated out of experience" has become the general state, as the synaesthetic system is marshalled to parry technological stimuli in order to protect both the body from the trauma of accident and the psyche from the trauma of perceptual shock. As a result, the system reverses its role. Its goal is to numb the organism, to deaden the senses, to repress memory: the cognitive system of synaesthetics has become, rather, one of anaesthetics. In this situation of "crisis in perception," it is no longer a question of educating the crude ear to hear music, but of giving it back hearing. It is no longer a question of training the eye to see beauty, but of restoring "perceptibility." (17)

In shifting the focus of shock from the problem of penetration and what Freud terms "traumatic neurosis" (35) to the problem of the shield itself, Buck-Morss provides us a theoretical framework with which to understand *Atlas Shrugged*'s obsession with anaesthetisa, perception, and sight.

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[9] All quotations in this passage refer to Benjamin's essay, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire."

In *Atlas Shrugged*, the construction of a shield between the self and the external world is not symptomatic of the death drive, but is the actual cause of death. When Galt takes over a television station, and delivers his famous laissez-faire manifesto, he explains that, "To remain alive [man] must act and before he can act he must know the nature and purpose of his action" (930). Throughout *Atlas Shrugged*, Rand associates the protective shield that the welfare state constructs against the market, and which ultimately blocks subjects from experiencing life, with death. Galt accuses the state and looter society of being so intent on "avoiding death" (941) that, paradoxically, they have made the price of "life […] the surrender of all the virtues required by life—and death by a process of gradual destruction is all that you and your system with achieve" (945). In short, he concludes, the looters have created a religion of the "ideal zero, which is death" (945). Galt's speech effectively aligns the looter-state and its ideal zero with the death drive itself, with that incessant urge to "lead organic life back into the inanimate state" (Freud 40). In doing so, Rand transforms the death drive from a biological fact into an ideology and symptom of the looter-state.

Notably in this regard, Galt's condemnation of the state's death drive aligns with characterizations of fascism. Commenting on the aesthetics of the prototypical fascist film, *Triumph of the Will*, Buck-Morss observes, "aesthetics allows an anaesthetization of reception, a viewing of the 'scene' with disinterested pleasure, even when that scene is the preparation through ritual of a whole society for unquestioning sacrifice and ultimately, destruction, murder and death" (38). When Galt takes over the television station to deliver his condemnation of the state's drive towards death, the first thing he does is disable the television's visual output, using it instead as a radio as "he had not

chosen to be seen" (928). At every turn, Rand distinguishes the men of the mind who use industrial technology to create life from the state that uses mass culture to prepare their subjects for death. When the "Equalization of Opportunity Bill," an anti-monopoly bill that limits the number of businesses a person can own to one, begins to take effect, the narrator bemoans how industrial producers can no longer access Rearden's metal, while at the same time, "golf clubs made of Rearden Metal were suddenly appearing on the market, as well as coffee pots, garden tools and bathroom faucets" (338). Meanwhile, as steel, coal, and railway industries dissolve, the industry of entertainment takes its place: "People wrenched their pennies out of the quicksand of their food and heat budgets, and went without meals in order to crowd into movie theaters" (463). Time and again, the looters's descent into mass culture prefigures their often literal deaths. In part, this association between Trumanism and Nazi Germany simply reflects Rand's very explicit alignment of all state interventions with fascism, but it also provides us an early glimpse into the post-war reversal whereby the state is no longer understood as the necessary mediator between the market and the subject, but the problem that requires mediation.

Where anaesthesia in Rand becomes a force of death, shock becomes a force of life, the one force that is able to disrupt the numbing malaise caused by the state and mass culture. When Rearden, discovers that the Legislature has passed the "Equalization of Opportunity Bill," the novel describes him as looking up "as if a curtain of anaesthesia had broken" (201). This "sudden stab" (201) represents a crucial moment when Rearden is "jolted" (203) out of complacency and begins to act against the state. Similarly, when Dagny's plane veers off course and crashes into Atlantis, the "shock [that] threw her back, her

hands off the wheel, and over her eyes" (22) is described not as blindness, but rather as a necessary recalibration and restoration of sight, which signals her arrival into the laissez-faire paradise of Atlantis. Finally, when Dagny finds Galt's infamous and long-lost motor, she explains: "she could not keep up with all the things which a sudden blast had opened to her vision" (270). Whereas in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, a plane crash is precisely the kind of mechanical "accident" (12) that would create in a subject "traumatic neurosis" (12) around which a protective shield would develop, in *Atlas Shrugged* industrial accidents break through the callous that is created by the bureaucracy of the state and mass culture. That is, in *Atlas Shrugged*, shock becomes the force that is able to drive the subject and society through this "ideal zero" (945), or death drive, so that they can emerge as fully formed subjects equal to this new laissez-faire narrative.

Steeling Consciousness

Dagny emblematizes the figure that must pass through this "ideal zero" or "zero point" as Slavoj Žižek puts it.[10] This is no small task: Dagny must give up all of her attachments to the past and to looter society if she is to both save herself and society. Indeed, the entire novel is organized around a series of well-placed shocks that drive her through this zero point or death drive, and

[10]   In "The Actuality of Ayn Rand," Žižek transcodes this "ideal zero" or "zero point" into Lacanian terms as "subjective destitution" (222), the point the subject must pass through to become wholly actualized. But, such a transcoding removes our ability to situate Rand in her properly modernist context amidst a diverse range of other novelists and writers who, as we have seen throughout this dissertation, were engaged in the problem of shock. By keeping our language within the terms of Freud's death drive, we are better able to historicize and understand the critiques that Rand is levelling at the psychological and economic tenets of post-war liberalism and modernism.

bring her out the other side. The novel continually connects Dagny's attempts to manage the catastrophes that befall Taggart Transcontinental to the Freudian drive to "*restore an earlier state of things*" (30, emphasis in original). Her attachment to her family's railway is linked to her desire to return to childhood, and her desire to restore the railway to its eighteenth-century grandeur. It is only through a series of seemingly accidental shocks—many of which are ultimately coordinated by the men of the mind—that her drive to "restore" is abandoned, and it is shock that brings Dagny to the death drive and ultimately beyond it. The stakes of Dagny's psychological journey, however, are profoundly social. Žižek, for instance, contends that the destroyer's goal is not to destroy society as such, but rather "to break the chain that forces the [men of the mind] to work for [the looters because once] this chain is broken, the [looters's] power will dissolve by itself" (222). In other words, Dagny's ability to move through the death drive both causes, and is metonymic of, society's transformation from looter to laissez-faire.

The relationship between the subject and society's ability to pass through the death drive is highlighted by the psychological comparison Rand draws between the looters and the men of the mind. The looters's destructive policies are embodied in their own psychological neurosis, all of which are directly connected to death. All of the looters are either killed by their own policies or driven into various states of nervous collapse. For instance, Robert Stadler, the head scientist of the looters, is killed by his own weapon, Project X; both Orren Boyle, the head of the steel company of the looters, and James Taggart, the president of Taggart Transcontinental, suffer mental breakdowns because of their internal contradictions and failures; and James's wife, Cheryl, is so haunted by the contradictions of James's world that she throws herself into the

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harbour, committing suicide "with full consciousness of acting in self-preservation" (836). In contrast, the laissez-faire ideas of the men of the mind are embodied in Galt, the exemplary non-hysterical subject who has moved beyond the death drive. Shortly after Galt gives his speech, the looters capture him and subject him to a shock therapy machine, called the Ferris Persuader, in a desperate attempt to convince Galt to change sides from the men of the mind to the looters. The machine, of course, fails to work on him. What interests me here is the language Rand uses to explain this failure. The machine is unable to work on Galt because he neither tries to "fight" the machine nor to "negate" it (1050), but rather defeats the machine by "surrendering" to it (1050). In Freudian terms, "negation" is the mechanism through which "the content of a repressed image or idea can make its way into consciousness" (667). Negation, in other words, is a condition of the divided mind and as such, it is also the condition of Dagny's mind because she maintains a hysterical attachment to the society she knows must be destroyed. The Ferris Persuader fails to defeat Galt precisely because, unlike Dagny, he has no need to negate the machine. Dagny remains vulnerable because the looters can offer her what she wants, namely the ability to be productive as the Vice President of a railway line. Galt has already moved through his attachments to either the past or society and no longer requires others to fulfill his drives; he has become a whole unto himself. Galt's chief characteristic is, in the words of Dagny, his "single whole[ness]" (650). Galt is the model of Rand's proposition that A is A, that there is no contradiction: he has no internal contradictions, no competing drives or repressed desires that can be aroused and exploited by an external shock. The Ferris Persuader cannot work on Galt because the shocks, like Galt, are rational forces that only work on those who have not yet passed through this zero point.

The shocks that the looter-state attempts to manage through their technological shields are refigured as a force of rationality and progress. This is part of the novel's larger attempt to change conceptions of shock from an extra-rational event that impinges on, or disrupts, the market (as in corporatist liberal models) to a self-regulating mechanism of the market that serves to wipe out older attachments to the collective good and bring into being laissez-faire capitalism, which as Michel Foucault argues, is built on a systematic refusal to consider collective good as a factor.[11] Indeed, in *Atlas Shrugged*, it is shock that ultimately leads US society through its own historical apocalyptic zero point, which is defined in the novel as its hysterical attachment is to some kind of notion of collective good or social planning. This occurs most notably in the explosion of Project X, a thinly-veiled version of the atomic bomb. Project X is a sound-weapon created by the head scientist of the looters, Robert Stadler, which explodes when one of the scientists accidentally pulls the lever (1040). The explosion is described as destroying everything "within the circle of a radius of a hundred miles, enclosing parts of four states [...] Telegraph poles fell like matchsticks, farmhouses collapsed into chips, city buildings went down as if slashed and minced by a single second's blow" (1041). I'd like to take the short leap from Rand's vision of telegraph poles falling "like matchsticks" to Walter Benjamin's famous striking of the match in his 1939 essay on Baudelaire, an essay that extends Freud's theory of shock to the experience of daily life in the modern metropolis. Benjamin argues that the striking of the match symbolizes the many nineteenth-century inventions whereby "a single

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[11]   In *Birth of Biopolitics,* Foucault argues that for laissez-faire capitalism, "The collective good must not be an objective. It must not be an objective because it cannot be calculated, at least, not within an economic strategy" (279).

abrupt movement of the hand triggers a process of many steps" (328). For Benjamin, this process is central to understanding the almost supernatural power man now possesses in modernity and, as with Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Marx's sorcerer, the uncontrollable nature of the creations this power conjures. The eruption of Project X is also caused by a single "abrupt movement of the hand" (328), in this case, the looter's accidental "yank[ing of] a lever of the xylophone" (1041). Yet, significantly, only the looters experience disaster as an uncontrollable and traumatic disaster akin to Freud's railway disasters or World War I. From the perspective of the men of the mind, Project X is a rational outcome of the looter's laws, a final rational shock that pushes society past its zero point, and clears the ground for the emergence of the laissez-faire system.

Masterful Urbanisms

In its seeming science fiction apocalypticism, Rand actually provides us with one of the clearest expressions of the fantasies of the post-war white, disenfranchised working and middle class. That is to say, the fantasy of the men of the mind who are able to sever their connection with the looters and thus trigger the looters's self-destruction is simply an allegory for the fantasy of white flight and return. To see how this fantasy plays out, however, we must transpose Rand's narrative from the mythical realm of Project X to the novel's primary geographical locus: New York City. In spite of the myriad other locations that *Atlas Shrugged* covers, the heart of the novel, and of the struggle between the looters and the men of the mind, is the battle over New York. *Atlas Shrugged* begins with Eddie's anxious stroll around a decaying New York, tracks New York's increasing descent into decay and destruction, and concludes with the men of the mind's triumphant return to a New York that

has been bombed out and empty, but is now theirs. In short, *Atlas Shrugged* traces New York's shift from the hands of the New Deal liberal looters into the hands of the laissez-faire men of the mind. The importance of New York is not incidental. As Rand scholar, Gerald Houseman, suggests, cities have special importance to Rand as they represent "the triumph of creative people over nature" (162).

Written during a period of expanding slums and social unrest in US urban centres, *Atlas Shrugged* articulates this New York of race riots, slumification, and labour unrest as part of the decay into wild, untrammelled nature, a decay that requires the mastery of the men of the mind. *Atlas Shrugged* must thus be read in dialogue with the dramatic transformations of urban policy and national space that were carried out through the numerous post-war infrastructure projects, including the 1956 construction of the national interstate highway system, and suburban housing programs such as the National Housing Act of 1949 and the expansion of the Veterans Affairs loan guaranty program. These initiatives paved the way, so to speak, for the white flight from impoverished urban centres to prosperous suburban communities.[12] As Marshall Berman argues, these federal policies "conceived of cities […] as junkyards of substandard housing and decaying neighborhoods from which Americans should be given every chance to escape" (307). The result of these laws and policies was that "millions of people and jobs, and billions of dollars in investment capital [were drawn] out of America's cities and plunged […] into

[12] As Raymond A. Mohl points out, freeway construction was used all across the United
      States "to destroy low-income and especially black neighborhoods in an effort to reshape
      the physical and racial landscapes of the postwar American city" from the 1950s through
      the 1970s (1).

chronic crisis and chaos" (307–8). This "chaos" finds its way into *Atlas Shrugged*. Right before the looters capture Galt, Dagny goes to visit his home in New York for the first time. Galt's house, we learn, is in the middle of a slum. As Dagny approaches, the novel comments, "She looked at the shape of the slums, at the crumbling plaster, the peeling paint, the fading signboards of failing shops with unwanted goods in unwashed windows, the sagging steps unsafe to climb, the clotheslines of garments unfit to wear" (1000). This state of decay makes Dagny cry out "But this is New York City!" (1001). Dagny's cry emblematizes the attachment that she must overcome. Just as Dagny must overcome her own attachments to become a true subject, so too the novel argues, Dagny and the men of the mind must abandon her beloved New York and allow it to decay in order for New York to be reborn as a great metropolis.

This urban focus of *Atlas Shrugged* is difficult to see. Rather than portraying the city in the recognizably urban terms we encounter in both Ellison or O'Connor, Rand portrays the struggle over New York as a projection and repetition of the eighteenth-century American revolution and specifically, as Andrew Hoberek has suggested, the culture of "frontier individualism" (36). In this schema, Rand refigures the urban space of New York, the urban stronghold of the looters, as the dangerous and uncivilized *terra nullius* of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century frontier and the men of the mind as the civilizing force of Westward expansion. But, what Hoberek misses, is the specifically racialized implications of Rand's return to the frontier. This omission reflects the notable absence of race within the novel. There is only one explicitly racialized figure in all of *Atlas Shrugged*: Ellis Wyatt's servant, "an elderly Indian [Native American] with a stony face and a courteous

manner" (233).[13] Given the complete absence of African Americans in the novel, and particularly in New York City, this single, proud Indian servant highlights the racialized meaning of the novel's recoding of post-war urban struggles into the fantasy of the frontier.

This substitution is particularly relevant given the friction between the civil rights movement and the racialized fears of a rising white-collar middle class, which underpinned this period. In *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight*, Eric Avila offers a sketch of the specifically racialized nature of the post-war city's changing landscape. He explains that as the

> civil rights movement gathered steam and the challenge to racial segregation inserted African Americans and other nonwhite social groups into the public spaces of industrial urbanism, a *new* 'new mass culture' took shape, one that was [… experienced by suburbanizing Americans as a] heterosocial, unpredictable, and often dangerous. (6)

Avila's focus here on the racialized nature of post-war mass culture brings into sharp relief Rand's complete effacement of race in her discussions of both mass culture and slumification within New York City. Read alongside Avila,

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[13]   This turn towards the figure of the "Indian" and the frontier is not unique to Rand, and becomes a notable feature of satiric works in the 1960s. Specifically, the figure of the Native American comes to stand in for a certain image of the white man who is oppressed by, but separated from the state. For instance, in *One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest* (1962), Ken Kesey's first-person narrator is a mute "half-Indian" (3) named Chief Bromden who is enlisted in the aid of, and saved by, the model of embattled white masculinity, Randle Patrick McMurphy. As well, in Joseph Heller's *Catch 22*, we have the "handsome swarthy Indian," Chief White Halfoat (44), an alcoholic and illiterate intelligence officer, who has the unfortunate luck to find oil wherever he goes, and, as a result, is perpetually followed and displaced by the state. In both of these instances, Native Americans align with white men and come to stand in opposition to the nanny state, which is recoded as the realm of women and African Americans.

Atlas Shrugged's effacement serves to mask the politically charged and highly racialized nature of the struggle being waged against mass culture. It also, usefully, anticipates the shift from the pre-Jim Crow era where struggles over urban space were explicitly framed in racial terms to the post-Jim Crow era where the language of race was replaced by the language of property and individual rights. In stark contrast to the slum that Rand's New York has become, the calm, bucolic order of Atlantis begins to resemble not so much a frontier town, as Hoberek suggests, as the "homogene[ous], contain[ed], and predictabl[e]" (Avila 6) post-war suburbs that were popping up everywhere while *Atlas Shrugged* was being drafted.

In fact, one of the notable attributes of the men of the mind is their complete withdrawal of resources from public space. Galt, we learn, has already extracted his resources from the city, and moved them to Atlantis. When Dagny sees "the most efficiently modern laboratory she had ever seen" (1005) in Galt's apartment, she asks how he could have paid for such a thing on the salary of "an unskilled labour" (1005)—Galt, we have just learned, has been working at Taggart Transcontinental as a track labourer. Galt explains that he has been building his laboratory (which is in New York, but only serves Atlantis and literally self-destructs as soon as the looters approach it) based on royalties for his work as an engineer in Atlantis, but that he had to work as a track labourer in order to pay his rent and buy food because "no money earned in [Atlantis] is ever to be spent outside" (1005). This segregation of funds— working class money in the city and white-collar money in the utopic small town—is not just a deluded fantasy, but a quite literal (if bizarre) enactment of the state policies that created a system of economic and racial segregation between the urban and the suburban: subsidizing the expansion of home

ownership and white-collar industry into the suburbs while concentrating poverty in urban centers through public housing projects like that of Minorou Yamasaki's Pruitt-Igoe in St. Louis or Robert Moses's Stuyvesant Town in New York.

Rand's revision of the city within the terms of frontier culture anticipates the urban discourses that would become dominant in the eighties. The urban geographer Neil Smith has argued that the process of gentrification occurs alongside a dominant shift in understandings of the urban from a "wilderness" to a "frontier" (16). This frontier, Smith contends, is:

> associated with the forging of the "national spirit" [… and] presents gentrification as the leading edge of an urban renaissance; in the most extreme scenario, the new urban pioneers were expected to do for the flagging national spirit what the old ones did: to lead the nation into a new world where the problems of the old world are left behind. (17)

Rand's strategy of evacuation, destruction, and reclamation mimics the processes of white flight and gentrification that were created by the urban and

suburban policies and practices of the 1950s.[14] Indeed, part of what makes *Atlas Shrugged* such an important novel to our current moment is that it does not just recode the process of white flight in its own moment, but also anticipates what Byron Lutz terms "reverse white flight" (9), the process of gentrification that would occur in the following decades. While the men of the mind take shelter outside of New York City and while Rand must fully sever her connection to New York City, "the city she loved" (1001), it is only a temporary retreat. She must give up her city, but only, the novel makes clear, so that the looters can destroy the infrastructure of New Deal liberalism and create a *terra nullius* on which the men of the mind can enact their laissez-faire revolution.

Atlas Shrugged concludes with the men of the mind hiding out in Atlantis while the banker Midas Mulligan sits at his desk. "He was listing the assets of his bank and working on a plan of projected investments. He was noting down the locations he was choosing: 'New York—Cleveland—Chicago . . . New York—Philadelphia . . . New York . . . New York . . . New York . . .'" (1072). Meanwhile Judge Narragansett sits in his farm drafting new laws that forbid the

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[14] The nationalism inherent in this discourse is emphasized in *Atlas Shrugged* through Rand's twinning or urban and national anxiety. In a particularly pointed jab at the Marshall Plan, Rand emphasizes that one of the primary roles of the Men of the Mind is to sabotage all attempts of the US state to circulate money outside of its borders. The copper baron, Francisco d'Antonia, creates an elaborate and fraudulent copper rush that sabotages both the Mexican government and the US looters who partner with them while the shipping magnate/pirate Ragnar Danneskjöld prevents all looters's products from ever making it across the Atlantic, seizing both the steel that Boyle tries to deliver to the "People's State of Germany" through the "Bureau of Global Relief" (464) and the shipment of coal heading to the "People's State of England" (464). Indeed, throughout the book, vessels heading to Europe to give aid, vanish at the hands of Danneskjöld who brags that he has seized "every loot –carrier that came within range of my guns, every government relief ship, subsidy ship, loan ship, gift ship" (534).

"abridging of production and trade" (1073), and finally, Galt stands at the road (presumably back to New York) and announces: "The road is clear [....] We are going back to the world" at which point he traces the sign of the dollar "over the desolate earth" (1074). Reading these final few pages, it is difficult not to be struck by the uncanny prescience of Rand's prose, all of which would be realized following the near-bankruptcy of New York in the 1970s and the structural adjustment programs of privatization, deregulation, financialization, urban renewal, and the reverse white flight that followed in its wake.[15]

When read against the historical trajectory of New York, what appears as the zero point or death drive of the subject is really the zero point of New Deal liberalism and its attendant political and legal structures, its aesthetic forms, and its political subjectivity. Dagny is purged of the vestiges of collective responsibility, the novel is purged of its sympathetic identification with the disenfranchised and dispossessed, and New York is purged of its social safety net and market controls What remains is an empty space, which the financiers, judges, and industrialists—in other words, the capitalist elite—are able to take control over. What we thus find on the other side of the death drive is nothing other than Reaganism, which Avila nicely summarizes as being marked by "patriarchy, privatization, patriotism, law and order, hard work, and self-help, modeling a new political subjectivity set against the tenets of New Deal liberalism and personifying the values incubated within the spaces wrought by suburbanization, urban renewal, and highway construction" (7).

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[15] For an excellent discussion of this period of crisis, see Kim Moody's *From Welfare State to Real Estate*.

The point here is neither to argue for Rand as soothsayer nor even as the architect of a conspiratorial neoliberal plan, but rather to illustrate the crucial disavowal that lies at both the centre of her novel and the neoliberal policy that would emerge in the coming decades. *Atlas Shrugged* clearly illuminates the sharp division between middle class conservative ideology and the actual economic processes of what would become neoliberal practice. In the most naked and clear-eyed of manners, the novel lays out the cynical ways that a small group of economic elites systematically hollowed out and destroyed urban infrastructure in order to take it over for a very select group of people—steel barons, bankers, a judge, a movie star, and a railway magnate—all of whom never in reality had to flee the cities or rely on the state to build their suburban existence. *Atlas Shrugged* maps out the peculiar conjuncture between middle class conservatives' frustrations that, as historian David Freund puts it, "government interventions were not providing considerable benefits to white people" (9) and what Harvey terms the "*political* project" of neoliberalism (*Brief History* 19, emphasis in original), which he defines as an attempt "to re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and to restore the power of economic elites" (19). *Atlas Shrugged* suggests a model for thinking through the disjunctural relationship between neoliberal economics and conservative ideology, which continues to persist and has perhaps even reached its apogee today.

Conclusion

While Dagny and her city might succeed in passing through such a zero point and becoming a model subject and a model society, the novel fails in its ability to create a new and non-contradictory narrative of capitalism. To explain

the failure of *Atlas Shrugged* to live up to the generic promise of romanticism, I want to conclude by considering romanticism within the metageneric categories of the epic and romance. David Quint, in *Epic and Empire*, gives us an elegant and concise definition of the modalities of these metageneric categories. Moving between psychological and historical analyses, Quint reads the genres of the epic and romance as conforming to Freud's theory of repetition-compulsion whereby:

> the victim of an earlier trauma may neurotically reenact his [sic] victimization over and over again. Alternately, he may replay the original traumatic situation in order to create a new version of it, a situation in which he is master, rather than victim, thereby 'undoing' the past and gaining some control over his psychic history. (51)

Extrapolating the political valences of these two modes, Quint argues that romance, which is marked by chance encounters and "random or circular wandering" (9), expresses the "losers['] experience [of history as] a contingency that they are powerless to shape to their own ends" (9).[16] In contrast, he argues that the epic's ability to "subsume its own historically contingent situation" (15) into a narrative, that is its ability to shape the contingencies of history into a teleological story, makes it the genre of empire and power. Indeed, he goes so far as to suggest that "the equation of power and the very possibility of narrative is a defining feature of the genre" (15). In her attempt to write a narrative that shapes the chaos of the post-war era into a narrative of human

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[16]   Similarly, in *The Political Unconscious*, Jameson defines the meta-genre of romance as a "wish-fulfillment or Utopian fantasy which aims at the transfiguration of the world of everyday life in such a way as to restore the conditions of some lost Eden, or to anticipate a future realm from which the old mortality and imperfections will have been effaced" (110).

mastery, Rand's romanticism bears a striking resemblance to the metagenre of the epic. For instance, Rand's rejection of Balph Eubank, a novelist and cultural icon of the looters, who proclaims that plot is a "primitive vulgarity in the novel, melody is a primitive vulgarity in music," and "logic is a primitive vulgarity in philosophy" (129) is only one of the many instances where Rand aligns looter cultural forms with chaos and aligns the power and mastery of the men of the mind with the very possibility of narration.

But, while *Atlas Shrugged*'s attempt to create an empire from the ruins of the looter-state evokes the teleological and victorious genre of the epic, the novel bears a more striking resemblance to the repetitive and fantastical genre of romance. Instead of moving through the zero point of history, as Dagny ostensibly does, the novel remains divided between its epic leanings and the traumatized psychological structure of romance. The parallel that the novel constructs between Dagny and Willers underlines this division. *Atlas Shrugged* begins with Willers's anxious stroll around a decaying New York City and with Dagny on a train trying to get back into the city. It concludes with a reversal; Dagny triumphantly returns to New York City while Willers is stranded on an abandoned railway somewhere in the Arizona desert, "sobbing at the foot of the engine, with the beam of a motionless headlight above him going off into a limitless night" (1072). While at every point in the novel, we are encouraged to identify with Dagny and not Willers, all that separates Dagny from Willers is luck and the valorization of Dagny by a higher power. As the symbol of white, middle class disenfranchisement, Willers represents the subject position that must be disavowed in order for the reader to identify with Dagny and, notably, the actual subject position of the majority of *Atlas Shrugged*'s readers.

Everything in Rand is pregnant with its contrary: her epic is filled with romance; the utopian possibility of the stable Atlantis is built on apocalyptic destruction; the technologies that promise to improve and liberate the world hold that very world hostage. Not even the volition of Rand or her genre can repress Atlas's Promethean origins and the Promethean progeny that her capitalist fantasy promises to create. *Atlas Shrugged*'s split between epic and romantic impulses expresses nothing so clearly as the novel's split identification with the disempowered, fleeing white, conservative middle class and the elite architects of neoliberal capitalism, and its failure to bridge this gap. Read within the context of this split, *Atlas Shrugged* represents neither a narcissistic nor a triumphalist view of the world, but rather the desperate attempt to transform one group's experience of historical trauma into a fantasy of stability, mastery, and control.

Chapter 5.

Naked Lunch:
The Last Snapshot of the Surrealists

Bang-utot is the disease
in which men dream themselves to death.

— Saturday Evening Post

The dominant theme or effect [of Naked Lunch]
is that of shocking the contemporary society.

— Judge Julius J. Hoffmann
June 30, 1960

with your eyes strapped down on the operating table
with your eyes with the pancreas removed
with your eyes of appendix operation
with your eyes of abortion with your eyes of ovaries removed
with your eyes of shock
with your eyes of lobotomy

— Allen Ginsberg, "Kaddish"

At first glance, *Naked Lunch* appears as the most Surrealist novel of the 1950s and early 60s. Contemporary reviewers pointed to the "shock value of its surrealistic prose" (qtd in Whiting 159-60); the renowned literary critic Leslie Fiedler accused William Burroughs of "exploding" the novel, "leav[ing] only twisted fragments of experience and the miasma of death" (170); and in a collection of essays released to celebrate the novel's 50th anniversary, the editors boasted that "the desire to shock, to rub one's face in human ordure, is the

book's strategic, perpetual motor" (xii).[1] So explosive and shocking did the novel appear that between 1962 and 1966, *Naked Lunch* lay at the centre of one of the most important obscenity trials in twentieth-century US. "Everyone," Frederick Whiting argues in "Monstrosity on Trial: The Case of *Naked Lunch*," from "US Customs, the trustees of the University of Chicago, the US Postal Service, [and] the City of Los Angeles [...] were all in agreement that what Burroughs had to say should not be said" (145).[2] The central question underlying the Boston trial, as it came to be known, was whether Burroughs's inflammatory writing was destructive and anti-social or whether its excesses could be construed as art that served a larger moral and therefore social purpose.

[1] Burroughs, like the rest of the Beats, was also an ardent admirer of the Surrealists and met them in Paris. For instance, Jean-Jacques Lebel tells the story of the Beats and the Surrealists meeting up at an international poetry fest: "Burroughs was stoned and mute as always. Corso got drunk and cut off Duchamp's tie with a pair of scissors, emulating when he thought was a typical Dadaist action. Allen, too, was drunk, he went down on his knees in front of Duchamp and kissed the bottom of his trousers" (87).

[2] This was not the first time *Naked Lunch* had been put on trial. In 1960, the University of Chicago literary magazine, *Big Table*, which included Burroughs's "Ten Scenes from *Naked Lunch*," was taken to court on obscenity charges that arose largely as a result of Burroughs's contribution. In that case, the trial judge, Julius Hoffman, found that "Ten Scenes" was not obscene. Citing the 1957 Roth decision that set the legal definition of obscenity as "material which deals with sex in a manner appealing to prurient interest" (259), Hoffman argued that as long as literature appeals to "some other interest than the prurient" (261), it is not obscene and thus concluded that Burroughs's use of drugs was not obscene because it was part of a larger strategy of "shocking contemporary society, in order perhaps to point out its flaws and weaknesses" (Big Table, Inc. v. Schroeder, 186 F. Supp. 254 [N.D. Ill. 1960]). In the infamous 1966 trial, Professor Thomas H. Jackson was asked whether he felt that there were "details and points in this book that you feel you may not be able to explain because, in effect, they have no meaning and are intended only for shock value?" The manuscript continues: "A. 'Actually, no.' / Q. 'Everything in this book has meaning then?' / A. 'As a literary man I have to assume it does, yes.'" (1966).

Whiting has persuasively argued that the question of *Naked Lunch's* obscenity is closely connected to Burroughs's purported rejection and subversion of traditional novelistic genres. Noting *Naked Lunch's* similarity to his 1952 novel *Junky* in both theme and content (its opening "episodes," as its chapters are called, read like a *précis* of *Junky*), Whiting considers the factors that led to the radically different reception of the novels and suggests that the most pertinent difference between the novels is not content, but literary form:

> The sensation that *Naked Lunch* created was due less to what it depicted than to the difficulty that the form of the novel proper made for the arbiters of what was speakable. [...] Because it lacked both a unified consciousness and the standard continuities of time and space that characterize conventional novels, there was little that could serve as a reference point, much less a center of gravity for moral concerns. (158)

He concludes that, where in *Junky* "the single voice of addiction was delegitimated by the moral universe of the genre," in *Naked Lunch*, Burroughs inhabited the subject position of both "addiction and its condemnation" (159). In short, Whiting suggests that Burroughs's rejection of conventional generic resolutions meant that the lascivious and shocking behaviours he described no longer had the clear social condemnation or moral lesson that traditional novel forms offered.

If we take *Junky* as its model, what Whiting considers to be a "conventional novel" appears to be a novel that exemplifies naturalism, the genre that, Fredric Jameson argues, "let[s] us briefly experience the life and the life world of the various under-classes, only to return with relief to our own living rooms and armchair" (286). Indeed, in its confessional accounts of life in New York City, its concluding glossary, its detailed explanations of drug

policies like Public Health Law 334 or the Harrison Narcotics Act, and its in-depth descriptions of the different state and federal approaches to drug trafficking, use, and addiction, *Junky* provides a comprehensive tour of the underside of New York City. Moreover, in its discussion and critique of drug laws and policies, *Junky* participates in the long line of naturalist novels like *The Jungle* (1908) that made morally based and reformist demands to the state, to which the state could then respond. When viewed in relation to these novels, *Naked Lunch*'s turn to pornography, horror, and intoxication, on the level of content, and fragmentation, repetition, and the episode, on the level of form, appears at first to bombard and overwhelm the moral universe of naturalism, sending the novel form itself into a state of Surrealist shock.

But, while Whiting is right to note the importance of *Naked Lunch*'s formal disruptions and destructions, he fails to think about what kind of form or structure *Naked Lunch* creates. In short, *Naked Lunch* cannot be thought of as an explosion or outright rejection of either naturalism or society. The narrative arc of *Naked Lunch*, which loosely follows the protagonist William Lee, begins with a revision and repetition of *Junky*'s naturalist routine, before dissolving this entire first group of episodes into the shocking, raucous, and raunchy dream-space called the Interzone, which is modeled on the Tangier International Zone in the wake of World War II (Morgan 253). The novel then concludes with Lee's awakening from the Interzone seemingly back in New

York City.[3] Reviewers' and critics' anxiety about the novel's form and its social meaning largely derives from the scenes of this Interzone section, and their mistaking of the Interzone section for the novel as a whole. But this Interzone space is not the chaotic and uncontrolled space that his contemporaneous reviewers and even the courts worried it was. Like Surrealism, *Naked Lunch* too has a definitive structure and moral universe and, also like Surrealism, *Naked Lunch* emerges in relation to, and is interconnected with, growing regimes of state and bureaucratic institutions. While the Interzone appears chaotic, it does so by design: the novel positions the Interzone dream as a construction of Dr. Benway, a Western agent who is equal parts Cold War military psychiatrist and Dr. Mengele. The Interzone section begins once the protagonist enters Dr. Benway's laboratory, or "Reconditioning Centre" (15)—the place where Benway has been tasked with using psychoactive drugs, shock, and other forms

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[3]   The interpretation I offer here reads Burroughs against the grain and even directly contradicts his own claim that "[y]ou can cut into *Naked Lunch* at any intersection point" (224). *Naked Lunch* is often read alongside the legend that on receiving its proofs, Burroughs decided "not to reread the chapters that he had selected in order to determine an appropriate sequence in which they might appear on publication but to submit the chapters in the entirely arbitrary sequence in which they had been put to the side when the selection process had taken place" (Sheehan). Whether this is true is difficult to say. Burroughs also claimed that parts of *Naked Lunch* "were written as a tract against Capital Punishment in the manner of Jonathan Swift's *Modest Proposal*" (205), and that the cut-up method came from a book called *Theory of Games and Economic Behaviour* (Gysin and Burroughs 32); both claims seem spurious at best, especially given Burroughs's own proclamation that he was a "huckster" (Loranger 1999). While there are substantial shifts between the editions put out by *Big Table* and by Girodias and Olympia Press, and the two editions put out by Grove Press, the overall structure of the book remains remarkably intact (see Appendix B). In each version, the novel has a clear four-part structure, and both the opening two sections and the final episode follow a clear and recognizable narrative arc. I am not alone in this claim. Ron Loewinsohn has made a similar observation, suggesting that *Naked Lunch* follows the structure of didactic novels like Dante's *Inferno*, John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, in that it recounts the "allegorical […] adventures of perfectly ordinary people in far-off, bizarre geographies that—in spite of their remoteness and/or their unabashed fictionality—have a mockingly familiar look to them" (563).

of sexual and psychological manipulation to achieve "all phases of interrogation, brainwashing and control" (19)—and is structured as an experiment in psychological manipulation. By positioning the unconscious dream not as an expression of the subject's unique unconscious, but of a manipulated unconscious, *Naked Lunch* marks a notable break from the Surrealist or Gothic genres that followed the Romanticist trajectory. Where, as Leslie Fiedler suggests, the operation of these Romanticist genres was to critique "the dogmatic optimist and shallow psychology of the Age of Reason" by illustrating "the world of dreams and of the repressed guilt and fears" lurking underneath (*Love and Death* 140), in *Naked Lunch*, the world of dreams, guilt, and fear have become the very tools of the dominant ideological order. Far from a space that is an exception to the dominant order, a space that is either free from, or an amplification of, that order's negative attributes, the Interzone is designed to construct the fears, anxieties, and desires that uphold the dominant order.

As a result, in *Naked Lunch*, shock no longer functions as a disruption to ideology, but rather acts to produce what Slavoj Žižek terms "ideological fantasy" (Sublime 33), that is, the very ideological illusion that sustains reality. In his 2008 *In Defense of Lost Causes*, Žižek builds upon the premise of the "ideological fantasy," which he developed in *Sublime Object of Ideology*, to theorize what he terms the "fetishistic mode of ideology" (296) that he sees as operating in our current moment. Whereas symptomal ideology operates as a lie or an illusion that can be critiqued by identifying "the symptom [… that is] the exception which disturbs the surface of false appearance" (296), fetishistic ideology operates in the distance between knowledge and belief; the distance between the subject's claim not to believe the ideological fantasy and their

hysterical attachment to a fetish that "embodies" the fantasy (296). Žižek argues that in this new moment, traditional attempts at ideology critique, of which Surrealism and the Gothic are exemplary, that seek "faults in an ideological edifice" (296) have become ineffective because "the thoroughly cynical power discourse concedes all [these faults] in advance" (296). Yet, rather than abandoning ideology critique altogether, Žižek instead offers a new kind of ideology critique, one that responds to this new, yet equally nefarious form of ideology by revealing, not reality, but the subject's intense attachment to the fantasy he or she disavows. As I will argue at greater length in this dissertation's conclusion, the shift that Žižek identifies from symptomal ideology to fetishistic ideology emerges in response to the failure of what Hal Foster calls the "modernist fiction" (168) of the unconscious as an internal space protected by a shield, and of the Romantic and naturalist genres that both subverted and upheld this fiction. Or, put in historical terms, the shift that Žižek identifies is part of a larger shift that Giovanni Arrighi notes, from British to US hegemony and its attendant literary, and especially novelistic, transformations. Located on the cusp of these transformations, *Naked Lunch* narrates the generic shift from traditional to fetishistic ideology through the space of the Interzone. Read as a dream, the Interzone upholds the Gothic model of ideology critique; read as a creation of Benway, it becomes productive of fantasy and entirely outside of the exceptional space of symptomal ideology. *Naked Lunch*'s formal transition from the dream novel brings us from the world of the former into the world of the latter.

If the novel's formal innovation is one factor in understanding why *Naked Lunch* was deemed obscene when *Junky* was not, its content is equally important. The changing role that drugs play in *Junky* and *Naked Lunch* reflects

the actual shifts occurring in the meaning, legislation, and symbolization of drugs, at the same time as it acts as a lens through which the novel maps the broader aesthetic, geopolitical, and economic transformations that occurred between the beginning of the 1950s when *Junky* was published and the early 1960s when *Naked Lunch* was published. By the beginning of the 1960s, the use of narcotics was no longer understood as a sickness, moral or physical, but rather as criminal activity.[4] This shift was, at least in part, a result of the radical transformation of the drug-user profile throughout the 1950s. Drug historian Andrew Courtright explains: during the nineteenth-century, "the typical opiate addict was a middle-aged white woman of the middle or upper class" (1),[5] but

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[4] Noted drug historian, David Musto, for instance, notes that, beginning in 1951, "the Federal statute was dramatically strengthened […] by making first convictions carry a mandatory minimum penalty of two years and by omitting provision for either suspension of sentences or probation on second and subsequent convictions" (230). Similarly Gerald M. Oppenheimer argues that the "draconian" Boggs Act of 1951 and the Narcotics Control Act of 1956 "significantly hiked minimum sentences and almost completely eliminated parole for those found guilty of selling or possessing narcotics" (498). For further discussions of the criminalization of addicts and addictions that occurred during the mid-century, see Alfred Lindesmith's pathbreaking 1965 *The Addict and the Law* and Rufus King's *The Drug Hang-Up: America's Fifty-Year Folly* (1972). In part, this turn towards criminalization is precisely what *Naked Lunch* argues against in its concluding coda "Deposition: Testimony Concerning a Sickness" where Burroughs, like many of the drug reformers of the time, argues for a return to medical conceptions of drug use and addiction. Notably, "Deposition," which is the clearest and most linear section of the book, is also the most reformist, that is, it is the section that most explicitly addresses the state and interacts with state policy.

[5] Under the period of British hegemony, cocaine and opiates were used across race, gender, and class lines to mitigate the nerve-related illnesses that arose from the intensified labour and social regimes of industrialized society. Paul Gootenberg argues that cocaine was a cure not just for the physical exhaustion of the working class but also for the mental exhaustion of the middle class. He cites the example of Vin Mariani, who created a wine-cocaine cocktail and marketed it as a tincture for "brain workers" by giving it a couth form of ingestion, upping its effects via alcohol, and making it a salve for white-collar, upper class workers (26). Morphine, on the other hand, was equally used by the working class, leisured ladies, middle class professionals, and royalty because of its ability to reduce excitation.

beginning in the 1950s, the new "model addict profile was that of a young black man […] in his twenties. The child of migrants from the South, he had been born in a northern slum neighbourhood in the early 1930s, and had begun using heroin in his late teens" (151). As a diverse body of anthropologists, political scientists, and legal theorists such David Musto, Philippe Bourgois, and Doris Marie Provine have shown, these transformations in US drug policy were explicitly guided by the "Racism [towards] and fear of a restive underclass" (Provine 12) that spread in the post-war era of declining Jim Crow. This criminalization was also intimately connected to the rise of the Cold War. As Musto explains, "Narcotics were […] associated directly with the Communist conspiracy: the Federal Bureau of Narcotics linked Red China's attempts to get hard cash, as well as to destroy Western society, to the clandestine sale of large amounts of heroin to drug pushers in the United States" (231).[6]

The use and significance of drugs in the novel parallel the changing meaning of the novel's shocking and surreal narratives. The obscene aspects of *Naked Lunch*, most of which are connected to drugs, may appear to act as subversive critiques of the bureaucratic state, but by positioning the shocks and obscenities associated with drugs within the Interzone, that is within the purview of Benway and thus the state's laboratory, *Naked Lunch* highlights the ways in which the illumination of the repressed, the shocking, and the obscene no longer serve to disrupt or critique ideology, but come to form its very

[6] In their history of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics under the Commissioner Harry J. Anslinger from 1930 to 1962, Douglas Clark Kinder and William O. Walker also point out that the Federal Bureau of Narcotics' "linkage of foreign sources of narcotics with domestic drug abuse during the early years of the Cold War tied more closely than before the activities of the bureau with United States national security" (924).

fantasy structure. While *Naked Lunch* appears to escape the bureaucratic through the surreal, by reconfiguring the Interzone into a state-constructed fantasy, it actually fuses them together, making *Naked Lunch* both the signal instance of what I have named the genre of bureaucratic surrealism and of its imminent demise. By bringing the surreal and the bureaucratic together, *Naked Lunch* brings us to the end of the mode of ideology that operated under the British period of hegemony and the generic forms that gained dominance within it and begins the work of articulating the new mode of ideology that will rise to dominance under the period of US hegemony and the new genres that will emerge under its purview.

The World Network of Junkys

Throughout the early episodes of *Naked Lunch*, the novel follows *Junky's* naturalist lead by presenting us with a series of shocking images of drug addicts and drug use in the gritty streets of a decaying post-war city. In the same way that Ralph Ellison provides us with memorable portraits of shocked black men such as the Golden Day vets, so too Burroughs depicts shocked drug addicts whose psychological trauma becomes allegorical of a larger social trauma. Most notable here are two characters, Pantopon Rose and Willy the Disk, who embody the two sides of the Freudian theory of shock and the death drive. Pantopon Rose ("pantopon" is a mixture of various opium alkaloids) exemplifies the extreme openness of the shocked subject whose "protective shield" has been unable to keep external stimulus out. Her entire body is a gaping wound. She is covered in "splintered glass" (10), her thighs are "ravaged […] looking rather like a poster on soil erosion" (10), and she has a "great hole in her leg which seemed to hang open like an obscene, festering mouth" (10).

Willy the Disk, on the other hand, has so fully inhabited his "protective shield against stimuli" (Freud 27) that his entire being has ceased "to have the structure proper to living matter, [and] has become to some degree inorganic" (27). He "is blind from shooting in the eyeball, his nose and palate eaten away sniffing H, his body a mass of scar tissue hard and dry as wood" (7). In short, where Pantopon Rose is on the verge of death from shock, Willy appears on the verge of death as a result of the body's defense against shock.

Naked Lunch draws a parallel between the psychological state of shock of the novel's drug addicts and broader geopolitical anxieties about the erosions and invasions of the national and urban borders of 1950s America. On first read, then, *Naked Lunch* appears to use the trope of drugs, drug addicts, the drug trade, and especially the role of drugs in the decaying urban centres of post-war America, to shock and disrupt what Jameson archly terms "the sealed self-content of the American small (white, middle class) town, […] the conformist and the family-centered ethnocentrism of a prosperous United States" (279). For instance, throughout the early sections, Burroughs emphasizes the international nature of both the drugs and the rituals surrounding drugs. We learn that the drug habits of New York replicate those of "Yemen, Paris, New Orleans, Mexico City and Istanbul" (7); the protagonist's dumping of the Rube is done through a "smother party" ("a rural English custom" (10)) and a "let out" ("an African practice" (11)); and the habits of people in Illinois and Missouri are compared to festivals in which "the Centipede God reaches from Moundville to the lunar deserts of coastal Peru" (11). By tracing the lines of influence in American culture and forefronting US economic dependence on foreign economies, these descriptions of the drug trade directly mock beliefs in US exceptionalism and protectionism. Drugs give

the lie to the protectionist fantasy of Cold War America by showing that there is no aspect of US society that does not have its roots elsewhere—neither its drugs nor its forms of speech nor its economic systems is home grown or self-contained.

At the same time as Burroughs uses drugs to show the material fallacy of the US's protectionist policies, he also uses drugs to degrade the white-washed images of Americana often created around this culture of containment. The vestiges of Americana, which are present in these opening pages through references to the Brooklyn Dodgers, the fast food chain Nedicks, L'il Abner and *The News*, and the *Saturday Evening Post*, are a façade. The man who likes the Dodgers and Nedicks is an "Ivy League, advertising exec type" (3) who carries *The News* as a cover, and the kid who looks like he "stepped right off a *Saturday Evening Post* cover" (5) is the mark, the target of a junky scam. The detritus of Americana becomes nothing other than a prop in the expansive "world network of junkys" (7). In short, through the lens of junk, Burroughs provides a cultural image *par excellence* of the anxieties and fears that grew from what urban theorist Eric Avila terms the emergence of a "*new* 'new mass culture'" (6, emphasis in original), that is, the post-war and often racialized culture that disrupted the "mutually constitutive relationship between *public* and *white*" that was maintained by systematic exclusion of African Americans in the "turn-of-the-century metropolis" (4, emphasis in original). Burroughs uses the culture of drugs to reveal the much bleaker version of New York City: the "fifty ratty-looking junkys squealing sick, running along behind a boy with a harmonica […]. The Man on a cane seat throwing bread to the swans, a fat drag queen walking his Afghan hound through the East Fifties, an old wino pissing against

an El post, a radical Jewish student giving out leaflets in Washington Square, a tree surgeon, an exterminator" (7).

But, as in *Invisible Man*, even these opening naturalist sections are disrupted by scenes of Surrealist shock that send the novel into the realm of the fantastic and the haunted. Drug users dredge up the historical, and especially racial wounds of the US's past by often literally becoming ghosts and ghouls. There is a minor character in the novel, the Vigilante, who is being prosecuted "in Federal Court under a lynch bill" (9) for possessing drugs, and uses schizophrenia as a defense. His explanation is revealing: "I was standing outside myself trying to stop those hangings with ghost fingers . . . I am a ghost wanting what every ghost wants—a body" (8). In this vignette, the drug user becomes a vehicle for the return of the repressed, allowing Burroughs to bring the US face to face with its own history of racial violence.[7] The relationship Burroughs constructs between drugs, race, the law, and the supernatural is, in the context of the US, less fantastic than it might appear. For instance, in *The American Disease*, Musto discusses how, in the nineteenth-century, the rise of cocaine use in the US brought about entirely new kinds of racial fears in the South. "The fear of the cocainized black coincided with the peak of lynchings, legal segregation, and voting laws all designed to remove political and social power from him" (7). The myths that circulated such as "cocaine ma[king] blacks almost unaffected by mere .32 caliber bullets" (7) both gave voice to white fears and provided fodder for the maintenance and promotion of repressive race laws. Throughout the early scenes, encounters with the surreal

[7]   There are other drug-ghosts, as well, like Bradley the Buyer, who is both a narcotics agent and an addict, and who takes on an "ominous grey-green color" (15) before addiction drives him to literally eat his way up the career ladder.

or the supernatural serve to bring these effaced histories into the present, disrupting Cold War narratives of the US as purveyor of freedom and democracy.

Read in this context, the state's containment of drug users in *Naked Lunch* is especially pointed. A Judge calls for one of the particularly ghoulish figures, Bradley the Buyer, who is both dealer and narcotics agent, to "be confined or more accurately contained in some situation, but I know of no place suitable for a man of your caliber" (16), the Vigilante lands "in a Federal Nut House specially designed for the containment of ghosts" (9), and the protagonist is continually escaping or being caught and imprisoned by the cops for attempting to traffic and score. Drug users, in other words, take on the same status as Cold War enemies. The subversive operation of this opening section, then, is much like that of earlier naturalist or Gothic novels, shining a mirror on the darker sides of US society. In short, these opening episodes set the global and explosive world of drugs and drug users against "the sealed self-content" of America (279) and come out on the side of the junkies, blowing open the boundaries of US society to reveal its underside and refusing all attempts at political or narrative containment.

The End of Romance

Naked Lunch's attack on this "sealed self-content" of America and both its political and literary forms of containment appears to reach its apogee in the Interzone section, which moves from the borders of the US to the international

free-trade zone of Tangier[8] and initially appears to signal the victory of Surrealist shock and the return of the repressed over the oppressive containment and regulation of post-war US. Burroughs constructs *Naked Lunch* like a dream narrative by transforming the objects, people, and events that occur in the naturalist episodes of the novel into the characters and scenes that compose the Interzone section. Burroughs, in other words, turns the more "realistic" or gritty depictions of drug culture, and Lee's experiences in that world, into what Freud calls the "raw" or "latent materials" (90) that come to form the dream space of the Interzone sections.[9] Numerous materials from the novel's opening episodes recur again and again within the Interzone episodes. For instance, the Madam from Peoria named Pantopon Rose, who is a customer of Lee's (5), becomes the figure that an old junky repeatedly asks for in the Interzone. This request also becomes the title of an Interzone episode, "have you seen pantopon rose." The police hanging of a minor character, Chapin, in the first episode (6) forms the model of power underlying the highly sexualized hangings that occur throughout the Interzone section from the

[8] Tangier was a geographically unique space. Unlike the rest of Morocco, which was under French rule, in 1923 Tangier became a demilitarized zone and an International Zone under the joint administration of France, Spain, and Britain. Morgan explains: "Tangier was a hub of unregulated free enterprise. Anyone with a valid passport could become a citizen of the city. It was a free port, with no import duties or income tax [...] Post-World War II Tangier became a multinational boomtown, a capital of permissiveness" (237).

[9] We should note that Burroughs does not just draw on, but also actively engages with and critiques Freud's dream analysis. In his essay "On Freud and the Unconscious," Burroughs critiques Freud for not being enough of a materialist. His critique is two-fold: first, he argues that Freud's notion of the "Ego, Super Ego and Id, float[s] about in a vacuum without any reference to the human nervous system" (89), and second, he argues that Freud's theory that "errors and slips of the tongue are unconsciously motivated" (93) does not analyze the social and environmental "associations" (93) that lead to these slips. *Naked Lunch* makes visible what Freud would term the entire "train of association" (93)—the events, characters, and images that populate one's daily life—and places them in their social and environmental context.

"mugwumps" who hang "Exquisite Balinese and Malays, Mexican Indians […] Negroes […] Japanese boys […] Americans with blond or black curls […] sulky blond Polacks […] by the hundred" (67), to the actress, Mary, who begs Mark and John, whose names signify the labels of the "mark" (target of a drug scam) and the "john" (someone who patronizes prostitutes), to let her hang them, and lynchings occur repeatedly. Finally, the scene in which the Vigilante loses his mouth and eyes and is consumed by "one organ that leaps forward to snap with transparent teeth" (9) becomes the famous talking asshole episode, which emblematizes the political position of the Liquefactionists, an Interzone political party, who attempt to annul all differences.[10]

The Interzone is a space entirely without borders based on the total exposure of the repressed unconscious. It stands in stark contrast to two other imaginary geographies in the novel: Freeland and Annexia. Early on, when William Lee goes to meet Dr. Benway at his laboratory in Freeland, we learn that Benway used to work for Annexia, implementing a political system called "Total Demoralization," which inputted a complex system of bureaucratic control where all citizens had to carry "a whole portfolio of documents" (19) and were subject to random searches, arrests, and sentences. Freeland, in contrast, is a "welfare state" (155). The novel explains, "If a citizen wanted

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[10] Burroughs further emphasizes the dream-like nature of these episodes through his numerous allusions to Freud. Drawing on Freud's association between dreams of sexual excitement and "the dreamer taking a tooth out of his mouth" ("Interpretation" 72), Burroughs continually deploys images of loosening teeth in the Interzone. The teeth that in the first two sections either "fall out" because of drug addiction (14) or become conduits for shock in Benway's "Switchboard" machine (21) reappear in the Interzone sections: the professor's students chase him with "switchblades clicking like teeth" (72), and teeth—also associated with genitals in the novel—are constantly spilling out, whether it is the teeth that "fly" from an old man's mouth (80) or the "vaginal teeth [that] flow out" of Mary (84).

anything from a load of bone meal to a sexual partner some department was ready to offer effective aid" (155-6). Freeland and Annexia represent two fantasies of the bureaucratic, interventionist state: totalitarianism and social welfare. In other words, they represent the rise of what Michel Foucault has called the "negative theology of the state as the absolute evil" (116), which make possible the "sweeping up [of] events in the Soviet Union and the USA, concentration camps and social security records, into the same critique and so on" (116). In contrast, the Interzone represents the fantasy of a world of unregulated excess, free of bureaucracy and state control. It is also, as Timothy Yu touches on in "Oriental Cities, Postmodern Futures: 'Naked Lunch, Blade Runner', and 'Neuromancer,'" a space of "miscegenation" (49). The Interzone is a "carnival of drugs, sex, and commerce [...] This city, Utopian and dystopian by turns, is envisioned, as its name suggests, primarily as a space of freewheeling exchange, commercial, sexual, and national" (49).

Read as a dream, the Interzone section offers a Romantic rebellion against the controlled and bureaucratic state of the US that walks a fine line between what Hal Faster theorizes as the two Surrealisms: the Surrealism that releases the "charmed" (4) unconscious, which would deliver the individual and society from the binds of the rational, the bureaucratic, and the mundane, and the Surrealism that found an unconscious that was "not unitary or liberatory at all but primally conflicted, instinctually repetitive," and obsessed with death (5). Indeed, at first glace the Interzone section and *Naked Lunch* more broadly appear as a prime example of this conflicted Surrealism. *Naked Lunch* employs a range of Surrealist practices: the marvellous, the cut-up method (which derives from Surrealist experiments in chance, such as *exquisite corpse* and automatic writing), montage, the blurring of dream and reality, primitivism, the use of

shocking language and imagery, and repetition. Burroughs's use of the colonial/decolonizing space of Tangier, Morocco, as the site of radical otherness to the US's bureaucratic control further appears to position him in the tradition of the Surrealists whose "critique of 'reason,'" was, as Amanda Stansell points out, the site of their radical "anti-racism" and their complicity in racist and colonial tropes of "the 'primitive'" (112).[11]

Much of the criticism that has built up around *Naked Lunch* analyzes the novel within the Surrealist (and more broadly Romanticist) trajectory where colonial space is metonymic of the repressed unconscious. For instance, in *Colonial Affairs,* Greg Mullins collapses the Interzone with Tangier in order to read the Interzone as a utopic counter-space to the West. In this space, he writes, "encounters between people from different nations, cultures, and religions were transacted, in part, through sexual activity and drug use […] served to break down other social and psychic barriers" (5) and concludes that

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[11]   For instance, in 1926 the Surrealists, inspired by the anti-colonial Rif Rebellion in Morocco, joined the communists in supporting the rebels and in 1931 they protested the Colonial Exhibition in Paris by hosting a counter-exhibit called "The truth about the colonies" that featured "a black child with a begging bowl" as one of their "European fetishes" (Richardson 4). Recent work by critics like Amanda Stansell, Robin D.G. Kelly, Michael Richardson, and Krzysztof Fijałkowski has also begun to focus on the Surrealisms created by students from the colonies who were living in France, most notably Etienne Léro, Jules-Marcel Monnerot and Pierre Yoyotte. The lone issue of their journal, *Légitime Défense* heralded the creation of a Caribbean Surrealism, but joined it with an appreciation of Western philosophy, European Surrealists, and African American writers like Langston Hughes and Claude McKay (see Kelley "A Poetics"). Soon thereafter, another group led by Aimé Césaire, Leon Damas, and Leopold Sedar Senghor came together and founded their own journal *L'etudiant Noir.* It was from here that Aimé Césaire and the negritude movement emerged, and it was the negritude movement that most clearly drew the "direct link between the logic of colonialism and the rise of fascism" (12). When Césaire moved back to Martinique, he and his wife Suzanne and René Ménil formed *Tropiques,* a journal of black consciousness, anti-fascism, and international Surrealism.

this "assault on identity waged by Interzone literature[12] raises the possibility that alternative modes of existence can rescue us from the repressive norms imposed by postindustrial, heterocentric, consumer society" (6). While Mullins offers a model of the Interzone as the charmed unconscious, which provides an alternative to the "repressive norms" of capitalism, Fiona Patton reads the Interzone as a model of the shocked and haunted unconscious. Drawing on Leslie Fiedler's definition of the Gothic as a literary form that attempts "to shock the bourgeoisie into an awareness of what a chamber of horrors its own smugly regarded world really was" (116), Paton reads *Naked Lunch* as a Gothic novel: "When we connect the monstrosity in Burroughs's fiction," she argues, "with the official discourses surrounding communism, homosexuality, and national security at this time, a much more concrete explanation of the execratory excesses of the novel emerges" (49). While these two articles disagree on its valence, both read the novel as functioning within the Romantic trajectory of projecting society's repressed unconscious through a colonial space.

But, *Naked Lunch* does not fit into the Romantic trajectory of the Gothic-Surrealist, nor does it share the Romanticist relationship to colonialism, in large part because the geopolitical dynamics Burroughs is grappling with are between the US and the countries it is supposedly helping decolonize, not those of nineteenth-century Britain and its colonies. Morocco's decolonization is often attributed to the arrival of US troops on the shores of Morocco and Algeria and Roosevelt's subsequent meetings with Morocco's Sultan,

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[12] By "Interzone literature," Mullins is referring to work of Paul Bowles and Alfred Chester, alongside Burroughs, all of whom lived in Tangiers.

Muhammed Ben Youssef.[13] Not only did Roosevelt assure the Sultan that he would support the Moroccans in their struggle to gain independence from France, but US rhetoric throughout the 1950s continued to be, as Giovanni Arrighi has pointed out, rooted in the language of "anti-imperialism" and "self-determination" (70). As historians like Ebere Nwaubani have argued, however, Roosevelt's support of Moroccan independence was never about liberation, but about opening up Morocco as a site of expansion for the US. Nwaubani offers the example that on January 22 1932,

> Roosevelt raised the possibility of oil deposits in Morocco; the sultan was excited but regretted the dearth of indigenous personnel who would run the oilfields. At that point, Roosevelt proposed that Moroccans could be trained in the United States under some exchange program and that Morocco could engage American firms for its development projects on a 'fee or percentage basis.' (514)

Nwaubani's example brings into relief the lineage from Roosevelt's foreign policy to Truman's prized Point Four Program, which, as I discussed in Chapter 2, provided technical training to Third World countries to develop their resource economies and thus bring them into the global US-led market.

Burroughs grapples with this fraught relationship between the US and Morocco throughout the Interzone narrative. In one particularly telling episode, "ordinary men and women," which satirizes the Moroccan National Party, the upper cadres of the Nationalist Party attempt to talk to a "street boy"

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[13]   For instance, Stephane Bernard opens his foundational study *The Franco-Moroccan Conflict* with the claim that "The Franco-Moroccan conflict may be considered as having begun on 22 January 1943 with the meeting at Anga between Sultan Mohammed Ben Youssef and President Franklin Delano Roosevelt" (3).

by asking "You hate the French, don't you?" (103). The boy responds, "I hate everybody. Doctor Benway says it's metabolic" (103). Similarly, when the nationalist leader drops dead after trying to import "Latahs[14] from Indochina" to start a riot (118), Benway rushes up and takes a blood sample. Benway appears again and again, carrying out bizarre drug experiments on subjects, claiming "disinterested research" (110) and often even "slashing his patient to shreds" (118) in the name of science. Benway's form of psychiatric medicine echoes the kinds of behavioural control we saw most notably in the factory-hospital scene of *Invisible Man*, but applied to the international stage. Benway allegorizes the US's utilization of psychology, which, as Ellen Herman points out, increased during the Cold War with the study of "third world development and revolution" (64) and the aid of military attempts to "manipulate economic and political developments in the newly emerging states of the third world" (65). When the Nationalist Party leader responds to the "street boy" by proclaiming that "Benway is an infiltrating Western Agent" (103), he is making the connection between the US's psychological and medical experiments and its economic and political designs. While the Nationalist Party leader is a satiric figure, his diagnosis of Benway is accurate: Benway proves the point made by Aimé Césaire as early as 1950 that what Truman hailed as "anti-colonialism" really only ever meant "American domination" (77). Read as an allegory, Benway's role in the Interzone enacts the difference between British and US hegemony. Whereas British hegemony was based on what Arrighi terms a "territorial 'world empire'" (70), US hegemony was based on the "leadership of

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[14] Latahs is the term for a person who suffers from "Latah," a "culture-specific startle-syndrome" in Malaysia and Indonesia (371) that is often associated with erratic and skittish behaviour and also with "forced obedience" (371).

movements of national self-determination" (70)—as violent, self-serving, and highly interventionist as that "leadership" might have been.

But, while *Naked Lunch* develops the relationship between Benway and the Interzone as an allegory for the relationship between the US and Morocco, it also interrupts that allegory by refusing the simple alignment between the Interzone and Tangier. Within the frame of the novel, the Interzone is structured not as Tangier, but as William Lee's fantasy of Tangier, a fantasy that has been constructed by Dr. Benway. It is not just that Benway is an agent infiltrating the Interzone; rather, the Interzone is Benway's creation, constructed in the laboratory of his "Reconditioning Centre" (25) using the new arsenal of synthetic drugs such as Scopolamine, harmine, LSD6, bufotenin, bascarine, and bulbocapnine, drugs whose goal is not to protect the subject from shock, but to open up and manipulate the shocked and exposed subject.[15] This reframing of the Interzone section radically changes the meaning of the colonial space of the Interzone, and the Surrealist or Gothic genres in which we generally code that space. In *The Fantastic*, Tzvetan Todorov argues that the "fantastic" genres, of which the Gothic is exemplary, are built around the novel's continual "hesitation" in resolving how a seemingly supernatural event will be explained. For Todorov, the Gothic novel delays revealing its generic affiliation, that is whether the novel is part of the genre Todorov terms "the

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[15]   In the post-war era, the kinds of psychoactive drugs Burroughs places in Benway's lab were increasingly used as part of what Herman calls the "military-psychology combination" (58), which underpinned the Cold War and which formed in response to fears of Chinese and Soviet Communists brainwashing American POWs (58). Herman goes so far as to argue that the "Cold War was, above all, a psychological phenomenon, just as total world war had been. While the Cold War presented the U.S. military with new challenges […] nothing could have offered clearer evidence for the World War II maxim that war was fundamentally a battle for hearts and minds" (63).

supernatural explained" (41), or the genre of the marvellous, where "the supernatural [is] accepted" (42). In *Naked Lunch*, this hesitation is removed. There is no question of whether the novel is marvellous or uncanny because it is both and neither. The marvellous or supernatural instances in the novel can both be rationally explained (they are Lee's delusions) and are put there by the seemingly supernatural power of Benway and his arsenal of revolutionary new drugs. At once, the supernatural is stripped of its subversive underpinnings (Todorov, for instance, sees the fantastic as "the bad conscience of [the nineteenth-century] positivist era" (168)) and becomes a tool of the state at the same time as the return of the repressed that underpins the uncanny narrative dissolves as the unconscious becomes not a hidden space, but a canvas.

Arrighi's work on the rise of US global hegemony is useful here for understanding the significance of this shift from the colony acting as either a supernatural space or the repressed unconscious, to the colony acting as an imposed fantasy. In *The Long Twentieth Century*, Arrighi argues that in contrast to Britain's extroverted model of governance, the US market operated on principles of centralization, protectionism, and "vertical integration," that is, the integration of production, circulation, and distribution within the firm (295). On the one hand, Arrighi contends, the protectionist nature of the US market was crucial to its success in withstanding the collapse of the British global marketplace. But, on the other hand, the internalization of the market within the US created its own crisis: following the chaos and destruction of the global market in World War II, no US policy could "overcome the fundamental asymmetry between the cohesiveness and wealth of the US domestic market and the fragmentation and poverty of foreign markets" (295). If the US was to keep capital circulating and expanding, it needed to develop foreign markets,

but to do so it had to radically transform its economic policy, which up until then was premised on a corporatist approach that tried to keep money isolated within the border of the US (295). Arrighi's interpretation of the US's solution is suggestive and worth quoting at length:

> the impasse was broken by the "invention" of the Cold War. What cost-benefit calculations could not and did not achieve, fear did. […] The genius of Truman and of his advisers was to attribute the outcome of systemic circumstances [i.e. a stagnating global marketplace], which no particular agency had created or controlled to the allegedly subversive dispositions of the other military superpower, the USSR […] Moreover, President Truman and Under Secretary of State Acheson well knew that fear of a global communist menace worked much better than any appeal to raison d'état or to cost-benefit calculations in spurring to action legislators better known for fiscal prudence than for interest in world affairs. (296)

Arrighi, here, articulates how the construction of a Communist threat was a necessary part of a larger strategy of developing, or in many cases re-developing, a global marketplace. Specifically, the creation of an external threat to the market was necessary for prying open the federal coffers to fund programs like Point Four, the Marshall Plan, and other aid and economic development plans that were targeted at rebuilding and opening up new markets into which US capital could flow.

Naked Lunch narrates this shift from a system where the fears and fantasies associated with colonial space are understood as the underside of state policies, to a system where the state produces these fears and fantasies to further its policies. *Naked Lunch's* innovation is its ability to track the need for literary forms to change in order to grapple with this new geopolitical and psychological regime. While the structure of *Naked Lunch* draws on the older

form of the dream novel or psychomachia, the content of the dream is no longer some hidden repressed unconscious that the novel brings to the surface, but an externally constructed fantasy. Doctor Benway, the protagonist tells us, is a "manipulator and coordinator of symbol systems, [and] an expert on all phases of interrogation, brainwashing and control" (19). Benway's methods are so successful that he can boast of how he once targeted an undercover "female agent" by inverting her real identity with her cover one. Bragging, he explains:

> An agent is trained to deny his agent identity by asserting his cover story. So why not use psychic jujitsu and go along with him? Suggest that his cover story is his identity and that he has no other. His agent identity becomes unconscious, that is out of his control; and you can dig it with drugs and hypnosis. (24)

As with the female agent whose true self is hollowed out and replaced with an identity, so too is the Interzone dream a fantasy imposed on the protagonist, William Lee, one which becomes his unconscious only through external manipulation. Within the revision of the dream narrative, the interpretive framework that Sigmund Freud offers in *The Interpretation of Dreams* when he suggests that "*the content of the dream is thus the fulfillment of a wish; its motive is a wish*" (205, emphasis in original), a framework that has widely been read as

offering a hermeneutic of literary analysis (Eagleton *Literary*),[16] becomes untenable precisely because we can no longer read the dream as the fulfillment of a wish. Or rather, the wish being fulfilled in Lee's dream is not his, but Benway's. Dreams or drug-induced visions are no longer emancipatory or demonic visions to be unleashed into the world, but rather forms of fantasy into which the subject is interpolated.

Burroughs points most explicitly to the failure of the Romantic genres that were based on the Freudian model of the protected unconscious in an Interzone episode entitled "Campus of Interzone University." In this episode, a professor with multiple personality disorder tries to teach Samuel Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" to his students. Ignoring the story of the albatross, the professor instead focuses on the relationship between the Mariner and the Wedding Guest and the Mariner's attempt to intoxicate the Guest with his story. The professor asks his students to "consider the Ancient Mariner without curare, lasso, bulbocapnine or straitjacket, albeit able to capture and hold a live audience" (73). The professor's reading of the poem implicitly connects the persuasive power of Romantic literature with that of drugs in its ability to "capture" a subject. Specifically, the professor's call to imagine the Mariner "without curare, lasso, bulbocapnine" echoes Benway's

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[16]   In *The Political Unconscious*, Fredric Jameson suggests that the problem with the notion of "wish-fulfillment" is that it remains "locked in a problematic of the individual subject […] which is only indirectly useful" for the act of literary interpretation (66). Jameson turns to Lacan's revision of Freud to shift the focus on psychoanalysis from its individual to social form. He argues that the transformation from Freud to Lacan marks a shift from a theory of the "nature of the dynamics of the subject" to an "interrogation of that problematic […] of the subject […] and the process whereby this psychic reality (consciousness)—as well as its buttressing ideologies and illusions (the feeling of personal identity, the myth of the ego or the self, and so forth)—become rigorous and self-imposed limitations on Freud's notion of individual wish-fulfillment" (66).

earlier claim that "bulbocapnine potentiated with curare—give[s] the highest yield of automatic obedience" (73). In the professor's interpretation, the power of Romantic literature is akin to the controlling power of narcotics. In the actual poem by Coleridge, the Wedding Guest is understood to be intoxicated by the power of the Mariner's story; in the professor's revision, it is not a matter of intoxication, but of control. For the professor, the Mariner is a master druggist, able to take control over passers-by. The professor, on the other hand, is effectively in the position he asks his students to imagine. He is the Mariner without curare,[17] and the Romantic literature he uses to try and capture his students' attention fails miserably. The professor's students are entirely uninterested in "Rime" and attack him as soon as he starts discussing the poem, demanding instead that he return to the Americana of "Old Ma Lottie" stories, presumably because the students see "Rime" as one more tired canonical text. Compared to the tropes of narcotics and possession that serve to disrupt early episodes, like "Vigilante," here drugs and the Romantic aesthetic tradition attached to them are stripped of their subversive or marvellous potential. They fail to possess their readers.

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[17] Burroughs emphasizes the importance of curare by having his protagonist recount its history: "An explorer in sun helmet has brought down a citizen with blow gun and curare dart. He administers artificial respiration with one foot. (Curare kills by paralyzing the lungs. It has no other toxic effect, is not, strictly speaking, a poison)" (34). In *Poison Arrows*, Stanley Feldman fleshes out this story: curare was a toxin used for centuries by indigenous populations in South America as a poison on their arrows that could kill game or their enemies. Feldman explains that curare works by preventing the message carried in nerves from translating into muscular activity. This effect could both kill and be mobilized to give the medical establishment greater control over, and access to, the nervous system, and thus become a key part in the development of anaesthetics and electroshock treatment. (See also Shepherd 752).

Here again, Burroughs's use of drugs, and specifically his juxtaposition of older, nineteenth-century drugs such as opium with newer synthetic drugs such as bulbocapnine, signals a shift from drugs that protect and bolster the subject's shield against shocks[18] to drugs that attempt to break through the subject's shield to gain control over the unconscious. This shift symbolizes the transformations occurring on both geopolitical and literary fronts. Specifically, it highlights the analogy *Naked Lunch* constructs between opiates and the genres of Romanticism, both of which come to appear outmoded and obsolete with

[18]   Morphine and cocaine were the chief drugs used to treat shock disorders such as nervous exhaustion throughout the nineteenth-century. Morphine dealt with shock by, instead of raising the subject's capacity to take in external stimulus, reducing the amount of external stimulus the subject absorbed. In the nineteenth-century, opium was understood to be "'the chief' of all drugs used for 'nervous exhaustion' […] because of its twofold impact: 'it excites and stimulates for a short time the brain-cells, and then leaves them in a state of tranquility, which is best adapted to their nutrition and repair" (qtd. in Oppenheimer, 115). In contrast, Freud argued that cocaine was unique in its ability to "increase the reduced functioning of the nerve centers" (64). Cocaine, he argued, was the only drug that could cure neurasthenia (341). The benefits of cocaine that Freud identified were related to its ability to treat this exhaustion. He lists these effects as follows: "Long-lasting, intensive mental or physical work can be performed without fatigue; it is as though the need for food and sleep, which otherwise makes itself felt peremptorily at certain times of the day, were completely banished" (60). Using a dynamometer (a machine that measures exertion or force), Freud found that cocaine increased both man's ability to perform labour and his euphoria.

the passing of British hegemony.[19] The opium that lies behind the inspiration of "Rime," like "Rime" itself, has become, in the Interzone, inadequate to either make sense of the world or to subvert it. Where Coleridge is the "first great Romantic junky" (McConnell 675), *Naked Lunch*'s protagonist is its last—in large part because it is no longer possible to be a Romantic junky who makes an art out of vision and experience once the visions and experiences that were expressions of the individual self become the very fantasies used by Benway to recondition and create new subjects.

Miscegenated Encounters

Read as a production of fantasy, Yu's observation of the ever-present "threat of miscegenation" (49) suggests that the Interzone, with its "encounters

[19]   In *Forces of Habit*, historian David Courtright offers a model for thinking about the relationship between the emergence of drug types and regimes and periods of global hegemony. Between 1500 and 1789, Courtright explains, the world witnessed a "psychoactive revolution," a term he uses to describe the popularization and globalization of increasingly powerful drugs that provided people "more, and more potent, means of altering their ordinary waking consciousness" (3). Courtright contends that this revolution, which had its "roots in the transoceanic commerce and empire building of the early modern period" in which "early modern merchants, planters, and other imperial elites" (2), brought into being the global drug trade through the crops of caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol. As the bookends of Courtright's periodization suggest (beginning with the emergence of a merchant culture and ending with the French revolution), and as he plainly states, his psychoactive revolution is intimately connected to global transformations such as "the transoceanic commerce and empire building of the early modern period" (2). Extrapolating from Courtright we can identify two other psychoactive revolutions that align with the global hegemonies of Britain and the US. First, was the "isolation and commercial production of psychoactive alkaloids such as morphine and cocaine" (76) and the development of hypodermic drugs, and the discovery and manufacture of synthetic drugs and "semisynthetic derivatives." Second, was the development of new synthetic and chemical drugs such as amphetamines, barbiturates, hallucinogens, and steroids that offered more precise manipulations of the nervous system, which occurred in the wake of World War II, and which became a cornerstone of US foreign and geopolitical policy.

between people from different nations, cultures, and religions" (Mullins 5), is neither subversive nor utopian, but rather acts as an articulation of jumbled post-war and largely white conservative fears. Burroughs excels at coming up with increasingly wild and raucous forms of miscegenation. In one episode, "hassan's rumpus room," a crowd watches as "A Javanese dancer […] pulls an American boy […] down onto his cock" (66) while nearby "Exquisite Balinese and Malays, Mexican Indians […] Negroes […] Japanese Boys […] Venetian lads, Americans with blond or black curls [etc.]" all hang at the end of ropes ready to be taken (67). In another episode, which occurs in a museum, the protagonist watches as "On a ruined straw mattress the Mexican pulled him up on all fours—Negro boy dance [sic] around them beating out the strokes" (98). This is not simply a utopic vision of an "encounter." As Yu explains, in "Burroughs's treatment of drug use and sex […] the pleasure and visionary potential of each is linked to grotesqueries and death" (51). Almost every encounter ends in death, sometimes repeated deaths as in the case of Mark, Johnny, and Mary who take turns hanging each other and coming back to life in a series of B-films. Moreover, ejaculation corresponds with hangings, such as the mugwumps who "snap the boy's neck […] and he ejaculates immediately" (64) or the Aztec princes who take a Latahs youth and secure him before "a waterfall pours over the skull snapping the boy's neck. He ejaculates in a rainbow" (68). Perhaps most pointedly, in another episode, Clem and Jody tell the story of being "arrested for Sodomy in Indonesia [... and saying to the] examining magistrate: 'It ain't as if it was being queer. After all they's only Gooks" (133) before exclaiming in a seeming non-sequitur, "So I shoot that old nigger" (133).

As in the Clem and Jody scene, the repeated scenes of (often violent) miscegenation occur in dialogue with the violent acts of anti-miscegenation that occur through the novel's numerous vacillations from Tangier to the US. In addition to the Clem and Jody scene mentioned above, Burroughs references the "nigger-killings sheriffs" in the South of Texas (14), the area known as "Dead Coon County, Arkansas ['Blackest Dirt, Whitest People in the U.S.A.—Nigger, Don't Let The Sun Set On You Here']" (36 square brackets in original), and, when the narrator is describing a guard's "ash-brown" scarf (49), he comments: "Ash-brown is a color like grey *under* brown skin. You sometimes find it in mixed Negro and white stock; the mixture did not come off and the colors separated out like oil on water" (49). The extremes of desire and death that underpin the fears and fantasies of blackness cohere in the figure of the "giant aquatic black centipede [that] sometimes attain[s] a length of six feet" with the less-than-subtle moniker of "Black Meat" (45). Referencing centuries of representations of black men as commodities and objects of desire and horror simultaneously, the centipede is understood as both grotesque and dangerous and highly prized and desired on the "Black Meat market" in which it is sold (45). The centipede recurs repeatedly throughout the novel, but always as something hidden below the surface. Most tellingly, there is a patient whose flesh melts away to reveal "a monster black centipede," to which a Southern doctor in the crowd responds: "We must stomp out the Un-American crittah […] Fetch gasoline! […] We gotta burn the son of a bitch like an uppity Nigra" (88). The orgiastic fantasies of miscegenation that mark the Interzone—with its ectoplasms, ghosts, life-sucking mugwumps, and giant black centipedes that grow to six feet—are ultimately not that far away from the science fiction film noir that dominated Hollywood in the 1950s, and which Eric Avila links back to conservative white culture. In *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight*, Avila

argues that "its discursive emphasis on invasion, infestation, and infiltration encompassed a set of images and words that found more consequential forms of expression in official assessments of urban property values" (97) in the face of rising ethnic populations.[20]

Moreover, this narration of racial threat is not limited to the post-war US city and the linked dynamics of white flight and the rise of the so-called chocolate city. *Naked Lunch's* argument is global in scale. As Yu points out, where most Beat writers tended "to move along the axis of US black/white race relations, *Naked Lunch* was prescient in its identification of Asia as the increasing (perceived) source of those threats in the post-World War II years" (49). From his reading of the Orientalized descriptions of the Interzone's centers of exchange (be they economic or sexual) to the watchful eyes of the "Chinese Chief of Police" (50), Yu rightly emphasizes how the Interzone is not just a "neutral meeting point of East and West but rather the invasion and contamination of the West by the East" (5). This mix of fears of Asian invasions from abroad and African American invasions domestically—what Yu describes as "racialized conflicts against orientalised backdrops" (48)—functions as two interconnected and inextricable parts of the US's post-war project of expanding and restructuring the field of global capitalism. Read within this context, it becomes difficult to distinguish to what extent the Interzone is shocking and subversive and to what extent it simply gives expression to, and reinscribes, conservative fears. This is not an issue of

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[20] Avila notes here the protagonist's opening claim in *Invisible Man* that he is "'not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allen Poe, nor am I one of your Hollywood movie ectoplasms' […] suggests how African Americans and other racial groups are […] often only visible through the disfiguring lens of American popular culture" (97).

subversion-containment or, as Alan Nadel might read it, of *Naked Lunch* simply becoming one more "narrative of containment" (xi). Instead, *Naked Lunch* is a commentary on the efficacy of these shocking and subversive gestures in the post-war era.

Burroughs not only aligns fears of the invading black body and fears of Asian and Communist invasions (both bodily and otherwise), but he also situates the figure of the police as the solution. From the urban narcotics agents that chase Lee throughout the opening episodes and into the Interzone to the US agents like Benway and A.J. who penetrate and control the Interzone, *Naked Lunch* is a novel structured by narratives of (often shocking and excessive) policing and law and order. Again, as with its focus on drugs, *Naked Lunch*'s law and order narrative sutures together the fears of foreign invasion and urban decay through the narrative of criminality. Read in this light, Arrighi's interpretation of the Cold War offers a useful parallel to what Bernard Harcourt has noted as a key feature of what he terms, along with Loïc Wacquant, "neoliberal penality" (41). In *The Illusion of Free Markets*, Harcourt outlines the underlying logic governing neoliberal penality: "the market is efficient, and within that space there is no need for government intervention. What is criminalized and punished is behavior outside the space of the orderly market that seeks to circumvent free, voluntary, compensated exchange. There, government intervention is necessary, legitimate, and competent" (38). In short, under neoliberal penality, criminality becomes defined as activity that occurs in, and here Harcourt uses the terminology of noted Chicago School legal theorist Richard Posner, "the zone of market bypassing" (38). It is this

space, or zone, that becomes the state's purview.[21] Read alongside Harcourt, *Naked Lunch*'s focus on police narratives bears further consideration. Burroughs's twinning of the narcotics agents and the foreign agents within the Interzone asks us to think about the construction of the red scare as the foreign policy version of neoliberal penality. After all, both the narcotics agents and foreign agents have the job of intervening in those countries or spaces that were deemed to act as a threat to, or who tried to escape from, the market, thus justifying the development of the US as the "self-proclaimed policeman of the planet" (Wacquant 120). This form of policing formed the obverse side of what Arrighi identifies as the US's anti-imperialist tendencies that led it to support movements of national self-determination and, even, as Jodi Melamed contends, to enforce the integration of African Americans as a means of expanding the global and domestic market ("Spirit" 4).

The figure in *Naked Lunch* who most clearly brings the domestic and foreign policy sides together is Iris, a "half Chinese and half Negro" (100) woman who is addicted to "dihydro-oxy-heroin" and subsists solely off of sugar (100). She is also "one of Benway's projects" (101) and a "wholesome American cunt" (101). Where Yu reads Benway's control over Iris as "effacing [her] hybridity and difference and placing her under biomedical regulation, [which] performs the recolonizing work of appropriation and containment that will become crucial in American imaginings of the postmodern Orient" (52), I want to suggest that what is at stake in Benway's regulation of her is less the

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[21]   Citing Posner, Harcourt explains that "the conventional criminal act—theft, robbery, burglary, even murder—represents an attempt, in Posner's view, to go around the free market" (136) while "crimes of passion […] often bypass implicit markets—for example, in friendship, love, respect" (136).

effacement of Iris's hybridity and more the creation of a figure that must be governed. Bringing together the yellow peril and the black threat, Iris represents the body that must be contained and controlled. In this sense, Yu misses the mark; what *Naked Lunch* enacts is not a fear of the Asian global market (that would come later), but the Cold War fears of Asia "bypassing" the market, to return to Harcourt, and joining the Communist Bloc. After all, while Yu is right that Orientalized figures do appear to run the most subversive and lucrative spaces in the Interzone, most of these spaces are connected to various elements of criminality (illegal drugs, prostitution, murder, etc.). But, while the Interzone gives form to a wide-range of racialized fears and desires that operate on both a domestic and international scale, these fears have not yet fully cohered to form a fantasy. They form instead the problem or crisis that needs to be resolved. It is only at the end of the novel, which concludes with Lee's "awakening" from the Interzone, that the novel consolidates its fantasy and that the relationship between increased criminalization and incarceration—that is, the law and order state—and the liberalization of the market is able to be successfully sutured together.

Hard-Boiled Fantasy

Naked Lunch concludes with a return to the hard-boiled detective novel that would have been at home in either the novel's opening section or *Junky*. In the final episode, "hauser and o'brien," we find out that William Lee has been attempting to escape the eponymous narcotics agents throughout the entire Interzone narrative. When they catch up with him at the Hotel Lamprey, Lee hoodwinks them with a violent flair that Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer would admire, and plots his escape. Running out of the hotel and into the

"beautiful Indian summer day," Lee muses to himself, "I didn't have much chance, but any chance is better than none, better than being a subject for experiments with ST(6) or whatever the initials are" (178). He concocts a plan to call Hauser and O'Brien and give them a tip about a massive drug shipment in an attempt to switch sides from criminal to cop. On first glance, Lee's awakening appears similar to the Invisible Man's escape down a manhole, the men of the mind's escape to Atlantis or, as we will see in the conclusion, Yossarian's escape to Sweden in *Catch-22*. However, where in these novels the characters are attempting to flee from the state, Lee tries to escape by joining the state.

At this point, the novel intervenes and provides Lee with a form of escape beyond anything he could have hoped for. When Lee calls the Narcotics Department and asks for Hauser and O'Brien, the department responds that there is "no Hauser no O'Brien in this department" (181). Lee realizes that either he has imagined the entire Interzone or that reality itself has shifted and he is no longer being pursued by the Narcotics Department. He comments: "I had been occluded from space-time […]. Locked out . . . Never again would I have a Key, a point of Intersection . . . The heat was off me" (181). In this final scene, the novel enacts its real escape, an escape into an older moment and an older genre where the boundaries between dreaming and waking and between the unconscious self and the world remain intact. In *Naked Lunch*, the usurpation of life by dreams is literally a matter of life or death, a point emphasized by the presence of the disease Bang-utot in the novel. Bang-utot, which the novel links back to an actual *Saturday Evening Post* article about a condition that "occurs in males of Southeast Asiatic extraction" (61), is a term that describes death by dreaming. More specifically, it is a disease that causes

death to occur "in the course of a nightmare" (61). However, Bang-utot is also a disease that is both somatic and without a clear somatic cause: "Careful autopsies of Bang-utot victims have revealed no organic reason for death. There are often signs of strangulation [caused by what?]; sometimes slight haemorrhages of pancreas and lungs—not sufficient to cause death" (61, square brackets in original). The hypothesis that death results from "misplacement of sexual energy resulting in a *lung* erection with consequent strangulation" (61) suggests that Bang-utot is a death that occurs when the boundaries between dreaming life and waking life, and between the conscious and unconscious mind, have eroded, when the nightmare extends from mind to body.

The life-and-death stakes of this final escape are not merely structural, but are tied to the specific fantasies and anxieties that are foreclosed. Lee's awakening pulls him back from the Interzone and both its libidinal horrors and the expanding law and order state. While this escape appears to act as an awakening from illusion into reality, it really acts as an escape *into* fantasy, into the safety of a refunctioned older model of the hard-boiled detective novel and its model protagonist: the strong, rational, and self-reliant subject like Mike Hammer, whose mistrust of, and ambivalence towards, the police and the state is overshadowed only by his horror at the Communists and counter-cultural movements more broadly. Lee's awakening relegates both the porous world of miscegenation and the expanding police state into the Interzone dream that has now been sealed off. In this concluding gesture, both the red scares, yellow perils, fears of urban decay, and fears of the excessive violence and control of the police and state are contained within the now safely sealed boundaries of the Interzone. Turning away from Annexia, Freeland, and the Interzone,

William Lee comes to represent the suburban fantasy of the isolated individual who has escaped the horrors of the city and who is able to exist outside the grasp of, while being protected by, the new law and order state.

This final awakening functions as both a radical break from, and a return to, older generic forms. As a result, this final awakening creates a peculiar split in the novel's form. On the one hand, the novel's awakening into fantasy acts as the complete rejection of Romanticism, which depends on the structure of the return of the repressed, and thus on the unconscious, and it signals the emergence of a new genre whose purpose is no longer to reveal the truth beneath the illusion, but to articulate the illusion that structures reality. On the other hand, the novel's reinscription of the form of the dream, and its return to the hard-boiled detective novel, pulls back from this radical break. While the content of Lee's waking up aligns it with an ideological fantasy, the form of the conclusion, the very fact that Lee "wakes up," reinscribes the line between the conscious–unconscious system that the drugs and practices of Benway have all but eroded. What we find here is a similar contradiction to that which we found in *Atlas Shrugged*: the fraught push and pull between a revolutionary movement forward and a nostalgic return to the past. *Naked Lunch* simultaneously pushes all the frontiers of literary and psychic form and public taste, and pulls back from the precipice, reinscribing the boundary between the unconscious and conscious, of dream and reality, of obscenity and art. It offers a final strategy of re-containment. The protagonist's loss of "the Key," his "occlu[sion] from space-time" (181), reasserts the boundaries that the rest of the novel collapses. The psychic structure remains momentarily intact and the novel maintains, however tenuously, a distinction between the Surrealist shocks of the unconscious and the naturalist narratives that can contain them. But,

while with the act of waking, *Naked Lunch* ultimately reconstructs the boundaries between the conscious and the unconscious, it also marks the point of no return, the moment of transition between the unconscious as a hidden or underlying structure that can be released or explored, but not touched nor shaped, and the unconscious that is itself the site of struggle. It is this new subject and narrative Joseph Heller takes up in *Catch-22*.

Conclusion

The shocking excesses are part of the system itself, what the system feeds on in order to reproduce itself. Perhaps this gives us one possible definition of postmodern art as opposed to modernist art: in postmodernism, the transgressive excess loses its shock value and is fully integrated into the established art market."

— Slavoj Žižek

In the postmodern world of advanced capitalism the real has become the surreal, […] our forest of symbols is less disruptive in its uncanniness than disciplinary in its delirium.

— Hal Foster

This dissertation has explored how a seemingly disparate group of novels all grapple with, and attempt to resolve, the problem of shock, which is both a psychological, historical, and aesthetic problem, as well as an ideologeme around the specifically post-war transformations that brought about desegregation and the rise in power of both African Americans and immigrants domestically, and ex-colonies internationally. The novels previously discussed in this dissertation all stage the struggle between, on the one hand, the large-scale bureaucratic structures of the passing welfare state and the emerging Keynesian security state and, on the other hand, the explosive shocks and maelstroms that blow apart the social, aesthetic, and psychological fabrics of the pre-war world. In all of the novels, shock and bureaucracy are set in dialectical tension against each other, often coming to stand for the two poles of capitalism: the market and the state. While each novel charts shock's increasing domination with the novelistic form, none is able to fully resolve the

contradictions and crises resulting from the collision between bureaucracy and shock. In each of these novels, the enclaves grow smaller and smaller, ultimately either vanishing or leading to death.

Both, the formal problem of shock and the social problems that emerged in the reorganization of power both at home and abroad find their solution in Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*, and similar satiric black comedies, all of which mark the high point and dissolution of the genre of bureaucratic surrealism. Where *Invisible Man* set up the tension between bureaucracy and shock, *Catch-22* resolves this contradiction by fully fusing together bureaucratic institutions and shock. Like similar black comedies or satires such as Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962) and Kurt *Vonnegut's Cat's Cradle* (1963), *Catch-22*'s fusion of bureaucracy and shock into the massive bureaucratic institution of the military, which is then set against the everyman, allows the novel to finally solve the problem of shock by projecting it as an external threat to be escaped or deflected.[1]

Catch-22 tells the story of Sgt. John Yossarian, a bombardier in the US Army stationed in Pianosa, a small Island off the coast of Italy, at the end of World War II. The novel stages his and his fellow airmen's struggle to get home against the US military that is trying to keep them there indefinitely

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[1] This chapter predominantly focuses on *Catch* 22, but this set of satiric or black comedy novels all take a similar form and accomplish a similar fusing. While in *One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest*, the action takes place in an asylum, where both *Catch 22* and *Cat's Cradle* take place on annexed islands, the structuring logic of these spaces (and the institutions that govern them) are uncannily similar as is the formal fusing of the bureaucratic state with a Surrealist aesthetic of shock.

through the eponymous directive known as "Catch-22," a directive that holds

that says that anyone who is insane does not have to fly more missions, but that

anyone who wants to stop flying more missions cannot be considered insane.

In effect, "Catch-22" ensures that no one can escape the military. Heller's

military is a hulking bureaucratic structure that embodies the logic of state

planning and control, yet it is entirely based on, and fuelled by, the logic of

shock. Not only are all of the officers within the military trapped within shock's

symptomology of repetition–compulsion, doubling, and the uncanny, but the

military also appears as an entirely powerless, paranoid, and shocked

organization.[2] Yet, at its centre is the mess hall officer and mercenary Milo

Minderbinder, who very much controls the shocks that threaten the military

and those shocks that the military visits on foreign countries, and who uses the

military and its attendant shocks to expand and develop his syndicate, M&M

Enterprise, at the expense of all of the airmen with whom Yossarian flies, lives

and is hospitalized.

[2]   *Catch 22* was being completed around the same time that Dwight D. Eisenhower
     delivered his famous military-industrial complex speech, in which he traced the
     staggering advancements of the US armaments industry: "We have been compelled to
     create a permanent armaments industry of vast proportions. Added to this, three and a
     half million men and women are directly engaged in the defense establishment. We
     annually spend on military security more than the net income of all United States
     corporations" (n.p.). Heller's choice of the military as the structure that was able to bring
     together shock and bureaucracy, and the market and the state, is even more fitting when
     read alongside Eisenhower's warning of the unprecedented "conjunction of an immense
     military establishment and a large arms industry" (n.p.).

This success of *Catch-22*'s narrative resolution, like that of Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle,* is in large part achieved through the expansion and re-containment of the novel's space. Set on a fictional Italian island at the conclusion of World War II, *Catch-22* globalizes the US novel, claiming Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East as its terrain. By globalizing the novel, Heller is able to contain and totalize the processes of shock carried out by the military and Milo. But, while *Catch-22* in one sense globalizes the novel, it also contracts the space of the novel, retreating to a semi-fictional island, Pianosa, and largely to a hospital on this island where the majority of the novel's present occurs. On the level of form as well, *Catch-22* enacts a peculiar expansion and contraction. On the one hand, the novel takes the duelling genres of naturalism (which often records the political or social structures that deny subjects access to the developmental promises of the *bildungsroman*) and the uncanny and grotesque of the Gothic and Surreal (which highlights the horrors and antagonisms lurking beneath the shiny promises of the *bildungsroman*) and absorbs them into the form of the so-called black comedy novel. In *Catch-22*, the shocking and grotesque aspects of previous novels that symptomatized a repressed unconscious, and that kept bubbling up to the surface and being pushed back down by the narrative, are fully absorbed into the narrative. But, as a result of this novel's absorption of the older impulses of shock deployment and shock management into its form,

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Catch-22's form also empties and contracts. Whereas *Invisible Man*, *Atlas Shrugged*, *Wise Blood*, and *Naked Lunch* all construct enclaves—both literal and narrative—that remain somewhat, if tenuously, protected (even though they must go through more and more elaborate gestures to do so), in *Catch-22*, there is no enclave left. While the plot of the novel offers us the comfort of clear lines of battle, of the individual subject against a shocked society, of community versus the government, the form of the novel reveals something entirely different. Without the repressed unconscious, without enclaves, the novel contracts into pure surface. Shock is no longer a disruption that the narrative must contain or deploy because it has become constitutive of the structure of narrative itself and its subjects. At the very moment when shock finally appears to be externalized and contained, in other words, it turns out it has actually taken over. In this moment, and with *Catch-22*, the genre of bureaucratic surrealism reaches its end. As quickly as the historical conditions of global indeterminacy and crisis created the potential for the emergence of bureaucratic surrealism, so too did history, and more specifically the solidification of the US as a global hegemon, foreclose this space.[3]

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[3] Franco Moretti makes a similar claim about the historical nature of genres in *The Way of the World* when he argues that the bildungsroman emerges as a dominant cultural form of modernity because of its ability to solve the "problems" of its tempestuous and

Shocking Bureaucracies

Catch-22 takes the form of shock. Robert Merrill, for instance, suggests that *Catch-22* is structured by two "exact and persistent repetitions" (142). First is Yossarian's compulsive return to the scene of Snowden's death in the tail of his plane and the secret Snowden reveals to him at the time of his death. Second is the repeated return of the soldier in white, a man whose entire body is covered in plaster and whose identity (or even whether he is alive or dead) remains a mystery. *Catch-22* is organized by, and circles around, the two questions of Snowden's secret and of the soldier in white's identity. While symptomologies of shock also played a central role in the earlier novels discussed in this dissertation, they were symptoms that could be traced back to concrete events. In *Catch-22*, there is literally nothing beneath this logic of repetition–compulsion. There is no symptomology, no trauma to be revealed, no repressed unconscious to be unearthed, because the traumas are already fully on the novel's surface. The repressed unconscious that lurks beneath these

revolutionary energies by (i) containing those energies "through a fiction of youth," (ii) by creating an "anti-tragic" frame for the dissipation of those passions, and (iii) by creating enclaves of "smaller, more peaceful histories" within it (230). He suggests that the genre of the Bildungsroman loses its effectiveness in the period following World War I. Drawing on Freud's theorization of the war in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Moretti explains that the "insoluble problem" for the Bildungsroman, the problem that brought about its failure, was "trauma. The trauma introduced discontinuity within novelistic temporality, […] it disrupted the unity of the Ego, putting the language of self consciousness out of work; it dismantled neutralized spaces, originating a regressive semiotic anxiety. In the end, nothing was left of the form of the Bildungsroman" (244).

compulsive repetitions is literally nothing. Snowden's secret is that he has been

hollowed out, and the soldier in white's secret is that he too is entirely empty.

The meaning of both the shocks and horrors that mark the novel, and the logic

of repetition–compulsion that structures it, radically alter. No longer do the

narrative structures of shock or the return of the repressed serve to disrupt or

critique ideology. Instead, they become the structuring principle of ideology.

Shock is not disruptive of the ideological promises of post-war society, it is not

the "chamber of horrors" (116) to return again to Leslie Fiedler's memorable

claim, because it has become constitutive of post-war society: the military

explicitly understands and utilizes shock to break down subjects and

reconstruct them within the expanding and consuming logics of the US state

and capital.[4] With every traumatic horror, with every dismembered body, the

military's response is only to intensify the war, to increase the number of

missions required.

[4] In novels that are fully localized within the asylum like Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest*, shock too forms the fabric of everyday life and the banal tactic of control. Most notably, in Kesey's case, shock no longer functions to reveal the often colonial, racial, or gendered unconscious of the narrative, but is a tactic explicitly carried out by African Americans and women on behalf of large bureaucratic institutions to control and contain the various models of embattled, white, masculinity. In *One Flew*, this model of masculinity, which is embodied in the big, burly Irish protagonist, McMurphy, an escaped POW in Korea, who is discharged from the army and charged for statutory rape of a 15 year old (44), which lands him in the asylum. The asylum, in contrast, is run by the "Big Nurse" Ratched (15) and her three "black as telephone" attendants (32) who act as the asylum's security guards and are responsible for transporting the patients to the "Shock Shop" (8).

More horrifically, though, shock does not just function as a tactic or a tool. Rather, it comes to form a compensatory fantasy. Shock becomes a fantasy or a screen that stands between the subject and the void.[5] The emptying out we witness in the novels of bureaucratic surrealism echoes the development of Jacques Lacan's theory of the unconscious and the death drive from a Freudian biological model to a linguistic and structural one. In *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, Slavoj Žižek explains this shift:

> Until the end of the fifties, the pleasure principle was identified with the imaginary level: the symbolic order was conceived as the realm "beyond the pleasure principle". But starting from the late fifties […] it is, in contrast, the symbolic order itself which is identified with the pleasure principle: the unconscious "structured like a language", its "primary process" of metonymic-metaphoric displacement, is governed by the pleasure principle; what lies beyond is not the symbolic order but a real kernel, a traumatic core. [… This core is] some strange, traumatic element which cannot be symbolized into the symbolic order. (132)

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5   The extent to which shock becomes constitutive of fantasy can be seen in Sylvia Plath's 1963 novel, *The Bell Jar*. As in the novels of Heller, Vonnegut, and Kesey, the asylum ceases to function as a heterotopic space and comes to form an exact mirror to external society. In the case of Plath, the caste system of the asylum mirrors the same caste system the protagonist, Esther Greenwood, encounters when the novel opens in the centre of New York high society. In *The Bell Jar*, shock is offered as a promise of salvation and normalization; it becomes understood as therapeutic. While the character is initially traumatized by a series of badly administered shock therapy, the novel concludes with her undergoing safe and well administered shock therapy by the kind doctor, Doctor Nolan who notably works at an elite, private asylum that cures her. *The Bell Jar* completes the gentrification of shock as a controlled, therapeutic, and life saving procedure.

The relocation of the death drive to the Real—that is, to that which not only cannot be symbolized in language, but which threatens to undo symbolic structures themselves—is precisely what occurs in *Catch-22* at the moment when Yossarian stares into the abyss of Snowden's wound.[6] In the same way that Freud's discovery of a biological death drive, which he located in all species, formed in response to the railway disasters and mechanized warfare that wreaked hitherto unimaginable damage on the human body, Lacan's inversion and de-biologization of the death drive is a result of historical transformations. Specifically, the Lacanian theory of the traumatic void seems to emerge with the final erosions of what Freud theorized as the "protective

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[6]   Lacan himself argued for an implicit connection between the psychoanalytic and the aesthetic. In his 1975 seminar, *Le Sinthome*, he argued that the fourth ring, which held together the Bromean knot of the Symbolic, the Imaginary, and the Real, was the sinthome, which Lacan also associates with art (n.p.).

shield against stimuli" (*Beyond* 26) that kept the unconscious in a state of relative stasis.[7]

As shock becomes a dominant mode of governance, the narrative function of shock shifts from being the symptom in the Freudian sense to a *sinthome* or fantasy in the Lacanian sense as that which provides a fantasmic "support" for the subject (Žižek, *Sublime* 47). Žižek clarifies this shift, arguing that whereas in Freudian analysis, the symptom could be "dissolved" by "re-establish[ing] the broken network of communication by allowing the patient to verbalize the meaning of his symptom" (73), Lacan showed that identification

[7] Paul Verhaeghe's recent discussion of transforming pathologies highlights the material nature of these psychic shifts. In "'Chronicle of a Death Foretold': The End of Psychotherapy," Verhaeghe argues that contemporary psychotherapy is facing a crisis in the wake of the radical transformations in the kinds of pathologies that are being encountered: "The classic symptoms seem to be disappearing, and we are facing a new kind of pathology" (7). He outlines three ways in which the contemporary patient differs from the one whom Freud would have treated. First, the symptoms have "to do with the body in a direct, unmediated way," as opposed to the "conversion symptoms" of Freud's time (7). Second, the symptoms are "performative ones, not in the theatrical meaning of the word, but in the sense that they imply actions," whereas under Freud the dominant issue was inhibition (8). Finally, "[i]n contrast to the traditional symptoms, the new ones seem to be devoid of meaning, they are just what they are" (8). This "they are just what they are" represents the end of the efficacy of the protocol of following a symptom to its root through interpretation. As Žižek noted in *Sublime Object of Ideology*, this raises serious problems for literary critics committed to symptomatic critique. It raises the question: how do we *do* ideological critique if ideology is on the surface? Žižek suggests that "[w]e can no longer subject the ideological text to 'symptomatic reading'" (30), but must rather invert the Marxist formula "'they do not know it, but they are doing it'" (32) to "they know very well how things really are, but still they are doing it as if they did not know" (32). In short, Žižek shifts his focus from the unconscious truth that resists ideological illusions to the "ideological fantasy" (33) that operates as an "unconscious illusion" (33).

often brought not resolution but trauma, and thus reconceptualized the symptom as the *sinthome*, that which is necessary for the patient to secure his or her identity within the world. For Lacan, Žižek contends, the symptom masks not reality, but rather a void: "the only alternative to the symptom is nothing: pure autism, a psychic suicide, surrender to the death drive even to the total destruction of the symbolic universe" (75). In *Catch-22*, the shocking and violent acts brought to the novel's surface are not symptoms to be unearthed, but they form the fantasy structure that protects the state and the subject from some traumatic void.

Structurally, this void is precisely the traumatic kernel of Snowden's "secret." Throughout *Catch-22*, event after event triggers Yossarian's memory of Snowden's coldness before he died and the secret he "spills" upon his death (170). With each return to the scene of Snowden's death, Yossarian's concealment of Snowden's secret grows increasingly elaborate. Yossarian's memories of Snowden, which start out as scattered fragments, expand to become a wholly consuming, "eternal, immutable secret concealed inside his quilted, armor-plate flak suit" (355). Like Freud's war veteran who is trapped in a compulsion to repeat, the novel comes to rotate around, and spiral towards, Yossarian's encounters with the fragments and glimpses of Snowden's deathly secret. Yet, when the novel finally brings us to the traumatic kernel of

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Yossarian's memory, it appears that Snowden's secret is literally nothing at all: Yossarian "gazed down despondently at the grim secret Snowden had spilled all over the messy floor. It was easy to read the message in his entrails. Man was matter, that was Snowden's secret […]. Ripeness was all" (450). In a novel filled with hacked up, disembowelled, and mangled bodies, what is it that lends the scene of Snowden's secret its immense psychological and narrative weight? The answer, in part, lies in the structural nature of Yossarian's process of repression and revelation.

Snowden's secret is two-fold. First, Yossarian has been dressing the wrong wound. The entire time that Yossarian was slowly and deliberately tending to an injury on Snowden's thigh, a "chunk of flak more than three inches long" (449) had torn open his stomach. Yossarian only realizes this mistake once Snowden has been entirely disembowelled, once his insides have literally "slither[ed] down to the floor in a soggy pile and just keep dripping out" (449). It is here, in the pile of Snowden's insides, that Yossarian reveals the second part of the secret: that "[m]an was matter […]. Ripeness was all" (450). What Yossarian witnesses in Snowden's haemorrhaging is a physical enactment of the process of exposure, the slow and deliberate evacuation of the subject's inner self. The second secret, then, is that there is literally nothing

left inside of Snowden because it has all spilled out. "Ripeness was all" is another way of saying that within, there is only the symptom and nothing else.

While Yossarian's obsessive repetition of Snowden's death illustrates the Freudian process of repetition–compulsion, the symptom or primal shock being worked out is that of lack. Snowden's wound functions simultaneously as a symptom that the novel dissolves and resolves through its reestablishment of "the broken network of communication," and as a *sinthome*, as the symptom that protects the subject from the empty void it is covering. The dissolving of the secret reveals not the underside of society, but rather the void, the traumatic kernel that social fantasy itself seeks to mask. In this sense, the consonance between the imagery of Snowden's secret as the "quilted, armor-plate flak suit" (355) and Lacanian quilting point, or *point de capiton*, bears consideration. For Lacan, the quilting point is a point that "[e]verything radiates out from and is organized around […] similar to these little lines of force that an upholstery button forms on the surface of material" (*The Psychoses* 268). Just like Lacan's quilting point, Yossarian's secret secures meaning: the maintenance of this secret is what protects him from the void. In the same way that the state relies upon the numerous dismemberments of its soldiers to fuel its increasing missions, and in the same way that Milo Minderbinder relies on wars and geopolitical insecurity to expand his syndicate, so too the trauma of Snowden's

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wound generates the novel's repetitive, fragmentary, and disoriented structure. Shock and trauma are no longer wounds or aporias that the novel must resolve, they now generate the novel itself.

The ideological importance of this quilting is underlined by the state's involvement in *Catch-22*'s other "exact and persistent repetition" (Merrill 142): the soldier in white. He is introduced early on in the novel as one whose wounds are so extensive that he has been "entirely encased from head to toe in plaster and gauze […] with a frayed black hole over his mouth" (10). He appears to be nothing other than a medium for the continual exchange of liquid that enters him from one jar and is expelled into another, only to have the two jars repeatedly exchanged. Even though the soldier in white dies shortly after we are introduced to him, he resurfaces again and again, like the "'daemonic' power" (21) that Freud's neurotic believes is pursuing him.[8] When the soldier in white returns once again to the hospital, however, his presence suddenly drives Yossarian's friend, Dunbar, over the edge. Dunbar begins yelling, "There's no one inside […]. They've stolen him away" (375), which in

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[8] The soldier in white enacts the "compulsion to repeat" that Freud saw as "lending to certain aspects of the mind their daemonic character" ("The Uncanny" 237). *Catch 22* makes clear that the soldier in white is not actually one person, but a series of soldiers whose injuries are so severe they are entirely encased in plaster: the soldier in white who finally triggers Dunbar's meltdown is notably described as being "the same man" as all the other soldiers in white, except that "he had lost a few inches and added some weight" (374).

turn results in the military police rushing into the hospital with "carbines and rifles" to prevent Dunbar from looking inside the soldier in white to check. This bizarre series of events raises two fundamental questions: first, given the number of characters who have disappeared or been killed as a result of army activities—namely Nately, McWatt, Mudd, Kid Sampson, Dobbs, Chief White Halfoat, and Hungry Joe—why does the seemingly innocuous question of the soldier in white's identity drive Dunbar to have a complete breakdown? And second, why does Dunbar's desire to "look inside" trigger the military to use force against its own troops when they have never attempted to violently put down any of the previous uprisings and rebellions, all of which appear to have been far more insurrectionary?

The inside of the soldier in white, like Snowden's secret, has become the traumatic kernel, what Žižek terms the "antagonistic split" (*Sublime* 126) that the state must hide at all costs. The parallel between Yossarian building up a system of increasingly elaborate defenses to avoid the abyss of Snowden's wound and the military taking up arms to prevent Dunbar from staring into the abyss of the soldier in white registers the social and political stakes of masking this void. The shocks and horrors that would challenge the state in other narratives are here reversed. Neither the defenses of the state nor Yossarian's unconscious are masking the traumatic and shocking truths of war; rather,

these shocks and traumas are the defense. They form the fantasy that conceals the traumatic kernel. Shock and horror constitute the fantasy that the state will kill to maintain. In other words, unlike in earlier novels, where the tension was between the development narratives and the Surrealist shocks that foreclosed both the character's development and the very promise of development, in *Catch-22*, the tension is between a narrative of shock and complete narrative and subjective destitution. Shock, with its attendant symptoms of repetition–compulsion and the uncanny, has become constitutive of fantasy itself.

However, in spite of the seeming totality of this logic of shock, and in spite of Yossarian's inability to escape (the best he can do is run away to Sweden), the novel does not naturalize or eternalize this state of existence. In *Catch-22*, this void at the centre of the subject is not an a priori fact, but a direct result of the violence and horrors of World War II, and the fusing of the market and the state under the catastrophically dehumanizing system of Milo Minderbinder. The doubling between the soldier in white, who has nothing inside, and Snowden, whose insides spill out, provides a temporal and narrative reference point for the moment when shock moves to the centre of the system. Heller positions the soldier in white and Snowden on the cusp of this transition.

That both Heller and Lacan would reframe the unconscious in this post-war moment is no coincidence, but rather points to the importance of reconfiguring understandings of the political, the aesthetic, and the psychological during this key moment of transition. Throughout the 1950s, Lacan repeatedly expressed his discontent with the directions in which Freudian psychoanalysis had been taken. Referencing the work of psychologists such as Ernst Kris, Lacan pointedly notes that Freud had been transformed into the "New Deal of ego psychology" ("The Situation" 328). Fink unpacks this construction, "Just as President Franklin D. Roosevelt tried to regulate the economy, control business, and standardize the quality of certain human services, [Ernst] Kris sets out to give ego psychology its 'official status' as a normalizing process, a regulating and standardizing procedure" (328). Lacan's return to Freud was at least partially inspired by the need to move away from the normalization of Freud's system, and the commodification of psychoanalytic theory.[9] In shifting the focus of the unconscious from a protected space to "the Other" and the structures of language, Lacan not only

[9] Lacan sums up his critique of the Americanization and commodification of Freud when he notes: "When a market study had concluded upon the proper means by which to sustain consumption in the U.S.A., psychology enlisted […] Freud along with it, to remind the half of the population most exposed to business's goal that women only realize their potential through gender ideals" ("The Position" 706). Lacan's call for a radical reconsideration of Freud attempted to rescue him from the medicalization of Freudianism under the Société Psychoanalytique de Paris and from the thorough commodification into which the US system had cast him.

radically repoliticized the unconscious, but also implicitly provided an answer

to the question of the role of psychoanalysis in an era of exposure.[10] As

Jameson points out, Lacan's radical rewriting of Freud was a "substantial and

reflexive shift" (66), one that moved the focus from "the dynamics of the

subject" and his psychic reality to the problem of how "buttressing ideologies

and illusions […] become rigorous self-imposed limitations" on the subject

(66). In other words, under Lacan, the role of psychoanalysis shifted from a

deeper unearthing of the internal dynamics of the self to an analysis of the self

within the structures of social fantasy.

This is the point that Alan Nadel inadvertently arrives in *Containment*

Cultures, when he anachronistically reads *Catch-22*, and especially Snowden's

body, as metaphoric of the Vietnam War era. Nadel writes: "Snowden's body

becomes one more territory, mapped by a bomb pattern that Yossarian can

neither read, nor affect, nor refer to accurately. Snowden becomes, in other

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[10]   Indeed, the ambivalence almost all of the authors in this dissertation express towards
psychoanalysis is rooted less in a critique of Freud than in the US appropriation of
Freud, which fused him together with various programs of social control or mass
cultural manipulation. In *Catch 22*, psychoanalysis has been wholly subsumed into the
purview of the state.

words, the topos of Vietnam" (203).[11] If Vietnam and Snowden's wound are parallel, they are so only inasmuch as they function within the imagination of the US as a kind of organizing principle of subjectivity. The misrecognition that marks both Yossarian's encounter with Snowden's wound and the US's encounter with Vietnam is not a symptom that must be unveiled to reveal a hidden truth, because the misrecognition is all that stands between the subject and, as Žižek puts it, "'the end of the world'" (*Sublime* 75). And "the end of the world" is precisely what Yossarian encounters as he stares into Snowden's wound, and what countless US novels and films encounter in rendition after rendition of Vietnam, each of which, as Jodi Kim argues, "symptomizes an inability to come to terms with its protracted war" (195). What Kim sees in the obsessive re-representation of Vietnam is not a move to come to terms with the military defeat but rather an attempt to efface it. In other words, the goal of such cultural production was never recognition, because recognition was impossible, necessitating nothing less than the undoing of the mythos of empire.

[11] The irony of Nadel's claim is that twelve years later, in another historical novel about World War II, the territory-that-is-a-body, which is mapped by a bomb pattern, becomes the body-that-is-territory, which predicts or even causes the pattern of bombing. I am speaking of Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973), which takes the logic of MKUltra to its most absurd extreme when characters begin to realize that Slothrop's sexual encounters in the city of London seem to predict or even cause V-2 rockets to fall.

Indeed, *Catch-22* offers a map not just to the topos of Vietnam, but to the entire crisis in the Keynesian conjuncture of which Vietnam was just one more, albeit a major, example. Giovanni Arrighi dates this "signal crisis" to 1968, which marked both the "crisis of the post-war US world monetary order […] and the crisis of US world hegemony in the military and ideological spheres" (320). Arrighi argues that the conjuncture of the failed Tet offensive, the cracking edifice of Cold War ideology, the increasing demands for sovereignty from Third World states, and the US monetary crisis of the 1970s "finally convinced the US government that the time had come to abandon the New Deal tradition of confrontation with private high finance, and to seek instead by all available means the latter's assistance in regaining the upper hand in the global power struggle" (323). While *Catch-22*, and the novels of bureaucratic surrealism, were published in the years (and in some cases decade) before this signal crisis, these novels illuminate the emergent ideological groundwork that turned market accommodation, privatization, and penalization into the obvious solutions.

Bureaucratic Shocks

Catch-22 anticipates the transformation in the role of the state. Whereas in earlier novels, the state's narrative function was largely to mediate between

the individual and the market, and to provide a protective barrier between the self and the world, in *Catch-22*, the state is re-tasked with the job of preparing— of shocking, exposing, and breaking down—the subject for the market and policing all those who try and bypass it. This re-tasking occurs through Milo Minderbinder, who is both part of the military apparatus and part of the growing regime of transnational capitalism. On the surface, Milo appears to be thoroughly Un-American and even a threat to the US. Milo is a one-man market scam, running a business of which the entire world seems to be a victim/member. He is a fruit importer and exporter and an arms trade contractor who commits what would surely be the most treasonous activity imaginable for a post-war audience. At the same time that he helps "the American military authorities to bomb the German-held highway Bridge at Orvieto" (250), he colludes "with the German military authorities to defend the highway bridge at Orvieto with antiaircraft fire against his own attack" (250). However, both Milo and the novel are clear that, in spite of his traitorous acts, he is not anti-American. Rather, he offers a new model for the reorganization of the US state and its emergence as a global leader. Milo's success comes from his ability to move across different scales, from the domestic market and state to the world market and global governance. He becomes part of the state apparatus of numerous developed countries: he is the mayor of seven towns in

Italy, "the Vice-Shah of Iran, […] the Caliph of Baghdad, the Imam of Damascus, and the Sheik of Araby" (200), and in "those backward regions" that have not yet entered into the era of capitalist modernity, Milo appears as "the corn god, the rain god, and the rice god" (208). In short, Milo represents the US corporations that, once established within the US, would then expand, as Arrighi puts it, like "so many 'Trojan horses' in the domestic markets of other states [… which allowed them] to mobilize foreign resources and purchasing power to the benefit of their own bureaucratic expansion" (294).

Milo does not just represent the logic of US corporations; he represents an economic and political system where the market has become the naturalized order that is shielded from assessment and becomes the mechanism of assessment. In *The Illusion of the Free Market*, Bernard Harcourt traces the emergence of what he terms "the illusion of a free and natural market" that has "no need for government intervention" (38). He argues that under this illusion, the role of the state becomes governing "behavior outside the space of the orderly market that seeks to circumvent free, voluntary, compensated exchange. There, government intervention is necessary, legitimate, and competent" (38). This space, which occurs outside of the market, of market bypassing, becomes the space of criminality (38). While in *Catch-22*, the bureaucratic organization of the military appears to have expanded within the novel to totalitarian levels,

this is actually not the case. The state, represented by the military, has entirely evacuated the sphere of the market, which is now the realm of Milo Minderbinder. In fact, the only space the state seems to exert any control over is the military base, which primarily serves as a home for M&M Enterprise, where its sole job is making sure that no one is ever able to escape it.[12] While as Harcourt attests, the hospital (like the asylum in *One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest*) is part of an older logic, one of "rehabilitation and treatment" (223-4), as opposed to the prison whose "focus is on criminality, blameworthiness and punishment, not on madness, nor sickness" (224), within *Catch-22*, the hospital has already become a penal space.

Milo offers the clearest articulation of the reorganization of the market and the state that occurs in the post-war era. When Milo is trying to figure out how to unload a shipment of Egyptian cotton, he comments: "The government has no business in business […]. But the business of government *is* business […]. Calvin Coolidge said that, and Calvin Coolidge was a President, so it must be true. And the government does have the responsibility of buying all the Egyptian cotton I've got that no one else wants so that I can make a profit"

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[12] This in part explains why no punitive actions will ever be taken against Milo Minderbinder who sells arms to both sides of the war, but why it would be taken against anyone who would desert. Minderbinder's sale is fully within the realm of the market while desertion is an attempt to escape the market.

(272). While Milo's logic, like the rest of the military's, appears satiric to the point of absurdity, it is, in fact, impeccable. Milo's paradox of the state that both has no business in business, but whose business is business, articulates the precise conundrum of the post-war state, while his syndicate forms the solution. In contrast to the obsolete and incompetent military, which appears incapable of controlling its own officers let alone winning any wars, it is Milo Minderbinder who successfully brings the rest of the world into the global economy of the US. It is through Milo's syndicate that the narrative of *Catch-22* is able to expand beyond the boundaries of the US to Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, effectively globalizing the novel. Moreover, it is not just Milo's globalization generally but rather the specific locations of his expansion that bear consideration: his power expands to the European axis countries and the Arab world, the very countries targeted by both the Marshall Plan and Truman's Point Four. His logic of governance, which on the surface sounds the death knell of the state, also successfully re-tasks the state with the role of creating the ideal conditions for business. Where the hulking bureaucracies of the state seem to stand in outmoded opposition to the market, Milo brings the two together. The punitive and bureaucratic insanity of the military actually fulfills its function of preparing subjects for the logic of the market. From Yossarian's job arbitrarily censoring letters, to the directive "Catch-22," to the

linguistic shell game that Milo Minderbinder plays when explaining his syndicate, the qualitative (letters, missions, products) is reduced to the quantitative, and used to fuel a compulsive drive for accumulation: more letters censored, more missions flown, more commodities accumulated. Like Harcourt's state, so the role of the military in *Catch-22*'s is to discipline and criminalize those attempting to escape the market. While part of the novel's continued popularity is assuredly a result of its ability to articulate the problem of post-war capitalism, equally important is the solution that the novel offers: Yossarian's defection and attempted escape to Sweden.

Beyond Bureaucratic Surrealism

Yossarian's escape parallels the attempt of the airmen to look inside of the soldier in white and Yossarian's spiralling towards Snowden's secret. In this sense, his escape is both like and unlike the other social escapes that conclude the novels of bureaucratic surrealism. Much Heller criticism has analyzed the meaning of this escape, but most agree that, for the novel, at least, the escape, whether earned by the novel or not, is meant to be a satisfying or happy

ending.[13] But the novel's escape to Sweden is also profoundly ambivalent and, within the novel already situated as a failure. When Snowden tells Major Danby he is going to Sweden, Danby offers three objections: first, that "you'll never get there. […] You can't even row" (460); second, that "they'll find you […] and bring you back and punish you even more severely" (460); and third, that "even if they don't find you. What kind of way is that to live? You'll always be alone. No one will ever be on your side" (460-1). These three outcomes: failure, capture for desertion, or total isolation all represent forms of symbolic and most likely, literal death whether it is death by sea, by execution, or by total social destitution. Yossarian's "escape" to Sweden is truly an escape to the abyss; like Snowden's secret and like the soldier in white, his escape is a void

[13]   To cite just a few, James Nagel reads Sweden as "a possibility, a state of mind which allows for hope" (173); Daniel Green's claim that Yossarian's escape represents a necessary abandonment of an "irredeemable society" for "personal survival" (194); Howard Bloom argues that "Heller presents" Yossarian's desertion for Sweden as a "triumph" (2).

that must exist and that secures both the narrative form and social reality within the novel, but which can never actually be reached. [14]

Death—psychic, symbolic, and literal—is the ultimate resolution offered by many of the black comedy satires of the early 1960s. For instance, in *One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest*, the Chief suffocates McMurphy to free him from his lobotomization at the hands of Nurse Ratched and then, like Yossarian who escapes to Sweden, escapes, not unproblematically, back to nature.[15] In *Cat's Cradle*, a novel that ostensibly stages the battle between the research and development culture of the militarized US modernity that created the atom bomb and a primitive religion called Bokonism, the situation is even more stark with all roads leading to death. The novel concludes with its entire cast of

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[14] While Heller has largely focused on the structural function of Sweden as "a *goal* or an objective, a kind of *Nirvana*" ("An impolite" 26) rather than as an actual place, his choice of the geographical space of Sweden as the novel's utopian point bears consideration. Within the frame of a World War II narrative, the escape to Sweden most obviously represents an escape from militarism and intro neutrality, and quite likely also represents an escape into a more humane social welfare state. But, recent work on Sweden's own history of fascism, Sweden's accommodation with Nazi Germany and some Swedes active collaboration (Beggren "Swedish Fascism;" Scott "The Swedish Midsummer Crisis") undermines even this modest utopian gesture in the novel thus amplifying the ambivalence of this escape.

[15] The novel concludes with the Chief musing that he'd like to go to Canada, but first he'd like to return to the "Portland and Hood River and the Dalles to see if there's any of the guys I used to know back in the village who haven't drunk themselves goofy […] I've even heard that some of the tribe have took to building their old ramshackle roof scaffolding all over that big million-dollar hydroelectric dam, and are spearing salmon in the spillway" (272). As in *Atlas Shrugged*, the Indian character here serves as the noble savage who, even in the midst of the mass industrialization of land, represents the idyllic state of nature that offers a counterpoint to the bureaucratic state.

characters, and indeed presumably the world, dying either as a result of "ice-nine," a side project of a chief architect of the atomic bomb or of Bokonon who convinces what few survivors remain to commit suicide.[16] While the obvious allegorical struggle being enacted here is between the individual and the mass, with the individual who is able to separate himself playing the role of hero, the novel's alignment between the victory of the individual and death raises conceptual problems. Recalling Michael McKeon's definition of a genre as a literary form that provides "a conceptual framework for the mediation (if not the 'solution') of intractable problems" and makes "such problems intelligible" (20), the problem posed by these satirical black comedies is how a genre, whose resolution is death, can mediate the problems of its time. It is the collapse of all solutions into death that marks the end of the genre of bureaucratic surrealism.

But this death is not the death of the novel, but of bureaucratic surrealism's attempt to escape or manage shock. After *Catch-22*, the novel is no longer able to contain or deploy shock because shock is no longer something

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16   The irony of this mass suicide is that Bokonism is a religion wholly set up to critique all the other forms of social organization available in the post-war world, which the novel terms "granfalloons" (91) and which includes the "Communist party, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the General Electric Company, the International Order of Odd Fellows—and any nation, anytime, anywhere" (92). The novel's concluding mass suicide suggests that while "granfalloons" may represent false models of living, Bokononism only has death to offer in its place.

external to either the characters or the form of the novel itself. As a result, the post-war US novel is no longer able to either turn one part of the post-war conjuncture against the other or to move between the registers of Surrealism or naturalism. But, this death is also recuperative; the collapse of bureaucratic surrealism into the death drive also generates a new conceptual framework for the novel. As in the novels of Thomas Pynchon, William Gaddis, and Samuel Delaney, shock becomes the form within which the novel is created and thus, the range of possibilities, solutions, and struggles that they generate are not aimed at escaping shock, but instead occur within its purview. Ultimately, it is in this sense that we must understand the neoliberal novel as emerging from Snowden's wound.

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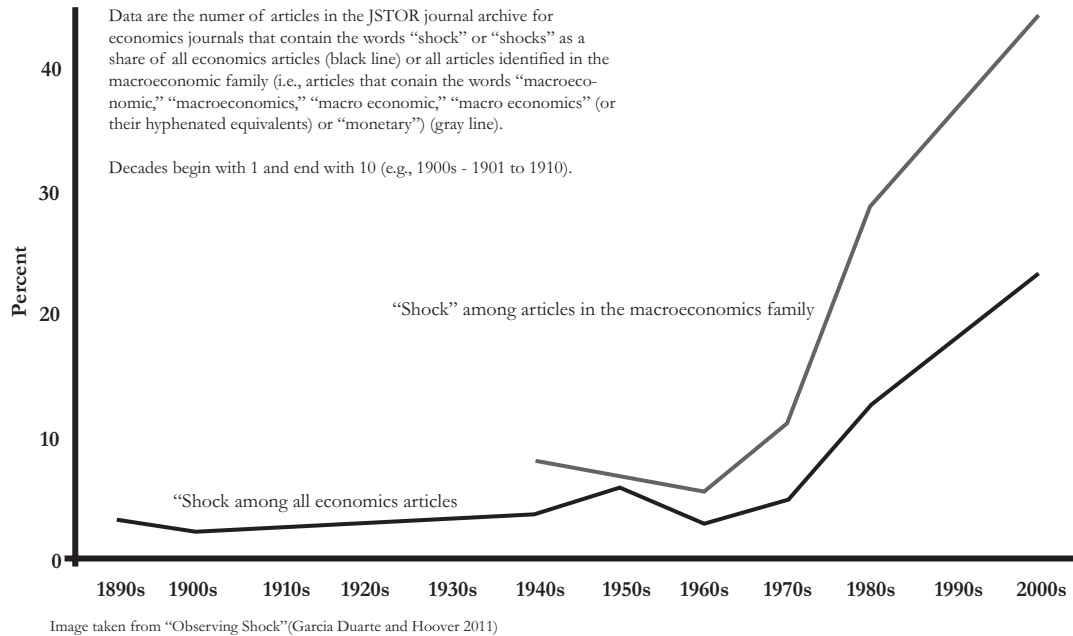Truman, Harry. "Inaugural Address." January 20 1949. Web. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=13282>.

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Appendices

Appendix A.

Usage for "Shock"

Data are the numer of articles in the JSTOR journal archive for economics journals that contain the words "shock" or "shocks" as a share of all economics articles (black line) or all articles identified in the macroeconomic family (i.e., articles that conain the words "macroeconomic," "macroeconomics," "macro economic," "macro economics" (or their hyphenated equivalents) or "monetary") (gray line).

Decades begin with 1 and end with 10 (e.g., 1900s - 1901 to 1910).

"Shock" among articles in the macroeconomics family

"Shock among all economics articles

Image taken from "Observing Shock"(Garcia Duarte and Hoover 2011)

Appendix B.

Publishing History of Naked Lunch

Ch.	*Big Table* (spring, 1959)[1]	Olympia Press (1959)	Grove Press (1959) [published 1962]	Restored Text (2001)
			"Deposition: Testimony concerning a Sickness" and "post script . . . wouldn't you" (which includes sections the 2001 text is missing)	
1	"The Word is divided"	"I can feel the heat closing in" (includes the Rube, Joselito)	"I can feel the heat"	"and start west"
2	"I can feel the heat closing in"	"the black meat" (incl "the hospital")	"Benway"	"vigilante"
3	"*Habit Notes Continued*" (becomes "the hospital")	"lazarus go home"	"Joselito"	"the rube"
4	"everyone looks like a drug addict" (also becomes part of "the hospital"	"campus of Interzone university"	"the black meat"	"benway"
5	"The Rube is a social liability"	"a.j.'s annual party"	"hospital"	"joselito"
6	"The Sailor was working for an outfit..." (becomes "islam inc")	"ordinary men and women"	"lazarus go home"	"the black meat"
7	"So I am assigned" (becomes "Benway")	"islam incorporated and the parties of Interzone"	"hassan's rumpus room"	"hospital"
8	"The Divisionists" (becomes "parties of the Interzone")	"Interzone"	"campus of Interzone university"	"lazarus go home"

[1] All comments in parentheses refer to the 2001 text unless otherwise stated.

Ch.	*Big Table* (spring, 1959)[1]	Olympia Press (1959)	Grove Press (1959) [published 1962]	Restored Text (2001)
9	Drawing (ends up on cover of the Olympia edition)	"have you seen pantapon rose?"	"a.j.'s annual party"	"hassan's rumpus room"
10	Joselito	"coke bugs"	"the market"	"campus of Interzone university"
11		"the exterminator does a good job"	"ordinary men and women"	"a.j.'s annual party"
12		"the algerbra of need"	"islam incorporated and the parties of Interzone"	"meeting of international conference on technological psychiatry"
13		"atrophied preface: wouldn't you?"	"county clerk"	"the market"
14			"the examination"	"ordinary men and women"
15			"have you seen pantapon rose?"	"islam incorporated and the parties of Interzone"
16			"coke bugs"	"the county clerk"
17			"hauser and o'brien"	"Interzone"
18			"atrophied preface: wouldn't you?"	"the examination"
19			"letter from a master drug addict"	"have you seen pantopon rose"
20				"coke bugs"
21				"the exterminator does a good job"
22				"the algerbra of need"
23				"hauser and o'brien"

Ch.	*Big Table* (spring, 1959)[1]	Olympia Press (1959)	Grove Press (1959) [published 1962]	Restored Text (2001)
24				"atrophied preface"
25				"quick"[2]

Ch. = Chapter Number.

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[2] Following "quick" is a section titled "Original Introductions and Additions by the Author" that contains "Deposition: Testimony Concerning a Sickness," "Post Script. . . Wouldn't You?," "Afterthoughts on a Deposition," "Letter From a Master Addict to Dangerous Drugs" and a range of texts categorized as "Burroughs Texts Annexed By the Editors"