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Spaces of Collapse: Psychological Deterioration, Subjectivity, and Spatiality in American Narratives

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Abstract

This thesis studies the relationship between spatiality and subjectivity within the context of modern and contemporary American narrative. Combining a psychoanalytic approach with phenomenological considerations, I set out to analyze the ways in which spatial structures mediate madness, paranoia, the compulsion to repeat, and uncanny anxiety. Space serves a primary focus of my analysis, and I outline the different ways that language and consciousness construct space. Considering the work of William Faulkner, Francis Ford Coppola, Paul Auster, and Mark Z. Danielewski, I argue that particular spaces, such as houses and cities, represent or contribute to particular forms of psychological psychosis and neurosis. While I use phenomenology as an important guide to understanding the relationship between subjectivity and space, my primary concern is tracing out the psychoanalytic subject's dependence on spatial orientation. Ultimately, I conclude that spatiality offers a key to understanding the basic instability that lies at the heart of the psychoanalytic subject.

Keywords

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1.   Theoretical Introduction and the Plan of this Study

1.1. Opening Remarks

The aim of this thesis is to describe the spatial conditions that structure and signify specific forms of psychosis and neurosis. My original intention for this project was to conduct an analysis into traumatic space. However, I soon discovered that I needed to abandon the term "traumatic" to overcome problems with ambiguity. When attempting to lay out the theoretical parameters of spatial trauma, I found myself constructing the same tautological argument over and over: "traumatic space is traumatic." I do not believe that it would be surprising to say that this type of circular reasoning is due to the indirect nature of trauma itself: the discourse of trauma repeatedly tells us that trauma cannot be described, except through its mechanisms or effects. Sigmund Freud, for example, tells us that trauma is defined as "any excitations from outside powerful enough to break through the protective shield" (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 45). Later, Jacques Lacan argues that traumatic experience comes in the form of "an image which summarizes […] that which is least penetrable in the real, of the real lacking any possible mediation, of the ultimate real, of the essential object which isn't an object any longer, but this something faced with which all words cease and all categories fail, the object of anxiety *par excellence.*" (*Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis, 1954-1955*, 164). Together, Freud and Lacan define trauma as a shattering experience caused by a phenomenon that exists outside the realm of language and signification. In the Freudian tradition, Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok extend the traditional psychoanalytic formulation of trauma by emphasizing its indescribability: "The words that cannot be uttered, the scenes that cannot be recalled, the tears that cannot be shed—everything will be swallowed along with the trauma that led to the loss" (130).

Other contemporary studies into traumatic experience have, more or less, confirmed the impossibility of "speaking" trauma. For instance, in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma,*

Narrative, and History, Cathy Caruth focuses on the dynamic interplay between "wounded" voices: "the way in which trauma is tied up with the trauma of another, through the very possibility and surprise of listening to another's wound" (8). Similarly, in *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, Dominick LaCapra argues that traumatic experience is structured through a "fidelity to trauma" (22), which is an elaboration of Freud's original conception of trauma:

> The effects of the trauma are twofold, positive and negative. The former are endeavors to revive the trauma, to remember the forgotten experience, or, better still, to make it real---to live once more through a repetition of it; if it was an early affective relationship it is revived in an analogous connection with another person. These endeavors are summed up in the terms "the fixation to trauma" and the "repetition-compulsion." (122)

Both Caruth and LaCapra write compelling and productive works that provide us with frameworks to help understand traumatic experience through particular symptoms. And yet, both texts circumnavigate a direct discussion of trauma itself. In *The Trauma Novel*, Ronald Granofsky attempts to define traumatic experiences as episodes that challenge one's ability to control reality: "I would like to stress here that […] I understand the experience of trauma to be one which defies reason and a sense of order, cripples our ability to maintain a stable sense of reality, challenges our categories of understanding and consequently [our] model of the world by which we unconsciously operate" (8). Granofsky's assessment of trauma helps to focus the lens of what traumatic experience could mean, but his definition is still broad enough that it could encapsulate a number of different psychological neuroses, psychoses, and disorders.

Other theorists have studied trauma in relation to certain moments in history, which would help explain the amorphous nature of traumatic experience through particular temporal and cultural contexts. This historical approach is essentially the move that Caruth makes in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*: she understands trauma through specific analyses of the Holocaust. In a different context, Jonathan Hart's *The Poetics of Otherness* and Paul Crothwaite's *Trauma,*

Postmodernism, and the Aftermath of World War II both seek to define trauma through the violence of war. For instance, Crothwaite argues that Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a cultural neurosis/phenomenon, as opposed to an individualized experience of repressed material breaking through the surface of one's consciousness: "I wish to take the reverse approach, however, by suggesting that trauma is best grasped not simply as an individual, psychological experience that might be analogous with certain aspects of social existence, but rather as a phenomenon that is, by definition, equally, if not *primarily*, social" (25). Crothwaite then carries out his investigation of trauma in the context of both postmodernism and the "prolonged aftermath of the Holocaust, and, to a lesser extent, the advent of atomic warfare" (27). In a related vein, Dolores Herrero and Sonia Baelo-Allue argue, "trauma and ethics are two terms inextricably linked. In fact, it is difficult to deal with trauma without taking into account the relevance of ethical criticism" (1). Herrero and Baelo-Allue's claim offers a way to move beyond the limited capacity of defining trauma as its own isolated phenomenon by using the discursive element of ethics to make sense of traumatic experience.

To move beyond a circuitous and ambiguous line of analysis, I examine traumatic experiences through a particular discursive element: spatiality. However, I have chosen to leave behind the term "trauma" and focus on the spatialization of four forms of psychological deterioration: madness, the repetition compulsion, paranoia, and anxiety. I will argue throughout this thesis that each psychological syndrome bears a close relationship to trauma. For my purposes, I define traumatic experience as encompassing two primary features. First, a traumatic experience is one that attacks the subject at the level of the symbolic order. Second, a traumatic experience is one that disrupts a subject's position in the world. Throughout this thesis, I aim to demonstrate that these two features are intimately connected to particular spaces and aspects of spatiality to establish the relationship between space and mental deterioration. Furthermore, my analysis is shaped by psychoanalysis and phenomenology, and so I want to begin by defining my theoretical fields and the relationship between psychoanalysis, phenomenology, and the spatialization of psychosis and neurosis.

1.2.   Space and Language

I approach the definition of space, in great part, as a linguistic construction that is influenced by the Lacanian concept of the symbolic order. Reconfiguring the Freudian psychoanalytic model into an expression of linguistics, Lacan argues that subjectivity is organized by symbols that govern speech and language:

> Symbols in fact envelop the life of man with a network so total that they join together those who are going to engender him by "bone and by flesh" before he comes into the world; so total that they bring to his birth, along with the gifts of the stars, if not with the gifts of the fairies, the shape of his destiny; so total they provide the words that will make him faithful or renegade, the law of acts that will follow him right to the very place where he is not yet […] ("The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis" 279)

For Lacan, language is a system that governs the construction of subjectivity: language prefigures subjectivity by handing down a network of symbols to each subject that comes into being. Space, too, is an organization of symbols, and those symbols have their origin in language. For instance, in *The Production of Space*, Henri Lefebvre offers a cross-section of spatiality that acknowledges various dimensions of space. In regards to what he refers to as "representational spaces," Lefebvre acknowledges the symbolic element inherent within spatiality:

> [space is] directly lived through its associated images and symbols […] This is the dominated – and hence passively experienced – space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects. Thus representational spaces may be said, though again with certain exceptions, to tend towards more or less coherent systems of non-verbal symbols and signs. (39)

While Lefebvre does not directly refer to Lacanian psychoanalysis, it takes no stretch of the imagination to suggest that representational space is enacted through the symbolic

order: the symbols that we apply to particular places are products of language; we attach language to the spaces we inhabit. Lefebvre states that representational space is the domain of "inhabitants" and "users," which suggests that subjects overlay space with symbols so as to make spatial arrangements comprehensible – to integrate space within the linguistic system that governs how subjects understand and describe the world (*The Production of Space* 39). Converting space into a complex network of symbols that relate to the symbolic order allows us to make use of space, to make it serve as a signifying system that supplements language. Thus, we can reinforce our linguistic comprehension of the world, making it familiar, by making symbolic use of space.

We must admit that the idea of representational space presumes that a certain level of harmony exists between space and the language used to describe space. Specifically, the presumption is that there is a one-to-one relationship between space and language: that language reflects space and space reflects language. However, psychosis and neurosis are forms of mental deterioration that disrupt the relationship between language and representational space. I look to establish particular instances of that disruption through each text that I examine in my thesis. Specifically, each text illustrates specific problems between space and the language used to describe space, beginning with the following basic premise: if space does not conform to our language, we cannot saturate it with symbols, signs, and meaning. In the first chapter of my thesis, I argue that subjects rely upon representational space to reinforce language when words fail to signify on their own. In the following chapters, I identify some particular effects that occur when subjects cannot control space through language: the breakdown of spatial practice, the inability to "read" or decode spatial symbols, and the disorientation that occurs when one tries to conquer space. Each of these problems comes to represent important ways that space disrupts the stability of subjects through various breaches in the symbolic order.

1.3.   Faulkner, Madness, and Space

In the first chapter of my thesis, entitled, "Barn Burning and the Language of Madness in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*," I examine the relationship between space and the language of madness. I use Faulkner's text to define madness specifically as the failure of

language: the inability to signify and control language produces insanity because meaning and understanding of the world are no longer possible. The debate over whether or not language can "speak" madness, exemplified in the work of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, is at the heart of my analysis. Despite occupying opposing philosophical positions, both Foucault and Derrida agree that madness has a particular affect on the syntax of language. Foucault celebrates the idea of a language founded on "imperfect words, of no fixed syntax, spoken falteringly" (*The History of Madness* xxviii); while Derrida claims that "The expression 'to say madness itself' is self-contradictory. To say madness without expelling it into objectivity is to let it say itself. But madness is what by essence cannot be said […]" ("The Cogito and the History of Madness" 43).

For Foucault, the language of madness is a linguistics founded on gaps, failures, and incoherency. In the middle of Faulkner's text, the matriarch of the Bundren family speaks from beyond the grave, and what she says primes the reader with a Foucaultian sense of language. In the only chapter given in Addie's voice, she condemns language as a system full of "words that don't ever fit even what they are trying to say at" (99). Foucault's assertion that language is a collection of imperfect words mirrors Addie's critique that speech is comprised of merely "[shapes] to fill a lack…" (*As I Lay Dying* 99). If Addie offers a concise treatise on the failure of language, Darl's experience illustrates the symptoms that occur when language can no longer signify. Grappling with the death of Addie, Darl is constantly trying to describe the loss of his mother. However, his constant inability to do so causes him to speak with "no fixed syntax" and each utterance he makes is "spoken falteringly" (*The History of Madness* xxviii). My discussion explores several of Darl's monologues to illustrate how the Bundrens' first son perpetually speaks himself deeper and deeper into madness. Specifically, madness is a consequence of being unable to "empty" his self and move beyond the loss of his mother (*As I Lay Dying* 47). Language isolates Darl because it cannot signify his feelings, and he cannot make sense of his loss. Darl's experience with language points to one of the many ironies that exist in *As I Lay Dying*: he attempts to escape language through the constant use of language. Consequently, Darl becomes locked within a linguistically-derived labyrinth that he cannot escape through the use of words.

In opposition to Foucault, Jacques Derrida contends that it is impossible to speak madness. Essentially, Derrida describes Foucault's project as fundamentally infeasible because language is a system tied to logic, which would forbid "letting madness speak for itself" ("The Cogito and the History of Madness" 33). Addie and Darl's experiences with words challenge Derrida's opposition by illustrating a separation between language and signification. Thus, defining madness as a linguistic breakdown works against Derrida's conception of language as a somewhat infallible system. However, Faulkner's text does not abandon Derrida's position altogether. Rather, in one aspect, *As I Lay Dying* tends to the complexity of the relationship between madness and language through a particular system of reason, although that system is not verbal in nature.

I will argue that the figuration of space intervenes and contributes to the articulation of madness, and it does so in a way that helps to clarify how spatiality supplements the symbolic order. In the context of *As I Lay Dying*, space can provide symbolic elements that compensate for the linguistic deficiencies of the various narrators. For instance, language prevents Darl from escaping himself and the loss of his mother. However, burning down Gillespie's barn allows Darl to free himself from the oppression of his own existence and the language that binds him to self-consciousness. The text premises Darl's emancipation on the conversion of his mother's corpse into an object. Beginning by establishing an association between Addie and the wagon, I argue that Darl enacts what LaCapra would call a conversion of "absence to loss" through an "identifiable lost object" (57). This is the symbolic potential of transitional objects as well as the representational space of the barn: the wagon and the barn fill in the absence that language cannot close, in regards to understanding Addie's death. Ultimately, this chapter sets out to demonstrate how the act of barn burning serves as a symbolic catharsis that pushes Darl beyond the constraints of language.

The symbolic value of the barn, however, extends beyond Darl's relationship and helps to compensate for another linguistic challenge that exists in Faulkner's text. Throughout the novel, Darl is often seen as strangely apart from the community, and difficult to define. In essence, Darl is indescribable. However, the community is able to condemn him as insane at the moment that he burns down Gillespie's barn because of what the barn represents.

Within the logic of Faulkner's fictional universe, the barn serves as a symbol of personal property and economic production. When Darl burns down the barn, he transgresses the law that governs his community, which finally provides his community with the evidence necessary to condemn him as insane.

My approach to *As I Lay Dying* is primarily psychoanalytic: I pursue the relationship between space and madness through ruptures in the symbolic order. I treat madness as the inability to describe absence through language, and I suggest that space can fill in that absence with its own symbolic network. Once this substitution occurs, the ego is able to transition from absence to loss by acquiring an object that houses that loss. At the same time, this opening analysis gestures towards the phenomenological aspects that are taken up directly throughout the rest of my thesis. For instance, Darl's relationship with the barn is indicative of spatiality's relationship with consciousness. First, the symbolism of the barn (and coffin and wagon) is a product of Darl's experience: it conforms to his consciousness at the moment that he converts it into an object of loss. In other words, the barn begins to reflect Darl's perception – it is converted into a symbol of his consciousness. The barn is another example of how consciousness converts space into symbols. Specifically, the barn is a representation of the community's collective conscious: it represents aspects of their right to personal property and industry. Ultimately, in "Barn Burning and the Language of Madness in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*," I set out to define madness as a linguistically-derived phenomenon while illustrating the foundations of space as a representational construction.

1.4.   *Apocalypse Now*, Spatial Practice, and the Compulsion to Repeat

In the second chapter, entitled, "Of What He Built in the Jungle: *Apocalypse Now* and the Practice of Warfare," I use the landscape of war to analyze the relationship between spatial practice and the compulsion to repeat. Beginning with the premise that representational space overlays spatial arrangements and objects, I further develop my definition of space by considering how spatial practice relates to the representational network of non-verbal symbols and signs. Specifically, I set out to illustrate how spatial

practice is contingent upon a subject's ability to "read" his or her environment. I derive the essential debate in this chapter from the somewhat contradictory points that Lefebvre makes in *The Production of Space*. Specifically, I work towards collapsing the division between representational space and spatial practice that Lefebvre attempts to maintain. Ultimately, Lefebvre creates a stark division between these two phenomena as a way of illustrating the "power" of space, which "commands bodies, prescribing or proscribing gestures, routes and distances to be covered" (143). It is clear that Lefebvre seeks to position space as a phenomenon that exists, to some degree, outside a subject's control. However, one must ask the following question: can spatiality ever be separated from the experience of symbolic language? In "Barn Burning and the Language of Madness," I began by stating that space is a specific aspect of language and that space is a product of the symbolic order. I use this second chapter to reinforce the linguistic aspect of space and expand upon my definition by arguing that spatial practice is dictated by one's ability to read space. Thus, to answer the above question, it would be difficult to theorize spatiality without acknowledging its symbolic elements. However, it would be incorrect to say that space does not control or place limitations on subjects.

The jungle in Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* (1979) is an ideal ground to explore how spatiality affects subjectivity. Specifically, the landscape in Coppola's film disrupts the relationship between spatial practice and representational space. However, this disruption is not a product of the jungle's disassociation from the symbolic order. Rather, the landscape effaces the discourse that governs spatialized warfare and replaces it with an altogether different symbolic network. The first step I take in this analysis is to illustrate the spatialized nature of warfare and how those who practice warfare are dependent on the linguistic/representational signs that guide their behavior. Again, the relationship between the symbolic order and representational space is traditionally stable; however, Coppola's jungle subverts this relationship by creating a breach between the symbolic order and representational space: the representational signs and symbols found within the landscape do not supplement the discourse of spatialized warfare. Spatial practice is directly impeded by the breach between representational space and the symbolic order because, without the directional cues offered by representational space,

the soldiers confront a landscape of emptiness – a terrain where the absence of order impedes their ability to perform.

The problem with representational space leads to problems with spatial practice because soldiers do not know how to behave in a landscape that they do not understand. They cannot function in a world that constantly defies their expectations. Ultimately, I argue that the discord between representational space and spatial practice produces the compulsion to repeat in two specific ways. First, Captain Willard converts spatial practice into the obsessive compulsion to return to the war. In essence, Willard enacts a repetition that is symptomatic of what Freud refers to as the "war neuroses" and the compulsion to return to the war itself (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 12). In *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, Freud describes this compulsion to repeat under the broader term of "traumatic neuroses:" a repetition where patients will "regularly produce the traumatic situation in their dreams" (243). However, Willard (and Kurtz) consciously reproduces the traumatic situation (the war itself) through spatial practice. In other words, the violence of the war has not yet ended; there is no dream based on his time in the jungle, only the reality of the war. Furthermore, Willard personifies the tension between the "instinctual forces [that] seek to conduct life into death" and the "life preserving forces" that ensure our survival (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 83). Willard embodies the repetitive processes undertaken by war neurotics in a slightly modified way: his compulsion to repeat is a conscious decision carried out through spatial practice, as opposed to the "manifestation of the power of the repressed" (27). To be clear, Freud describes the compulsion to repeat as a neurosis that returns one to the moment of an "accident" (13), and the violence of the accident is then re-inflicted upon the subject. However, Willard's "accident" is still occurring: his compulsion does not operate on an entirely unconscious level, as defined by Freud. Rather, Willard exerts a measure of his own will through a conscious decision to return to the war. Certainly, there could be unconscious motivations that inform Willard's decision to return to the war, which indicates his relation to a traumatic scene. However, I will focus on the conscious decisions he makes, which seek to preserve his selfhood. Furthermore, I contextualize Willard's repetition as a conscious decision to re-enter the conflict in Vietnam, which is directly related to the maintenance of his identity and self. I argue that the tension

between conflicting death and life drives produces the captain's compulsion to repeat: essentially the drive towards death is conflated with the will to live because he needs to be close to the danger of the war in order to preserve his sense of self. This is one-half of the war neuroses which is enacted by spatial practice: Willard must constantly repeat different performances in the war because his sense of self is drastically diminished when he is absent from conflict.

Colonel Walter E. Kurtz, on the other hand, maintains a more traditional relationship with the war neuroses and the compulsion to repeat. Initially, Kurtz occupies the blurred line between hysteria and the "war/traumatic neuroses" outlined by Freud in *Beyond The Pleasure Principle* (11): the colonel recalls a pile of severed arms, which were taken from the bodies of children, and this event produces symptoms of hysteria.[1] However, Kurtz comes to realize the "genius" represented in such violence (Coppola), and consequently, the colonel converts his hysteria/war neurosis into the drive towards death: he completely embodies the repetition of unchecked violence, which, in and of itself, is a complete embodiment of the death drive. Like Willard, Kurtz turns spatial practice into repetition, and he does so in two ways. First, the construction of his compound is a multi-layered representation of the original event that produced his hysteria. Second, the ideological implications of Kurtz's compound repeat the imperialism of the U.S. state, which led to his original secession from the U.S. military. Similar to Willard, Kurtz is caught between the tensions produced by the life and death drives because he converts his very existence into the production of death. However, I will argue that Kurtz's behavior in the jungle, his belief that there is a morality in war which is greater than any code created by a nation-state, and his inevitable reproduction of U.S. imperialism are indicative of what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as "the exteriority of the war machine" (354) and "the machinic enslavement" carried out by the State Apparatus and its power (466). Ultimately, Kurtz's occupation of the jungle and the spatial practice he employs in

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[1] I define Kurtz's brief bout with hysteria through Joseph Breuer, Freud, and the traditional hysterical symptoms that they catalogue in *Studies in Hysteria*. For instance, after witnessing the children's severed arms, Kurtz immediately reacts in hysterical fashion: he loses all control over language, he experiences bodily manifestations of trauma, and he loses his ability to understand what he witnesses.

his compound illustrate the reabsorption of his self-professed exterior position (exterior to the U.S. state) back into the programme of U.S. imperialism.

In "Of What He Built in the Jungle: *Apocalypse Now* and the Practice of Warfare," I define spatial practice through the compulsion to repeat, the war neuroses, and the practice of subjectivity. Specifically, when a breach opens between representational space and the symbolic language that reinforces its authority, spatial practice is converted into the compulsion to repeat. Furthermore, I argue that spatial practice perpetuates psychological neuroses when the breach between representational space and the symbolic order opens up: we lose all spatial direction when we can no longer understand the signs that we use to make sense of the world. Willard and Kurtz illustrate how the context of war turns spatial practice into an engagement with the war neuroses and the tensions that exist between the life/death instincts, the exteriority of the war machine, and the ideological control of the State.

1.5.   Auster, the City, and Paranoia

In "Infinite City: Signification, Nothingness, and Alterity in Paul Auster's *City of Glass*," the fifth chapter of my thesis, I extend spatial practice and the concept of repetition into the space of paranoia. I begin my definition of paranoia by asking the following question: can a subject disappear from space? Early in *City of Glass*, the narrator describes the effect that walking through the city of New York has on the novel's protagonist, Quinn: "New York was an inexhaustible space, a labyrinth of endless steps […] it always left him with a feeling of being lost. Lost, not only in the city, but within himself as well. Each time he took a walk, he felt as though he were leaving himself behind […]" (4). The question of whether or not Quinn can lose himself in space is a question of signification: if the experience of spatiality is tied to the symbolic order, can Quinn escape the signifying acts that tether him to language?

To begin answering the question of whether or not Quinn can disappear or lose himself in space, I pursue a psychoanalytic analysis from a phenomenological perspective: can consciousness affect the structure of the symbolic order and the subject's relationship to

representational space? To establish a definition of disappearance, I combine Michel de Certeau's concepts of walking and blindness with Jean-Paul Sartre's work on nihilation. In *The Practice of Everyday Life,* de Certeau argues that walking creates a specific text or "unrecognized poem," which the walker writes in his or her steps: "The paths that correspond in this intertwining, unrecognized poem, in which each body is an element signed by many others, elude legibility. It is as though the practices organizing a bustling city were characterized by their blindness" (91). De Certeau's statement implies that blindness is created in the network of pedestrians who traverse a city at the same time: the texts that they write and the poems that they compose remain unseen. However, a question consequently arises from de Certeau's claim: what is the nature of this blindness and how is it produced? While de Certeau does not directly answer this question, I use Sartre's theory of nihilation to explain how the act of walking can create some degree of blindness. For Sartre, consciousness can produce the experience of nothingness in the way that it nihilates and (dis)organizes specific spatial environments. In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre uses the example of trying to locate a subject ("Pierre") and meeting absence in his place (41). The doomed search for Pierre produces a specific cause and effect:

> When I enter this café to search for Pierre, there is formed a synthetic organization of all the objects in the café, the ground of which Pierre is given to appear. This organization of the café as the ground is an original nihilation. Each element of the setting, a person, a table, a chair, attempts to isolate itself, to lift itself upon the ground constituted by the totality of the other objects, only to fall back once more into the undifferentiation of this ground; it melts into the ground. (41)

The sensation of nothingness is produced as the café, its objects, and the people who inhabit it disappear. However, disappearance and nothingness are not produced in a physical sense. Rather, nihilation is an act of consciousness in which a subject chooses to remain blind to anything that exists outside her search. For Quinn to disappear, he would need to hide in the blindness of other pedestrians who fixate on their individual

trajectories. Consequently, the act of walking and the construction of space are, in part, acts of consciousness.

However, paranoia does not permit Quinn to disappear from the streets. In the context of *City of Glass*, I define paranoia as a neurotic need to signify and create meaning, which is brought on by Quinn's involvement with the Stillman case. I argue that *City of Glass* treats "meaning" and "knowledge" as one's ability to create a story that could bring about a resolution. To be specific, Quinn attempts to produce meaning by establishing a story that would explain the movement of Stillman – the man at the center of his case. The fact that Quinn treats meaning as a story is a product of the detective fiction genre: traditional detectives solve their cases via their ability to deduce or rationalize a story from a set of clues. *City of Glass* presents itself as detective fiction, and the novel positions Quinn as a writer of mystery novels. Consequently, Quinn's entire belief system, as a detective, is based on the conventions that shape the genre of detective fiction. But Auster uses these rules against Quinn: meaning becomes impossible to construct, and Quinn's belief in the world becomes increasingly paranoiac. I argue that Quinn's constant attempts to construct a story in a world where meaning is completely absent reflects Jacques Lacan's treatment of paranoia as a neurosis based, in part, on delusions. In *The Seminars of Jacques Lacan: Book III The Psychoses 1955-1956*, Lacan argues that paranoia is akin to a constant sensation that we are almost within reach of meaning: "It's a question of things that in themselves already make themselves understood. And by virtue of this fact, we ourselves feel that we are within reach of understanding. This is where the illusion starts to emerge – since it's a question of understanding, we understand. Well, no, precisely not" (21). The illusion that we, as subjects, understand the world is caused by the delusion that we can understand things that exist in the world. Therefore, I argue that *City of Glass* and Quinn's paranoia illustrates Lacan's argument that "all human knowledge [is] paranoiac" ("The Mirror Image as Formation of the I Function" 72).

Furthermore, I argue that Auster's novel treats paranoia as an essentially spatial phenomenon. The spatial character of paranoia is rooted in the relationship that Quinn builds with the city: New York City is responsible for fostering the numerous delusions that Quinn struggles to grasp in regards to his case. To explain the complex relationship

between Quinn and the city, I triangulate the theory of Emmanuel Levinas, Paul Virilio, and Michel de Certeau. First, I argue that Levinas's concept of the Other is the foundational characteristic that ties Quinn to the city. In other words, faced with the meaninglessness[2] that weighs down the Stillman case, Quinn positions the city as an Other from which he attempts to compile meaning.

Specifically, I suggest that Levinas's theory on distance and exteriority can contextualize the way that Quinn creates graphic space between his self and Stillman: in an attempt to produce a story, Quinn maps out a language based on the routes that Stillman takes throughout the city streets. Quinn's position in the city illustrates Levinas's argument that to transcend the totality of the "I" is to engage in a relationship with an externalized Other: "To have the idea of Infinity it is necessary to exist as separated. […] It is not the insufficiency of the I that prevents totalization, but the Infinity of the Other" (79-80). However, the relationship between Quinn and the city is essentially paranoiac in nature because the city-as-Other is a product of his paranoid belief that meaning exists within Stillman's movements.

Consequently, Quinn is always in pursuit of Stillman and tracking Stillman's movements through the streets is his primary mode of detection. Ultimately, I argue that both Quinn and Stillman are emblematic of Virilio's work on trajectivity. Describing his theoretical project, Virilio writes, "I have even proposed to inscribe the trajectory between the subject and the object to create the neologism 'trajective,' in addition to 'subjective' and 'objective.' I am thus a man of the trajective, and the city is the site of trajectories and trajectivity. It is the site of proximity between men [...]" (*Politics of the Very Worst* 39-

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[2] Though I have attempted to define how meaning functions within Auster's novel, the concept is quite complicated within the text. Thus, another note on the state of meaning is necessary. Meaning is certainly absent from *City of Glass.* However, the meaninglessness that Quinn faces is not always a product of a sheer absence of meaning. Rather, there is a plenitude or overabundance of meaning within the novel: as I will explore in the second chapter, Quinn views everything that he comes into contact with as a potential clue. Therefore, meaning is somewhat impossible to create definitively because far too many possibilities exist to create an individual story that contains all the "facts." Thus, to state that Quinn confronts meaninglessness is to acknowledge the overwhelming sense of meaning that Quinn could not hope to organize. In other words, the abundance of meaning ironically makes it impossible to bring about a resolution to the Stillman case.

40). For Virilio, the trajectory, the movement conducted by the traject, is where knowledge and understanding are produced: without this movement, "we will never achieve a profound understanding of the various regimes of perception of the world" (*Open Sky* 24). Quinn uses Stillman's daily movements through the streets as the impetus for the story he is searching for: he looks for a spatialized language by mapping out Stillman's footsteps. In creating these maps, treating Stillman as a trajective being, Quinn is able to achieve a distance between his self and the city within the topographic space of the map, and it is this distance that allows Quinn to parse meaning from Stillman's behavior. I argue that Auster's text treats representational space as topographical space, and I argue that the act of walking is a form of spatial practice - the language "spoken" in the footsteps of the "*Wandersmänner"* (de Certeau 93). To establish the nature of this language, I use de Certeau's argument that walking is akin to a "pedestrian speech act" (97) to illustrate how Quinn creates a dialogue between himself and the subject of his case. By establishing this dialogue, Quinn is able to build linguistically-based delusions, which he uses to explain the Stillman case. De Certeau's argument keeps the theoretical perspective of my analysis balanced between psychoanalysis and phenomenology, the symbolic order and acts of consciousness: the representational space of the city becomes a product of Quinn's interpretation and the paths he creates from Stillman's footsteps.

However, once again, Quinn's efforts are entirely paranoiac in nature. To demonstrate his continued paranoia, I combine de Certeau's theory of the "pedestrian speech act" with Lacan's argument that paranoia is constructed, in part, via "verbal hallucination." Combining these two theories helps to illustrate how pedestrian speech acts are yet another example Quinn's delusions.[3] Furthermore, I argue that the pedestrian speech act is emblematic of paranoia because it is merely a play of substitution carried out by the paranoiac who must constantly shift into new sets of meaning as the previous sets inevitably fail. Using Jacques Derrida's "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the

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[3] The concept of the delusion here differs from the Freudian notion that paranoiac delusions are based on the "self-observation—in the sense of the paranoiac's delusion of being watched […] ("On Narcissism" 54). Freud's formation of paranoid delusion begins with the fear that one is constantly being monitored. What I refer to as the delusion of meaning, though related to the Freudian concept, is the constant belief that meaning exists in the world and the belief that that meaning can be discovered.

Human Sciences," I suggest that the lack of meaning at the heart of the novel is reflective of the absence of centrality within the Stillman case. Specifically, Quinn enacts the play of substitution in two ways: he must choose a subject to follow, and he must interpret Stillman's movements. These two elements of the novel illustrate Derrida's claim that "anxiety is invariably the result of a certain mode of being implicated in the game, of being caught by the game […]" (279). For Quinn, the game is the Stillman case, and the game demands that he constantly substitute different sets of meaning in and out of the case. What Derrida refers to as anxiety, I refer to as paranoia: Quinn's attempts to turn the case into a coherent story are symptomatic of the belief that meaning should exist. In other words, the substitutions that Quinn makes when interpreting the Stillman case perpetuate the basic paranoid delusion that meaning must exist.

Ultimately, I treat paranoia as a spatial/linguistic neurosis. Specifically, paranoia is represented as the attempt to discern meaning within the representational/symbolic space of the city. Quinn's relationship to the city-as-Other is based on converting his subject (Peter Stillman) into a trajective being by mapping out the footsteps he takes in the streets. Trajectivity facilitates the production of paranoia because the trajective being offers Quinn the ability to create a story through various pedestrian speech acts. However, these speech acts are merely delusions - the paranoid substitutions that Quinn must make in order to create a tenuous story. Thus, the city is the space of paranoia because Quinn believes that meaning lies somewhere in the streets. I conclude this chapter with a consideration of Derrida's "Violence and Metaphysics" to emphasize the state of Quinn's paranoia. I gesture towards Derrida's critique of Levinas to emphasize further how paranoia is produced through the relationship with the Other. Specifically, Derrida argues that we are unable to assimilate the Other within the symbolic order, which suggests that the Other cannot be understood and expressed through language. Thus, the relationship between the subject and the Other perpetuates paranoia due to the subject's repeated attempts at understanding the meaning he or she glimpses in the Other.

1.6. Anxiety, *House of Leaves*, and the Spatial Uncanny

In the final chapter of this dissertation, I set out to define the boundaries of anxiety as it is produced by the spatial uncanny. The theoretical framework that I establish in "The House on Ash Tree Lane and the Spatial Uncanny" is equal parts psychoanalysis and phenomenology,[4] and each theoretical approach is concerned with a particular aspect of the house: the architectural (exterior) and the interior composition. First, I define the architectural level of the spatial uncanny as a form of consciousness. Second, I argue that the interiority of the house is a construction of repressed memory, which is unlocked by a confrontation with the uncanny. It is necessary to define these levels of space individually to clarify how each contributes to the production of uncanniness. I organize my analysis of the uncanny through the structure of a house, which "provided an especially favored site for uncanny disturbances: its apparent domesticity, its residue of family history and nostalgia, its role as the last and most intimate shelter of private comfort sharpened by contrast the terror of invasion by alien spirits" (Vidler 17). Specifically, I pursue my analysis by suggesting that a house is itself capable of producing uncanny experiences, as opposed to being invaded by something unfamiliar. And, from the outset of this chapter, I situate the spatial uncanny within the theory of Freud's "The Uncanny," as it sets out the basic criterion of the *unheimlich*.

The production of the spatialized uncanny begins at the level of architecture: uncanniness is produced through spatial disorientation. Drawing upon Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Martin Heidegger, and Sara Ahmed, I define disorientation as a state that occurs when a subject cannot synthesize his or her position in space simply by inhabiting it. If Merleau-Ponty argues that consciousness structures spatiality by "taking up a position in space" (*Phenomenology of Perception* 236), disorientation disrupts this conscious experience, inhibiting a subject's ability to navigate an environment freely. In other words,

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[4] Specifically, I trace out spatial disorientation in regards to Merleau-Ponty and the ways that bodies extend into space as well as Martin Heidegger's theory of thrownness.

disorientation occurs when spatial structures forbid the practice of space. I define spatial disorientation through what Heidegger refers to as "thrownness," in which "everyday familiarity breaks down" (183), and by which the subject is returned to the immediate alienation that governs his or her original entry into the world. Within the state of thrownness lies an anxiety that is produced when a subject confronts the idea of existence itself (Heidegger 181), and I link Heidegger's sense of anxiety to Freud's definition of the uncanny. Specifically, I connect Heidegger's conception of thrownness with Freud's claim that uncanniness returns us to a state where "the primitive beliefs we have surmounted seem once more confirmed" (17). To be clear, I contextualize Heidegger's thrownness within Freud's discussion of anxiety, fear, and the uncanny ("The Uncanny" 13). In "The House on Ash Tree Lane and the Spatial Uncanny," I suggest that disorientation disrupts spatial practice, which produces uncanny anxiety. In other words, disorientation occurs when the actions we take to make the world familiar, to move beyond the anxiety of "the nothing and the nowhere," are no longer possible (Heidegger 181).

I define the interior composition of the spatial uncanny as being governed by the consciousness of the subject who inhabits a particular space. However, in the context of uncanniness, consciousness itself is governed by what Freud refers to as "repressed infantile complexes [that] have been revived by some impression" ("The Uncanny" 17). But I argue that the uncanny provides the materials with which to build a theoretical bridge between psychoanalytic and phenomenological approaches to understanding spatiality, specifically through the function of memory. In *The Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty suggests that memory is an integral part of how consciousness constructs space: memories coordinate space, and memories allow the body to "[retain] its identity through the stages of […] movements" (235). In other words, the memories produced when navigating a room constitute both space and the self. To connect phenomenology to psychoanalysis, I assert that the unconscious can govern the experience of spatiality via repressed memories that make their way out of latency, augmenting the perception of space.

Repression is also the mechanism that connects the internal composition of the spatial uncanny to anxiety. In *Modernism and the Architecture of Private Life*, Victoria Rosner argues, "Literary modernism, in this way of thinking, seeks a means of representation that is determined by the need to repudiate its connection to the past. And modernist spaces become the key to retrieving that submerged connection even as they deny their own history" (15). Though not a modernist text, *House of Leaves* thematizes anxiety in the image of the Navidson house. It does so through the position Johnny Truant takes up as the editor of "The Navidson Record:" Truant's editorial efforts establish a firm connection between the intimate space of the home and a subject's (repressed) history. In this way, *House of Leaves* organizes the Navidson house as a "solipsistic heightener" (Danielewski 165) affected by the subject that inhabits the house: "the house, the halls, the room all become self – collapsing, expanding, tilting, closing, but always in perfect relation to the mental state of the individual" (Danielewski 165). Truant's position as editor illustrates the solipsism of the Navidson house through the construction of the text itself: "The Navidson Record" is a representational void that becomes filled in with the repressed memories of Truant, who is compelled to put the text back together. The production of anxiety is cyclic in nature: the text causes Truant's anxiety, and, subsequently, the text is constructed in the image of that anxiety. Thus, the space of the text becomes the space of the uncanny: "The Navidson Record" is taken over by Truant's anxiety, and the narrative comes to reflect his repressed past as much as it tells the story of Will and Karen Navidson. My discussion of anxiety is formed throughout by *The Seminars of Jacques Lacan Book X: Anxiety 1962-1963*, in which Lacan states, "Anxiety, as I've told you, is linked to anything that might appear at the place of [lack]" (47). The place of lack opens up a "cut" (76) within the symbolic order through which absence "appears [and] casts [one] into a completely different dimension" (59). In this chapter, I argue that anxiety is brought on by the spatial uncanny through disorientation and the return of repressed material. First, disorientation impedes spatial practice, which produces a specific lack within the subject's constitution. Second, repression is the mechanism that casts a subject into an alternate dimension by forcing him or her to confront those memories that should have been left behind.

However, to state that the text is the space of the uncanny necessarily implicates the reader because he or she, too, constructs the space of the novel. To theorize the reader's position within the space of the uncanny, I adopt the novel's own theory on echoes to illustrate how he or she is compelled to organize Truant's repressed past. The function of echoes offers a definition of interpretation and an explanation of how the reader occupies an architectural position within the novel. First, echoes offer a method of interpretation that connects seemingly disparate narrative information. Specifically, echoes of narrative information resonate between Truant, his repressed past, and the novel's appendices. The reader intervenes within the text and ascribes meaning to those echoes through the process of interpretation. These echoes are themselves uncanny: the echo is based upon the return of narrative information the reader has left behind, and the return inflects that narrative information with new meaning. Thus, the echo is both familiar and unfamiliar at the same time: each echo colors current narrative information with a vague sense of something left behind and vice versa. The interpretative process implicates the reader within the construction of the text by goading him or her into piecing together the narrative. Interpretation, then, causes the reader to be an architect of sorts: if *House of Leaves* attempts to transmit a labyrinth within the typography of the text, the reader's interpretive acts threaten to strengthen the integrity of the labyrinth itself by adding more narrative twists and turns. Ultimately, the act of interpretation converts the anxiousness that surrounds the text into the act of reading, and the reader suffers the anxiety of reading *House of Leaves*.

In "The House on Ash Tree Lane and the Spatial Uncanny," I define uncanniness as a system of return, which is mediated through the structure of a house. At the architectural level, the spatial uncanny disorients a subject and returns him or her to a state of thrownness that is governed by the anxiety of those "primitive beliefs" ("The Uncanny 17), which lie at the heart of existence. The interior composition, on the other hand, builds a structure in the image of repressed memories and the anxiety that they create. However, to conclude this chapter, I argue that this examination illustrates that the uncanny has a firm relationship with fear, in addition to anxiety. Using Heidegger's conception of fear (180), I make the distinction that fear is attached to particular objects or forces while anxiety "is not encountered as something definite to be taken care of; the

threat does not come from something at hand and objectively present […]" (327). To bridge this distinction, I align my discussion of fear and anxiety with what Freud calls a transition between "internal" and "external dangers" (*New Introductory Lectures to Psychoanalysis* 117). Thus, the symptoms of the spatial uncanny are both anxiety and fear: uncanniness can produce fear, but anxiety persists if one cannot localize that fear within a particular object or figure.

1.7.   A Note on Subjectivity

While my project is not specifically concerned with an analysis of gender or masculinity, I would be remiss not to acknowledge the constructed logic of the white, masculine subject who lies at the heart of each text that I take up in this dissertation. As Dana D. Nelson argues in *National Manhood*, masculinity functions as a dominant ideology within American culture that can be studied: "National manhood provides a new ideological framing for interactions between men and for expressions of more locally organized ideologies of manhood, seemingly guaranteeing that aggressive behavior will lead to the health (and wealth), rather than the fragmentation of the nation" (15). More broadly, E. Anthony Rotundo's *American Manhood* offers a cross-section of various iterations of masculinity that include "communal," "self-made," and "passionate manhood" (2-5). Rotundo suggests that the idea of communal manhood is established in colonial America where "a man's identity was inseparable from the duties he owed to his community" (2). As early as John Winthrop's "Modell of Christian Charity" (1629), William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation* (1651), and Hector Crevecoeur's address of what it means to be "American" in *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782), American narratives establish a communal idea of masculinity. However, I would argue that American narrative and its surrounding criticism (as well as cultural criticism) engages primarily with representations of what Rotundo calls self-made masculinity.

The logic of self-made masculinity can be found in *The Declaration of Independence* (1776) and its affirmation of the individual pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness, at the expense of the community. As Rotundo argues, "Men rejected the idea that they had a fixed place in any hierarchy, be it cosmic or social. They no longer thought themselves as

part of an organic community from which they drew personal identity" (Rotundo 19). Rotundo continues, "This new man—this atom—was free of the cord of generations that had given his forefathers a place in historical time. The past did not weigh him down in his struggle to make himself whatever he dreamed of being" (Rotundo 19). Similarly, in *Men Beyond Desire: Manhood, Sex, and Violation in American Literature*, David Greven explains how this individualistic conception of masculinity converted manhood into an economic unit:

> The classic studies of self-made manhood, Irvin G. Wyllie's 1954 *The Self-Made Man in America* and John G. Cawelti's 1965 *Apostles of Self-Made Men*, each focused on the implications for capitalism of the figure of the self-made man, treated as a peculiarly American economic phenomenon: self-made manhood as a moral system for the individual acquisition of wealth. (3)

However, American narratives also illustrate that personal industry comes in many forms and that the performance of self-made manhood, too, is enacted in various ways. The 19th-century offers a breadth of work that conceptualizes self-made manhood or ideas of individualized masculinity in various ways. Prime examples are the works of James Fennimore Cooper's *The Leatherstocking Tales* in which Natty Bumppo's integrity and mastery are pitted against the wilderness of the American landscape. In Cooper's work, the romance narrative is mobilized to celebrate the self-made manhood of the warrior who is able to use strength, cunning, and bravery to carve a place within nature. By contrast, Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Self-Reliance" (1841) offers a portrait of individual masculinity as an intellectually-based project: "To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men, - that is genius" (53). Moreover, Emerson suggests that masculinity is expressed through an explicit commitment to individualism and the self: "A man is to carry himself in the presence of all opposition, as if everything were titular and ephemeral but he. I am ashamed to think how easily we capitulate to badges and names, to large societies and dead institutions" (56). Emerson's view emphasizes a necessary individual autonomy over any communal constructions or affiliations. Self-made masculinity, then, presents a subject who

proposes to be industrious, libertarian, and strong enough to be sustained through self-reliance.[5]

Despite these critical assessments of white masculinity that dominate American culture, my focus is concerned with the breakdown of this particular subject. Again, it is important to stress that I do not approach subjectivity from a specifically gendered or racial lens. Rather, I organize the breakdown of subjectivity in regards to spatiality and the relationships that subjects take up with and within space. Furthermore, I set out to establish a framework from which to understand a psychoanalytic subject, as opposed to establishing a particularly nationalistic view of the "American" subject. And yet the focus of my thesis is how spatiality and psychological deterioration intersect within American texts. Specifically, I look at the ways that the psychoanalytic subject is shaped, affected, and, at times, disfigured through spatial arrangements of madness, repetition-compulsion, paranoia, and uncanny anxiety. Over the course of this project, I hope to elaborate on these contexts and offer a way to envision the psychoanalytic subject as fundamentally unstable and one who is deeply affected by specific spatial structures and environments within the American landscape. Thus, the place of the white masculine subject within my project is more symptomatic of the texts that deal with spatiality and psychological breakdown as opposed to a conscious attempt to figure a specific gendered or racialized analysis of the white American male.

There is a specific consequence produced by studying the texts that I have chosen: the scope of my analysis is limited to portrayals of one particular version of subjectivity within an American context. This is why it is important to acknowledge that the subject at

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[5] However, American narrative contains a body of work that challenges the industry of masculinity and the ability to achieve the American dream through one's work. John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* (1937) and *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) portray the debilitating effects that the Great Depression levied on Americans' ability to work and provide for self and family. The urban structure of John Dos Passo's *Manhattan Transfer* (1925) is composed of the disparity between the wealthy white men who are able to gain fortune and the downtrodden immigrant males, like Bud Korpenning who struggles to find gainful employment and self-sufficiency: "Thought I could git work as a longshoreman, ma'am, but they're layin' men off down on the wharves. Mebbe I kin go to sea as a sailor but nobody wants a green hand....I aint et for two days now" (54). Dos Passo's novel illustrates the exclusivity that sections off the male immigrant experience from the privilege of white masculinity.

the heart of my dissertation is not nationalistically-derived. Establishing a comprehensive view of the American subject greatly exceeds the scope of my thesis because American subjectivity is comprised of more than the perspective of the white, heterosexual male: portrayals and issues concerning the marginalization of femininity and ethnicity, at the expense of white masculinity,[6] offer productive avenues to explore the formation of American subjectivity, and these perspectives add a more diverse and accurate representation of the collective American "subject." Furthermore, the theorization of these subjects has produced an ocean of literary works and criticism that deserves more than a cursory glance, which could threaten to undermine their importance if approached in an abbreviated manner. Moving forward in my own theoretical work, a next step would be to conduct an investigation into the ways that space, psychosis, and neurosis are portrayed in specific regard to the American subject and the wide range of race and gender that the term encapsulates.

1.8.   Closing Remarks

Throughout this thesis, I do depend on the notion of the subject. For the purposes of my argument, I define the subject as a spatially dependent being. This dependence is established through the subject's own linguistically-based constitution. In one sense, subjects are linguistic constructions dependent on "the itinerary of the signifier" ("Seminar on the Purloined Letter" 7) or the complex linguistic network of the symbolic order: it is through the inheritance of language that the world becomes a comprehensible

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[6] It should be noted that American studies have illustrated that the state of white heterosexual masculinity is inherently fragile, despite its dominant position within American culture. The Cold War context offers a number of analyses that challenge traditional and normative constructions of masculinity: In *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War* K.A. Cuordileone suggests that the 1950s ushered in a crisis in manhood that challenged conceptions of masculinity: "Anxieties about an erosion of masculinity, shifting gender norms and behaviors, and the perception of a breakdown of sexual boundaries were inextricably bound up with the growing dread of the 'soft' malleable American psyche" (104). Robert J. Corber's *Homosexuality in Cold War America: resistance and the crisis of masculinity*, Michael Davidson's *Guys like us: citing masculinity in Cold War Poetics*, and Craig M. Loftin's *Masked Voices: gay men and lesbians in cold war America* all examine the ways in which gender anxiety pervaded the American cultural landscape. The tensions that challenge heteronormative male sexuality are taken up within American fiction as well: from the plays of Tennessee Williams to Ernest Hemingway's portrayal of impotence in *The Sun Also Rises* to the poetry of Allen Ginsberg offer various portrayals of manhood that complicate a straightforward notion of masculinity.

network of signs, signifiers, and significations. This is a primary way that the world becomes familiar: experience is indexed, defined, and labeled in the image of language. The outside world reflects our own internal linguistic makeup. To state that space is an "experience" is important because it implies that subjects practice space through acts of consciousness. In other words, spatial practice is the experience of space through acts of consciousness, and it is spatial practice that perpetuates subjectivity. To be clear, I define subjectivity through performances in space: subjects perform their subjectivity by navigating and practicing space. For instance, Willard's identification as a soldier is dependent upon his ability to perform in the Vietnam War, and, in *House of Leaves*, the Exploration #4 team defines its subjectivity through their expeditions and explorations.

In my reading, what Lefebvre refers to as representational space is compulsory for the maintenance of the subject: representational space breaks down if a subject is unable to synthesize space through the symbolic. The effect of this breakdown is a breach between language and space, and the imminent danger of becoming lost in that breach looms over the subject. In the trajectory of this thesis, I set out to establish how subjects are spatially dependent beings and how that dependence is, in part, linguistically ordered. However, the symptoms that occur when subjects become lost in the breach between language and space can be phenomenological in nature. For instance, madness and paranoia, which are established and understood through the dynamics of language and space, are forms of psychosis and neurosis that govern the perception and practice of spatiality. The distinctions between unconsciousness and consciousness are blurred by the way that the primary material of my thesis treats the compulsion to repeat and uncanny anxiety because at some point each character comes to realize the deterioration of his psyche. In other words, at some point the unconscious aspect of the compulsion to repeat and uncanny anxiety disappear, and these characters acknowledge the compromised state of their psyches. The combination of these texts illustrates that space is an experience of consciousness, and they link conscious experience to the (in)stability of the symbolic order.

Finally, I define subjects as unstable beings. Here, I draw upon the Heideggerian conception of thrownness. As indicated in the final chapter of this thesis, spatial

disorientation can disclose the fundamental anxiety that lies within the "nothing and the nowhere" of our existence (181). However, anxiety is but one symptom that occurs when space breaks from the control of a subject. Rather than assent to a one-to-one relationship between thrownness and anxiety, I argue that spatialized neuroses materialize and bring us toward the fundamental instability that governs our existence. Therefore, the theoretical aim of this thesis can be qualified as an effort to understand the relationship between space, subjects, and psychological deterioration.

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2. Barn Burning and the Language of Madness in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*

In regards to both literature and criticism, American narratives establish madness as a trope used to configure subjectivity in several ways. One such way is to depict madness through a direct relationship with language: one's ability to control one's speech is often a determining factor in whether one is considered sane. As early as Edgar Allan Poe, American fiction demonstrates that madness is a linguistic expression. The opening pages of the "Tell-Tale Heart" (1843) directly take up the notion of insanity, what it means, and the criteria of such a "disease":

> True!—nervous—very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why will you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my sense— not destroyed—not dulled them. Above all the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad? Hearken! and observe how healthily—how calmly I can tell you the story. (568)

These introductory lines introduce a division between the insane and sane, which is created by specific conditions: control over the physical faculties of the body, the acquisition of knowledge, and control over language. Specifically, Poe's narrator uses his ability to tell his story as evidence that he is sane. Similarly, the narrator of "The Black Cat" (1843) begins his story by making a defense against any accusation that he is mad:

> For the most wild yet most homely narrative which I am about to pen, I neither expect nor solicit belief. Mad indeed would I be to expect it, in a case where my very senses reject their own evidence. Yet, mad am I not— and very surely I do not dream. But to-morrow I die, and to-day I would unburden my soul. (417)

Similar to "The Tell-Tale Heart," "The Black Cat" is structured through the narrator's ability to confess his crimes through writing. Both of Poe's stories establish that sanity can be measured by one's ability to control language.

However, it is clear that these men are insane despite their ability to recount their stories. For instance, one narrator kills his neighbor for no other reason except to "rid [himself] of the eye" of the old man "forever" ("Tell-Tale Heart"), and the other narrator kills his wife with an axe in a fit of rage when she stops him from killing the cat. Such behavior is indicative of two minds that are clearly deteriorating to some degree. However, retaining control over speech and writing is one way that these madmen can hide their madness from society. For instance, the police who inspect the disappearances of their respective victims visit both men, and each man can convince the police that he was not involved in any crime. However, in regards to the "The Black Cat," the narrator is undone by his own hubris: he gloats at the structural integrity of the wall that conceals his wife by knocking on the brick, which results in a "continuous scream—a howl—a wailing shriek" that came from the "hideous beast whose craft had seduced [the narrator] into murder, whose informing voice had consigned [him] to the hangman" (431). While in "The Tell-Tell Heart," it is a gradual nervousness that overcomes the narrator when in the presence of the police: he slowly begins to hallucinate that the old man's heart is still beating beneath the floorboards, and he is compelled to confess his crime (575).

The ability that these narrators possess to blend into society, at least for a brief amount of time, hiding their madness from the sight of others, signals an important distinction between male and female portrayals of insanity. Gender plays an important role in the representation and understanding of madness in American literature. In *Readings of Trauma, Madness, and the Body*, Sarah Wood Anderson outlines some of the differences that exist between men, women, and depictions of madness:

> The lens of gender provides a perspective on reading madness that reveals fundamental understandings of masculinity and femininity. Why is it that madmen can appear indistinguishable from sane men, whereas mad

women tend to the other end of the spectrum---dysfunctional, destructive, dangerous? (57)

Anderson's question identifies a discrepancy that exists between masculine and feminine depictions of madness, and, certainly, there is merit to Anderson's question. Depictions of hysteria and other more performative bouts of psychological neuroses often organize a more feminine version of madness. Moreover, these women are often relegated to the control of the men in their lives. In Charlotte Gilman Perkins's "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892), the female narrator is diagnosed with "temporary nervous depression" and "slight hysterical tendency" (196). It is the narrator's husband, a physician, who assesses her mental health, and it is he who isolates her within a bedroom for the duration of the story. Under the control of the husband and the assumption that she is hysterical, the narrator slowly slips into madness due to the inertia that is forced upon her. Forty-one years later, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender is the Night* (1934), which fictionalizes the tempestuous mental decline of his wife, is, in part, a portrayal of Nicole Diver, an "eccentric schizoid" (170) that is married to her psychoanalyst, Dick Diver, who is charged with treating her deteriorating psyche. In a similar vein, Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* (1963) illustrates how the mental decline of Esther Greenwood is compounded by electroconvulsive therapy that she receives while institutionalized and under the care of Dr. Gordon, which makes her wonder, "what terrible thing it was that I had done" (138). These novels and the depictions of feminine madness stand in stark contradistinction to the masculinized version of insanity offered by Poe and his narrators---for the majority of their narratives.

Masculine depictions of madness certainly seem to afford men a certain level of agency that allows them to blend into their surroundings, which their female counterparts lack. For instance, Bret Easton Ellis's *American Psycho* (1991) is concerned with Patrick Bateman's inseparability from the culture in which he is immersed. A wealthy, young investment banker, Bateman's domain is the public forum where his social performativity is evidenced through fashion, music, and business cards. It is within the wide-open environment of Wall Street that Bateman, the serial killer, rapist, and torturer, hides. Furthermore, the psychotic action that Bateman repeats over and over again is so deeply related to the idea of public spectacle that some of his deviant behavior is propelled when

people fail to acknowledge the performance of his wealth. For instance, he kills one of his victims because she is not able to discern the brand of his expensive clothing (247).

Even within the controlled environment of institutionalization, male protagonists can challenge openly the administration that is supposed to control them. In *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962), Randle McMurphy is able to upset the order that Nurse Ratched attempts to impose on the inmates of the mental asylum. The disturbances caused by McMurphy, such as smuggling "whores" (197) into the hospital, illustrate a struggle over control between himself and Nurse Ratched.[7] In his discussion of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, Salah el Moncef suggests, "as a general critique, *Cuckoo's Nest* finds its most significant expression [in the] symbolization of the marginalized subject, its association with an atopian symbolic space which signals both the limits of the system and its incapacity to fully account for the (non)identity of its 'aberrant individuals.'" The space of madness (the institution that houses McMurphy and Bromden) illustrates the breakdown between subjectivity and the institutions that are responsible for sustaining and rehabilitating subjects. Thus, madness is a trope that spans across the canon of American narrative. The difference between masculine and feminine depictions of madness. Male figures are typically able to retain their agency and move freely throughout their worlds while females are incarcerated by other male characters.

In this chapter, I consider madness in the modernist work of William Faulkner, specifically as it is portrayed in his fifth novel, *As I Lay Dying* (1930). Faulkner's text is an ideal site to analyze the subject's relationship with madness because it offers clear boundaries within which to develop a theory that concerns the production and function of insanity. Specifically, *As I Lay Dying* concerns itself with what I will argue is the principal condition of madness: the breakdown of language. In regards to linguistic illustrations of madness, *As I Lay Dying* exists in the company of Poe's narrators who attempt to demonstrate their sanity through linguistic control only to have their madness accentuated as their grip on words gradually comes undone. Moreover, *As I Lay Dying* is

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[7] However, McMurphy's rebellion is only temporary, and he eventually receives a lobotomy as a result of a violent physical altercation with Ratched (277).

a text that adds another element to depictions of madness, particularly in regards to language. Specifically, the novel utilizes the symbolic quality of space to expand upon the relationship between linguistic communication and insanity. I do not mean to suggest that space is a revolutionary condition of Faulkner's novel,[8] but *As I Lay Dying* is an ideal text to examine the psychosis of madness because it unites language, spatiality, and the tension between freedom and oppression.

At the heart of *As I Lay Dying*'s depiction of madness is the inability to control language, and it is the failure of words that shifts the narrative focus towards spatiality and objects: spatial structures offer a means to overcome the linguistic deficiencies that plague the text and its characters. *As I Lay Dying* is yet one example of the emphasized role that materiality is given within Faulkner's literature. In *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), the psychological deterioration of Quentin Compson is symbolized within the watch he obsesses over, which was given to him by his father: "I went up to the dresser and took up the watch, with the face still down. I tapped the crystal on the corner of the dresser and caught the fragments of glass in my hand and put them into the ashtray and twisted the hands off and put them in the tray. The watch ticked on" (80). The inability to destroy the watch symbolizes Quentin's inability to escape the past that haunts him throughout his entire section. Furthermore, the breakdown of language also establishes his mental deterioration. Toward the end of his chapter, all grammatical and syntactic rules are abandoned in his speech: "Tell me and be damned then see what it gets you if you were

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[8] Rather, the reality is quite the contrary: for instance, Perkins's *The Yellow Wallpaper* is an early example of the spatialization of madness as the room and the wallpaper manifest the decline of the narrator's mind:

> I really have discovered something at last […] The front pattern *does* move—and no wonder! The woman behind shakes it! Sometimes I think there are a great many women behind, and sometimes only one, and she crawls around fast, and her crawling shakes it all over […] And she is all the time trying to climb through. But nobody could climb through that pattern—it strangles so; I think that's why it has so many heads. (211)

 Suffering through her isolation, the narrator begins to hallucinate that other women are trapped, like herself, within the pattern on the wall. Thus, the wallpaper and the room translate the mental deterioration of the narrator. Furthermore, Plath's Esther Greenwood describes her psychological decline and subsequent removal from society as though she is trapped under a bell jar. Even Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* illustrates the spatiality of madness through the institutional space of the insane asylum. Thus, Faulkner's work is neither the first nor the only consideration of the spatial conditions of madness.

not a damned fool you'd have seen that I've got them too tight for any half-baked Galahad of a brother your mother told me about your sort with your head swelled up come in oh come in dear Quentin [...]" (110). Quentin's depression and psychological degeneration are established in the way that he loses control over his words and in the memories that he cannot organize or contain through speech. *As I Lay Dying* extends the problems with language that Quentin demonstrates in a more philosophically organized way: Addie's chapter offers some basic problems with signification, and Darl's experience illustrates the symptoms of linguistic deficiency. I argue that the failure of language leads to the substitution of spatial structures and material objects so as to fill in the gaps created by words that do not work. For example, particular spaces and objects illustrate the tension between madness as freedom and madness as grounds for incarceration: the barn that Darl sets on fire is both a site that frees him from language and the evidence used to condemn him to the mental asylum. Thus, *As I Lay Dying* is a text that deals with a variety of important elements that exist within American depictions of madness and how psychosis relates to the subject. In this chapter, I seek to locate madness in the secondary discourse that shapes perspectives on insanity at the same time that I offer an elaboration on the fictional and critical perceptions of language, space, and madness.

The Thirty-fourth Annual Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference devoted its focus to studying the relationship between William Faulkner's literature and materiality. In the introduction to *Faulkner and Material Culture*, the volume produced from the conference, Joseph R. Urgo describes the scope of its literature: "We begin on the ground, with a definition of material culture ranging from created objects to 'invisible features that produce landscape expressions' and including as well the distinctive odors that define a place to our senses" (xiv). According to this definition, materiality is a term that encompasses objects, landscapes, and the bodily sensations produced within our environments. In my reading of *As I Lay Dying*, I am concerned with what Urgo calls the "invisible features" of spatiality. I interpret these "invisible features that produce landscapes" to mean the symbolic quality of spatiality: those signs and symbols we create to comprehend the space in which we find ourselves. In *The Production of Space*, Henri Lefebvre refers to symbolic space specifically as "representational space:" it is the space

of "writers and philosophers, who *describe* and aspire to do more than describe" (39). It is the description of space that gives spatiality a representational quality because, in his or her descriptions, the writer "overlays space, making symbolic use of its objects. Thus representational spaces may be said, though again with certain exceptions, to tend towards more or less coherent systems of non-verbal symbols and signs" (39). One of my primary aims in this chapter is to analyze the representational quality of specific spaces and objects within *As I Lay Dying* in regards to the Bundren family, the death of its matriarch, and the material mediation of madness and loss.

Towards the middle of *As I Lay Dying,* Darl Bundren concludes a densely anxious monologue with the following thought, which indicates a keen sense of displacement felt by the Bundren family's second son: "How often have I lain beneath rain on a strange roof, thinking of home" (47). Darl's statement results from an unfulfilled desire to find a sense of home, which is brought on by the utter inability to achieve a sense of cohesion when in the company of his family. Initially, it would appear that the oppressive sense of displacement that afflicts him throughout the novel is symptomatic of a familial absence: an acute disassociation from the rest of his family, resulting in a failure of belonging. And while Darl's familial deficiency is true, the dynamic between himself and his family (specifically his mother and brother Jewel) helps to explain the complex nature of what can arguably be called the madness of Darl Bundren. In addition to the obvious effect that Addie's death has on Darl, the community that surrounds him also impacts his psyche. Unanimously considered to be different or crazy by the inhabitants of his community, Darl is thought to exist in an unnatural psychological state – one that stands outside the accepted norms that govern his community. There are many instances where external perspectives categorize Darl as insane, but none better establishes the public's influence over his mental state than the events that lead to his incarceration in Jackson asylum. Darl's punishment occurs as a consequence of setting fire to Gillespie's barn, and by committing such an offence, Darl is doomed to public condemnation and sentenced to spend his life secluded within the confines of the county's mental asylum.

Two streams of influence contribute to the dissolution of Darl's psyche: the private disintegration of his mind as he struggles to understand Addie's death and the public's

need to make sense of and control the strangeness that they perceive in him. Another one of my primary intentions in this chapter is to interrogate the relationship between Darl's psychological interiority and the exterior perceptions of the community to theorize how exactly madness functions within *As I Lay Dying*. What constitutes the relationship between Darl and his community? What are the forces that lead him into insanity? Why does the community consider him insane? What exactly does the burning of Gillespie's barn represent? And how is the presence or threat of madness handled by Darl and his community? A central question I will take up in this chapter is not whether or not Darl Bundren is insane. Rather, the question is *whether or not he could be viewed as anything other than insane*, from both his own perspective and the perspective of his peers. Thus, I set out to use this chapter as a means of answering these questions and establishing a (paradoxical) logic of insanity within Faulkner's text.

I build my account out of the philosophical discourse established by Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and their opposing views on the representation of madness. The philosophical debate between Foucault and Derrida turns on the possibility and impossibility of developing a language of madness (a language that does not repress madness as soon as it enunciates it), and I seek to position Darl Bundren at the heart of their debate: his personal struggle with madness illustrates the attempt to enunciate it, ascribing it a language. Furthermore, I will mediate this debate and each philosopher's position through the function of representational space. In one sense, I argue that Darl reflects Foucault's conception of speaking madness because each sentence that Darl speaks sends him further and further into insanity. However, Darl's community challenges the Foucaultian model of insanity as something completely separate from reason. Specifically, Darl's madness is absorbed into a prefigured economic logic that governs the town in which he lives. Using an economic model, the community can make sense of Darl's behavior and condemn him as insane. In other words, Darl is viewed as insane because he violates the rationale that organizes his community. Consequently, the town is able to confer judgment upon Darl's psyche. Successfully casting judgment upon Darl, the town represents the Derridian conception of insanity as being something completely dominated by reason: the attempt to enunciate insanity only reveals a pre-established, and in this case, agrarian economic model of personal property and labor.

Representational space is the means used to condemn Darl as insane because it is what the barn symbolizes as an institution within the community that allows the town to describe his behavior as aberrant.

However, the relationship between madness and reason within *As I Lay Dying* is complicated, shifting between each side of Foucault and Derrida's debate. For instance, one must acknowledge that the novel privileges Darl's voice to some degree. In a narrative built on the oscillation between multiple voices, Darl is given the greatest number of opportunities to speak. Furthermore, he is the only person that can narrate outside the boundaries of his first-hand experience. Therefore, his perspective controls the novel more than any other character, and it is his voice that constitutes the majority of the narrative. Additionally, the erratic, anxious, and at times disorienting language that Darl uses is the language of modernism: it is stream-of-consciousness, a narratological and stylistic challenge to the pre-established narrative tradition of psychological realism. In the modernist aesthetic, Darl Bundren represents how pure consciousness functions as an unpredictable, freeform vortex of experience.[9] Darl is a figure of great importance, a figure of rebellion not only within the pages of the novel but in the modernist project as a whole: he represents an alternative model of human consciousness to 19th-century realism and its depiction of the mind and thought. Thus, Darl's association with modernism's linguistic experimentations, which anticipates the Foucaultian account of madness, challenges Derrida's argument: Darl establishes a version of madness that can begin to speak for itself at the same time that it stands in opposition to the pre-established conventions of narrative reason.

Ultimately, the site upon which this examination rests itself is the aforementioned barn that Darl sets on fire. Gillespie's barn is a space that has a two-sided representational value and importance: it is the place where Darl attempts to relieve the loss that afflicts him for good, and it serves as the principal evidence that the community uses to condemn

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[9] It should be noted that Vardaman, Darl's younger brother, is also a fixture of the modernist aesthetic within the novel. The same stream-of-consciousness technique that communicates Darl's perspective marks the passages spoken by Vardaman.

him as insane. Both Darl and the community suffer from a particular linguistic deficiency: first, it becomes clear that Darl lacks the ability to verbalize the loss of his mother because he cannot use words to help relieve the sensations produced by Addie's death. Language builds a verbal labyrinth that traps Darl within a state of changing, yet constant, isolation. Consequently, language fails Darl because it cannot adequately signify, and it cannot provide any relief from what ultimately becomes an unbearable burden of existence. However, as language fails him, the barn is able to provide a material site on which to act out his loss: by attempting to burn the barn he *attempts* to rid himself of the oppressive quality of Addie's death. Second, setting the barn on fire finally provides the community with a material compensation for its own linguistic deficiencies. By burning down the barn, Darl offers proof of the madness that the community sees in him but cannot adequately describe. The moment when Darl sets fire to the barn represents a transgression of the agrarian/personal property relations existent within the community:[10] he destroys Gillespie's financial livelihood, "endangering his stock and destroying his property" (*As I Lay Dying* 135). As previously stated, the act of barn burning confirms the community's suspicions that Darl is mad, and it confirms those suspicions based on what the barn represents symbolically within their communal economy. Gillespie's barn gives shape to the community's anxiety caused by Darl's insanity at the same time that it provides Darl with the material conditions needed to work through or act out his own feelings of loss. What the barn offers, therefore, is an opportunity to theorize how materiality can stand in substitution for language by offering representational signs and symbols that supplement the symbolic order. The barn illustrates how the failure of linguistic signification is compensated by the symbolic capabilities of materiality: how the symbolically economic value of a barn is privileged with the ability to configure subjectivity when language fails to signify it adequately.

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[10] For a detailed account of the relationship between Oxford, Mississippi and the mythical Yoknapatawpha, see: Hines, Thomas S. *William Faulkner and the Tangible Past: The Architecture of Yoknapatawpha*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996. Print.

Ultimately, I will argue that *As I Lay Dying* mediates the possibilities and impossibilities of speaking madness through representational space – the level of spatiality where language becomes intermixed with space:

> Words and signs facilitate (indeed provoke, call forth and – at least in the West – command) metaphorization – the transport, as it were, of the physical body outside of itself. This operation, inextricably magical and rational, sets up a strange interplay between (verbal) disembodiment and (empirical) re-embodiment, between uprooting and preimplantation, between spatialization in an abstract expanse and localization in a determinate expanse. This is the 'mixed' space – still natural yet already *produced* […] the space, in a word, of representations: representational space. (*The Production of Space* 203).

The spaces and objects[11] within *As I Lay Dying* represent the intermixing of language and spatiality insofar as verbal signification fails and the symbolic properties of space help to enunciate what spoken language cannot communicate. For instance, the space of the barn serves as a representation of madness: Darl transitions into insanity by burning it down, and his peers envision insanity as the act of barn burning. Faulkner's text allows us to conceive of representational space as being constructed out of the breakdown of verbal signification: space must represent language so as to reinforce the symbolic order when it is in its most vulnerable state. Thus, I will demonstrate at least two important points within this chapter: the failure of language is treated as madness, and madness is comprehended through spatiality when words fail to signify it.

To begin, I would like to outline the contention in Foucault and Derrida's debate so as to lay out the theoretical criteria that will inform my consideration of madness. Shoshana Felman's *Writing and Madness* offers a pointed and concise elaboration of the theoretical

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[11] I will also consider the symbolic relationship that Darl establishes between his mother's coffin and the wagon that the Bundrens' use to transport the coffin to illustrate fully the representational value that Darl places upon materiality.

differences existent between Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida on the subject of madness, which serves as a productive point of departure:

> That any translation is already a form of its repression, a form of violence against it, that the praise of folly can only be made in the language of reason, this fundamental insight is in turn developed by Jacques Derrida in his critique of Foucault. Not only, remarks Derrida, does madness remain necessarily confined in the fortress which holds it prisoner, but Foucault's own enterprise is itself imprisoned by the conceptual economy it claims to denounce… (43)

Michel Foucault's *History of Madness*, the text which Derrida critiques, undoubtedly works toward an enunciation of madness: the history that Foucault attempts to trace begins with madness as a kind of freedom, albeit a freedom brought on by exile, and ends with reason ensnaring madness. For Derrida, however, the process of historicity is what makes Foucault's project infeasible: "In writing a history of madness, Foucault has attempted---and this is the greatest merit, but also the very infeasibility of his book---to write a history of madness *itself. Itself.* Of madness itself. That is, by letting madness speak for itself" ("Cogito and the History of Madness," 33). And here is the great concern for Derrida: if Foucault sets out to release madness from its confinement within reason, his project fails to do so because historicizing madness or giving it order within the pages of a book merely ensures reason's stronghold. With each chapter he writes, Foucault allows the fingers of reason to tighten its grip on the throat of madness: "To say madness without expelling it into objectivity is to let it say itself. But madness is what by essence cannot be said: it is the 'absence of the work,' as Foucault profoundly says" (43). For Derrida, a work that attempts to let madness speak is impossible specifically because such a text makes madness sane in the language of the author. A book on madness can only offer a rational diagnosis of madness: we speak about insanity as opposed to letting it speak.

Writing madness and letting it speak for itself are problematic ideas for Derrida because he sees Foucault's project as one intimately connected to silence:

> And throughout the book runs the theme linking madness to silence, to "words without language" or "without the voice of the subject," "obstinate murmur of a language that speaks by itself, without speaker or interlocutor, piled up upon itself, strangulated, collapsing before reaching the stage of formulation, quietly returning to the silence that it never departed. The calcinated root of meaning." The history of madness itself is therefore the archeology of a silence. (35)

The systematized nature of language is what makes speaking madness problematic for Derrida. In other words, language necessitates reason: "But, first of all, is there a history of silence? Further, is not an archeology, even of silence, a logic, that is, an organized language, a project, an order, a sentence, a syntax, a work?" (35). Elaborating on his argument, Derrida continues, "Would not the archeology of silence be the most efficacious and subtle restoration, the *repetition*, in the most irreducibly ambiguous meaning of the word, of the act perpetrated against madness---and be so at the very moment when this act is denounced?" (35). Language is an organized system of communication, a logical system of expression governed by specific sets and subsets of given and accepted rules; language is a system that establishes rational and reasonable works. Given these characteristics, it would seem that language cannot be used to create an archeology of silence.

While Derrida's argument in "Cogito and the History of Madness" is compelling, it is worth pausing to question if this is always the case: is language always and automatically an ordered system that organizes thought into a specified logic or rationale? Throughout "Cogito and the History of Madness," Derrida presupposes that language always functions as a logical system: language always organizes madness "even in the language of those who are apparently the maddest; and even and above all in the language of those who, by their praise of madness, by their complicity with it, measure their own strength against the greatest possible proximity to madness" (55). Derrida's position within this essay is quite conservative in its view of language, as opposed to his other work. For instance, in *Of Grammatology*, Derrida critiques the structuralist system that maintains static connections between signifiers and signifieds:

> There is not a single signified that escapes, even if recaptured, the play of signifying references that constitute language. The advent of writing is the advent of this play; today such a play is coming into its own, effacing the limit starting from which one had thought to regulate the circulation of signs, drawing along with it all the reassuring signifieds, reducing all the strongholds, all the out-of-bounds shelters that watched over the field of language. (7)

For Derrida, the play of language is a certain form of fragmentation that occurs due to the perpetual erasure under which signs, signifiers, and signifieds fall:

> For example, the value of the transcendental arche [*archie*] must make its necessity felt before letting itself be erased. The concept of arche-trace must comply with both that necessity and that erasure […] The trace is not only the disappearance of origin---within the discourse that we sustain and according to the path that we follow---it means that the origin did not even disappear, that it was never constituted except reciprocally by a nonorigin, the trace, which thus becomes the origin of the origin. (61)

The trace ensures that meaning is always deferred by and related to other sets of meaning, and this is the nature of the play within language: "This *play*, thought of as absence of the transcendental signified, is not a play *in the world*, as it has always been defined, for the purposes of *containing* it […]" (50). Rather, play is a "game within language" (50). In "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," Derrida qualifies play as a "play of signification" that is based on the constant substitution of meaning so as to recreate the center of the structure, the origin of meaning[12] (280). Derrida's work on deconstruction, trace, and the play of language stands in contradiction to the rather conservative approach to language that he takes up in his critique of Foucault and the

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[12] Chapter three of this dissertation, "Infinite City: Signification, Nothingness, and Alterity in Paul Auster's *City of Glass*," considers the play of signification that Derrida constructs with "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Humanities", specifically in the context of how paranoia is produced.

language of madness.[13] As I will address shortly, Addie's condemnation of language, as lacking the ability to signify, illustrates Derrida's problems with signification and the possibility of play. Ultimately, Derrida's deconstructionist work is not consistent with the position he takes within "Cogito and the History of Madness." Further, his own critiques of language seem to gesture toward Foucault's language of madness and the language of stream-of-consciousness, which are formed from broken syntax and disrupted meaning. The problem with Derrida's reasoning is that he describes language as an ordered system that can bring about resolution. For any linguistic resolution to occur, one must establish beginning and end points: i.e., a problem and its resolution. Such end points assume that a trajectory can be established between a problem and a solution. Additionally, Derrida assumes that, once this trajectory is laid out, language is able to follow the path toward successful resolution. Derrida formulates this trajectory through what he calls "crises" and "reawakening:" "from its very first breath, speech, confined to this temporal rhythm of crisis and reawakening, is able to open the space for discourse only by emprisoning madness" (61). While there is no explicit explanation of what the terms crisis and reawakening mean, one can interpret these two concepts as meaning beginning and end points: the crisis represents a beginning, a potential state of madness; reawakening then represents the resolution of that madness, the endpoint – a successful journey out of madness. Maintaining that reasoning can lead thought out of madness, Derrida overlooks the possibility that the trajectory could remain unfulfilled, that one never reaches the end point, and that language may only perpetuate a state of madness.

William Faulkner's prose is, at least in part, a dense exploration into the complexity that exists between thought, language, madness, and the subject. Characters such as Quentin and Benjy Compson, Vardaman Bundren, and Joe Christmas all experience a decline into insanity that is brought on or dramatically exacerbated by the (mal)function of language.

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[13] Furthermore, from as early as Mary Rowlandson's *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* to Edgar Allan Poe's anonymous speaker in "The Raven" to Herman Melville's Ahab and the abstract whiteness of his whale to Nathaniel Hawthorne's Dimmesdale and his mania brought on by sin; all the way up to Henry Roth's disillusioned David Schearl, Saul Bellow's manic-depressive Moses Herzog, and Donald Barthelme's postmodern experimentation in works such as *The Dead Father*, American narrative has depicted thought and language as anything but stable, or being able to maintain, achieve, or even be aware of a logical resolution.

Each character suffers from individual experiences that push them beyond the boundaries of sanity, and each of these characters cannot be saved by or achieve resolution (reawakening) through the stability of words. What Faulkner's works offer are the consequences of such linguistic failure and the effects that such failure have on subjectivity. Faulkner's narratives suggest that one can speak him or herself further into madness; his works illustrate that language provides a certain economy for the development of madness at the precise moment when language fails to achieve its resolution. I define madness, in the Foucaultian sense, as a particular linguistic experience: "between madness and language, the lineage is not straightforward, nor is there any pure line of descent; rather, language and madness are linked, they are part of a tangled and inextricable fabric from which there can ultimately be no separation" (*Language, Madness, and Desire* 25). *As I Lay Dying* provides a narrative that allows us to identify the inextricability between language and madness as well as madness and space. Specifically, I contend that *As I Lay Dying* organizes madness as an experience of language, which occurs when linguistic signification breaks down. To demonstrate how Faulkner's text creates a production of madness, I argue that Addie's chapter shows how language fails to construct meaning. Moreover, I contend that Darl illustrates the symptoms of this semiotic failure: he represents a descent into madness through the perpetual failure to shape and comprehend the loss of his mother via words. As each attempt to understand and describe his self in relation to Addie's death misfires, Darl slips further and further into madness because he cannot sustain his existence through the symbolic order that structures being. Representational space and objects intervene in the perpetual process that keeps Darl lost within language by providing him with an alternative mode of coping with Addie's death. Specifically, he is able to escape the loss of his mother through his relationship with the coffin, the wagon, and, most importantly, Gillespie's barn.

As I briefly stated earlier, Darl's subjectivity is caught between his own diminishing sense of self and the community's continual attempts to define him. However, it will be beneficial to identify how language and its limitations act as a general thematic concern within the entirety of the novel before examining the specific tensions it produces for Darl and the town. The dynamic function of language within *As I Lay Dying* is an often-

studied aspect of the novel. In a preliminary sense, the language of *As I Lay Dying* is commonly approached as having (at least) two distinct perspectives or discursive modes: "the referential, identificatory experience we share with the characters, and the cross-referential, linguistic experience we share with the author" (Widiss, "Fit and Surfeit in 'As I Lay Dying'" 104); or what Michel Delville, drawing on the work of Warren Beck, categorizes as the division between the distinct voices of the characters and the voice of Faulkner-as-author that comes through the "stylistic distortions" primarily within the monologues of Darl, Vardaman, and Dewey-Dell (61).

Critics often view language as a stylistic accomplice that aids the greater symptom of "death and loss," which organizes the characters' experience within the novel (Delville 61). No two characters better exemplify a sense of loss than Addie and Darl,[14] and the criticism on the novel reflects as much. In "What Are You Laughing at, Darl? Madness and Humor in *As I Lay Dying*," John K. Simon asserts, "By inference Darl, capable of heightened consciousness, treats the 'I' as an impediment, similar in function to Addie's conception of the skin itself, which prevents, as she might say, the 'terrible blood' from flowing together" (106). The connection that Simon makes between Addie and Darl can be qualified as a shared sense of personal dissolution brought on by a language that constantly fails to bend in accordance with their desire. However, Addie's and Darl's experiences with language are quite different despite a shared sense of loss. Startling the reader with a monologue from beyond the grave, Addie gives a direct account of the failure of language:

> And when I knew that I had Cash, I knew that living was terrible and that this was the answer to it. That was when I learned that words are no good; that words don't ever fit even what they are trying to say at. When he was born I knew that motherhood was invented by someone who had to have a word for it […] I knew that fear was invented by someone that had never had the fear; pride, who never had pride […] [Anse] had a word, too.

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[14] Again, Vardaman is also a character that demonstrates the acute problems associated with loss taken up in the book.

> Love, he called it. But I had been used to words for a long time. I knew
> that word was like the others: just a shape to fill a lack… (*As I Lay Dying*
> 99)

Addie's declaration challenges the very operation of words by refusing to believe that language has any functional ability to describe anything. For Addie, words are inventions of people who have never experienced the sensations or emotions that they are trying to signify. Creating only a fundamental lack, words reflect the emptiness of the speaker; words can never really speak what they want to say.

Offering a traditional psychoanalytic response to the characterization of Darl, Delville writes, "Darl, as a speaking and thinking subject, constitutes the Lacanian notion of *lack*. His mother's death is an avatar of the irremediable loss of imaginary plenitude and unity, the primordial lack of origin and being which may only be represented through (Symbolic) language, in which the subject subsists as a construct of words" (64). While I will turn to Darl and his experience of lack and loss in detail shortly, it is important to acknowledge how Addie herself offers a pretty straightforward rendition of Lacanian lack. Delville attributes Darl's lack to the loss of his mother: her passing robs him of any sense of "origin and being," which can only be represented or thought through via the function of symbolic language. However, Addie's testimony reveals that language fails at a level prior to what Delville suggests about Darl: she believes that words have no meaning at all; therefore, Addie has no language to teach Darl or her other children because symbolic language is inherently flawed. She experiences a lack by coming to the realization that language has no constitutive value: signifiers will always fail to correspond to a signified. In other words, if Addie, as a psychoanalytic subject, is a construct of words, she is essentially empty. Thus, Addie identifies a significant problem with the idea that symbolic language can constitute and maintain subjectivity: when language fails to correspond to a sign, it produces lack, as opposed to restoring the subject from a fundamental absence. John T. Matthew's *The Play of Faulkner's Language* offers an early psychoanalytic analysis of the failure of words within Faulkner's texts. Considering the nature of Faulkner's language, Matthew's writes, "*The Sound and the Fury* discovers the fun of writing is in the play of failures, in the

incompleteness, deferment, and repeatability of texts" (73). Matthews argues that Benjy and Quentin Compson illustrate Faulkner's position on language: "The nature of language, Faulkner comes to suggest, forbids the illusion that any original idea, image, or sense can be embodied in words" (73).

Addie's account certainly illustrates the failure of words that Matthews identifies in *The Sound and the Fury*. From the outset of *As I Lay Dying*, language, in general, produces gaps or problems within linguistic communication. One of the more emphatic examples of these gaps is an early monologue given by Tull. When describing Addie's coffin, Tull states, "They laid her in it in reversed. Cash made it clock-shape like this…" followed by a small shape of a coffin (51). He then finishes his thought by stating, "…with every joint and seam beveled and scrubbed with the plane, tight as a drum and neat as a sowing basket, and they laid her in it head to foot so it wouldn't crush her dress" (51). The typographical play that occurs at this moment in the text is indicative of the limitations of language. Using a picture instead of a word illustrates how Tull cannot describe the coffin: he puts the picture of the casket before his verbal description of it, which suggests that the word "coffin" does not adequately signify what he is attempting to describe. Thus, the picture would compensate for anything lost in the verbal description of the coffin. Tull's use of the coffin is representative of the shared intersection between language, representations of space, and representational space. Lefebvre defines representations of space as phenomena "which are tied to the relations of production and to the 'order' which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to 'frontal' relations" (*The Production of Space* 33). In this moment of the text, Tull relies upon the drawing of the coffin as a representation of space to describe the object that Cash has built. Furthermore, using the shape of the casket gestures towards what Lefebvre calls "a conceptualized space," or, in this case, a conceptualized object, which is tied to the "space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers, and social engineers […] all whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived" (38). In one sense, Tull uses the shape of the coffin as a pure reference to describe the object that Cash had built. Moreover, Tull's use of the shape suggests that a purely linguistic description of the coffin would fail to signify Cash's design. In other words, only an image of the structure can gesture towards a representation of the coffin.

However, the coffin is as much a representational object as it is a conceptual object. For instance, in "The Philosophy of Furniture, or *Light in August* and the Material Unconscious," Jay Watson briefly addresses Cash's relationship with the coffin he builds for his mother's corpse: he "chips meticulously away at the supreme wooden fetish object in all of Faulkner, Addie Bundren's near-unnamable coffin […]" (25). While I will attend to the argument that Cash fixates on the object of the coffin as a substitute for Addie's death, it is immediately important to note how Watson states that the coffin cannot be named. Though Watson does not elaborate on this claim, the unnameability of the coffin can be explained through Tull's drawing: the fact that the casket cannot be named corresponds to Tull's inability to describe it and his use of the picture. Furthermore, while Watson does not address this, his claim directs the reader to the fact that even though the coffin exists outside of language, to some degree, it still maintains a symbolic value that is clearly identifiable: it is Cash's fetishized object that he uses to cope with the death of his mother.[15] What is it, then, that makes the coffin unnamable? While there is no definitive evidence within Faulkner's text to answer this question, one could speculate that the symbol of the coffin is not just a picture: it represents the concept of death, maintaining a correspondence to the Lacanian real, which makes the coffin a representational space/object that language cannot signify. Similar to Delville's observation that Darl suffers the loss of his "primordial origin," the coffin that Tull cannot describe with words also illustrates a gap that cannot be closed by language. It is clear that Tull is hesitant to use the words coffin or casket when describing Cash's work: the constant use of the pronoun "it" illustrates how Tull avoids naming the coffin by a proper noun. Once the drawing of the coffin is introduced into the monologue, the word "it" corresponds to the picture, which allows Tull to abandon the word altogether. In other words, the "it" corresponds to the materiality of the picture based on the visual reproduction of the coffin.

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[15] An alternative view of Cash as "craftsman as hero" can be found in T.J. Jackson Lears's "True and False Things: Faulkner and the World of Goods." See: *Faulkner and Material Culture*. Ed. Joseph R. Urgo and Ann J. Abadie. Jackson: The University Press of Mississippi, 2004. 139-148. Print.

While a coffin does not attempt to explain the act of death, it still maintains an associative bond with an experience that lies firmly within the Lacanian real: it is a vessel in which one is carried symbolically into death. The context of death begins to shed light on Lefebvre's argument that representational spaces are "more or less coherent systems of non-verbal symbols and signs" (*The Production of Space* 39). For instance, the coffin has a representational value based on how we, as a culture, have symbolically arranged its meaning. In other words, a coffin exists in the symbolic economy that represents the rituals of death and dying: it serves as a particular object that performs the function of storing the body of the deceased. However, the irony is that these symbols, associated with death, are representative of a phenomenon that language could not hope to describe, which is why Lacan situates them within the order of the real. In other words, we have no authoritative descriptions of death. Such information is impossible to know. Therefore, even if only speaking about death, Tull illustrates trepidation toward trying to figure the coffin through language, and any apprehension he might have would serve as another example of the novel's explicit distrust of linguistic signification. As I mentioned earlier, the picture of the coffin tries to draw on the physicality of a structure, offering a material representation of what it actually looks like – even if it is just a mere tracing of its shape. Furthermore, the shape itself helps to establish an analogue to the material world by abandoning pure verbal description and substituting in an idea of the coffin as a physical construct. And while Tull does not fully commit to a material concept of a casket (he still puts the picture in conjunction with his description of the coffin), he prepares the reader for the way in which the barn will come to stand in substitution for the loss that is deeply related to Darl's madness.

If Addie's experience with language is predicated on outward distrust, Darl's experience with language can be thought of as an excessive desire to work through his own personal loss, which constantly fails. Exploring the relationship between Darl, language, and alienation, Delville writes:

> Darl's oxymoronic language---a linguistic aporia---is also emblematic of
> his failure in his verbal quest, whose ultimate aim is to reach a place
> where he could discover a new identity for himself by recovering an ersatz

for a preoedipal, 'Imaginary' sense of wholeness and presence. Darl's rhetoric mirrors the dynamics of his perception of reality. It reflects his endeavors to organize experience through and in language. (65)

Delville draws a correlation between the breakdown of symbolic language and the breakdown of subjectivity: Darl is unable to synthesize a sense of self through the function of language. However, Delville might be somewhat premature in his argument that Darl's linguistic insufficiencies "mirror" the way in which he sees the world around him. Certainly, the novel establishes a grave sense of displacement between Darl and his community. Darl's many descriptions of Jewel, which continually objectify his brother, turning him into an inanimate wooden statue, are important moments in the text that reflect the distance he feels between himself and his brother. On the first page of the novel, the reader finds an immediate example of Darl's perspective on Jewel:

> Jewel, fifteen feet behind me, looking straight ahead, steps in a single stride through the window. Still staring straight ahead, his pale eyes like wood set in a wooden face, he crosses the floor in four strides with the rigid gravity of a cigar store Indian dressed in patched overalls and endued with life from the hips down… (Faulkner 3)

The problem with suggesting that Darl's rhetoric simply mirrors his perception of reality is that such a claim fails to attend fully to Darl's complex relationship with language. The act of mirroring suggests a coextensive relationship in which language and the perception of reality are merely tangential reflections of each other. While there is definitely a tangential relationship between language and the perception of reality, I argue that language actually *produces* Darl's perception of reality as opposed to merely reflecting something that is already there. Symbolic language is the filter through which one makes sense of the world, and language provides one with the necessary rules and information to navigate that world. In a rudimentary sense, then, the world and language are individual phenomena, separate from each other. However as soon as a subject internalizes symbolic language, the world becomes reformed and re-imagined by the subject based on the subset of rules and conventions of a prefigured symbolic language.

Symbolic language is a tool used to sustain subjectivity, protecting the subject from phenomena which one cannot interpret or synthesize, phenomena that threaten the subject via its very unknowability. To sustain subjectivity, symbolic language takes the figurative reigns and attempts to control the world, shaping a particular subject's perspective of it. A subject rearranges the world through language: he or she converts the raw data of the environment into signs and symbols that produce a reality that he or she can comfortably comprehend. Language, then, actually produces reality: it organizes the experience of reality and all that it encompasses. Thus, the novel establishes a sort of chain of command, which can be seen in Darl's experience of reality: language does not merely mirror his perception, but rather his perception of reality is firmly an effect of his faltering experience with language.

Delville does offer a solid foundation on which to examine exactly how language entangles Darl within a developing sense of madness. However, it is not enough to state simply that Darl's insufficiencies with language reflect the loss that he exhibits or feels within the novel. To stop there would limit the relationship between language and the subject as it is conceived in *As I Lay Dying*. One of the major concerns of the novel is the effect caused by the failure of producing a comprehensible reality through linguistic arrangements. If Darl establishes a general state of isolation from the outset of the novel, again evident in the descriptions of Jewel, this solitary existence becomes worse as the text progresses. The further that Darl attempts to reclaim a sense of identity through language, in the wake of his mother's death, the further he collapses into madness. T.H. Adamowski argues that Darl can compile meaning and understanding by existing outside of language:

> But the theme of identity and difference is not limited to Addie alone. A new dimension is provided for it by Darl's clairvoyance. Banished from his mother's side, he is at the margins of existence and must therefore learn to see from afar. Thus it is that we learn of Addie's death from him […]. Although at the time it occurs Darl is away from home (with Jewel in tow), selling lumber. Like his mother, he is an isolato, and he too can plunge into another consciousness, as Tull notes in a striking image: "It's

like he had got into the inside of you someway. Like somehow you was looking at yourself and your doings outen his eyes" (p 119). And it is Darl who intuits that Addie is hiding something about her relationship to Jewel. (212)

Adamowski's claim illustrates how Darl's relationship with language is impossible: his clairvoyance provides him with information that he could not otherwise know. Darl's intuition privileges him with secret knowledge about his brother, and his ability to read others produces uncanny sensations in those that meet his gaze. Thus, Darl is able to procure meaning and understanding by inhabiting the language and spaces of others, which are exterior to his own being.

However, Darl loses control over language as soon as he focuses on his own interiority. It is impossible for Darl to manipulate his words to understand his self, and it is this failure that propels his descent into insanity:

> In a strange room you must empty yourself for sleep. And before you are emptied for sleep, what you are. And when you are emptied for sleep, you are not. And when you are filled with sleep, you never were. I don't know what I am. I don't know if I am or not. Jewel knows he is, because he does not know that he does not know whether he is or not. He cannot empty himself for sleep because he is not what he is and he is what he is not. Beyond the unlamped wall I can hear the rain shaping the wagon that is ours […] the wind and the rain shape it only to Jewel and me, that are not asleep. And since sleep is is-not and rain and wind are *was*, it is not. Yet the wagon *is*, because when the wagon is *was*, Addie Bundren will not be. And Jewel *is*, so Addie Bundren must be. And then I must be, or I could not empty myself for sleep, in a strange room. And so if I am not emptied yet, I am is. How often have I lain beneath rain on a strange roof thinking of home. (Faulkner 47)

This section of the text gives a clear illustration of the problems between language and subjectivity that Darl experiences. While this passage is dense and difficult to parse, at

first glance, it is important to acknowledge that Addie's section offers the theoretical framework from which to (go back and) make sense of what exactly is happening to her son. Provisionally, I argue that this monologue is composed of the symptoms that are produced in the breakdown of language, which Addie identifies. It is clear that Darl desires to affirm a sense of self: the entire passage seems to attend to his declaration, "I don't know what I am. I don't know if I am or not." Constructing a comparison between himself and Jewel, Darl tries to establish a rationale that will help him close the gap that has ruptured his sense of self. Everything within this passage is predicated on what amounts to the simple desire to sleep. However, to fall asleep, he must "empty" himself. The problem then becomes his inability to empty himself because he cannot locate a sense of self to empty.

Here I would like to return to Derrida's dynamic between crisis and reawakening. When explaining the function of speech in relation to madness, Derrida argues that speech is predicated on a "rhythm of crisis and reawakening" that is connected to a temporal movement of logic or reason (61). While Derrida qualifies speech as the enunciation of logic, which would be capable of putting madness within the straits of reason, he only considers the dynamic of language/speech in the context of historicity as it relates to Foucault's project. This historical perspective is important because *As I Lay Dying* represents the way in which Derrida's logic breaks down on a more microcosmic level of personal subjectivity and its relation to language. Darl very much begins at a moment of crisis: the death of his mother has drastically accentuated the isolation he has already experienced in relation to his family. On the other hand, the desire for reawakening is there as well: he wishes to claim a sense of self so as to secure a sense of identity. It is interesting that Derrida plots speech on a trajectory in which temporalization "concerns that which unites it to the movement of logos" (61). In other words, he states that history is built upon the way that temporalities are organized into logical sequences, which for Derrida can only occur via a "speaking philosophy," or a linguistically based logic (61).

However, there are temporalities at work within Darl's troubled monologue that illustrate the problem of linking moments in time together through linguistic arrangements. The temporalities in the above passage can be broken into the categories of past and present,

which then can be related to notions of existence and non-existence. The constant fluctuation between being "was," "is," is-not," "are," "are not," and "were" create a labyrinthine temporal matrix in which Darl clearly loses himself (Faulkner 47). Caught in a vortex in which subjectivities (Darl, Addie, and Jewel's) cannot be linked to specific moments in time, Darl thinks himself in and out of existence and non-existence. From not knowing what he is and trying to fill that gap with different possibilities of being (i.e. is, was, is-not, etc.), Darl manages only to dig himself into a hole where the state of his subjectivity is put further and further into question. It is as if by the second to last line of the passage he corners himself within a startling conclusion: he cannot escape the sensation of being "is," he cannot enter the "is-not" of sleep, and he cannot escape the affliction of being something he cannot define. It is clear that "[he] does not know who [he] is. [He] does not know what [he] is not," and he cannot think himself out of this crisis of identity. What this represents is language's inability to track a line between the crisis and the reawakening: every sentence that Darl adds to his monologue and every thought that enters his mind distances himself from a potential reawakening. Language, then, can break down; it is not an infallible system – it does not always offer a logical sequence that ensures a rational end. Rather, language is subject to vulnerabilities that call into question its own efficacy.

The breakdown of a logically-based linguistic system opens up the possibility that madness might be able to speak on its own behalf, which is a conclusion that moves toward a more Foucaultian conception of how madness and language relate to each other: "the aim, the challenge, the ambitious wager of Foucault's endeavor is to say madness itself…" (Felman 41). Essentially calling for an exhumation of a buried language, Foucault's entire project is in great part devoted to wresting the language of madness back from the oppression of reason:

> There is no common language or rather, it no longer exists; the
> constitution of madness as mental illness, at the end of the eighteenth
> century, bears witness to a rupture in a dialogue, gives the separation as
> already enacted, and expels from the memory all those imperfect words, of
> no fixed syntax, spoken falteringly, in which the exchange between

>madness and reason was carried out. The language of psychiatry, which is a monologue by reason *about* madness, could only have come into existence in such a silence. (*History of Madness*, xxviii)

What makes Foucault's call important is that it refuses to submit to reason's autocratic reign over language. Many works associated with the modernist literary movement would seem to coincide with Foucault's own refusal. In *Writing and Madness*, Shoshana Felman makes the important connection between the expression of madness and literature: "it is said that madness silenced by society has been given voice by literature […] it is also commonly asserted, on the other hand, that literature itself is obsolete. The contemporary scene is: at the very moment some claim to be 'liberating' madness […] they are in fact denying and *repressing* literature" (15). Calling for both the resuscitation of literature and literature as speaking madness, Felman aptly directs our attention to the way that literary texts can give voice to a repressed language of the mad. Liam Clarke's *Fiction's Madness* also stresses literature's ability to represent madness: "Whilst it's true 'the madman' in literature can be a 'literary device' intended to entertain, literary accounts highlight questions about insanity informatively but, as well, in ways that resonate with people because they are felt and understood intuitively" (19-20).

Writing *As I Lay Dying* in 1930, a year after his landmark *The Sound and the Fury* and during the pinnacle of his high modernist aesthetic, Faulkner's novelistic experimentations created a space in which we might conceive of a Foucaultian notion of madness speaking, or at least *attempting* to speak, for itself. The breakdown of language caused by Darl's existential crisis, which culminates in the realization that he cannot escape the overwhelming and unformed existence that plagues him, represents the means by which madness can take stage. Darl's journey into the oppression of his own existence is emblematic of what Foucault refers to as the 17th-century model of madness. Within this model, the mad were forced to carry out pilgrimages of isolation in hopes of eventually rediscovering self-awareness. Being stranded at sea was a popular motif used to explain the state of madness within those who were forced out of their communities: "the passenger *par excellence*, the prisoner of the passage [does not know] where he will land, and when he lands, he knows not whence he came. His truth and his home are the

barren wasteland between two lands that can never be his own" (*History of Madness* 11). However, as opposed to approaching any shore of self-discovery, Darl's failures with language only widen the expanse of the figurative sea that isolates him. Furthermore, his isolation reaches its climax when he is sent to the mental asylum. However, it is necessary to examine the conditions and events that bring Darl into madness before exploring the way in which his speech illustrates the possibility of speaking insanity.

The entire crux of Darl's subjectivity and its balance between sanity and insanity can be said to rest on Gillespie's barn. Before fully comprehending how this occurs, we must return to a statement made by Darl that I previously quoted: "Yet the wagon *is*, because when the wagon is *was*, Addie Bundren will not be. And Jewel *is*, so Addie Bundren must be. And then I must be, or I could not empty myself for sleep, in a strange room. And so if I am not emptied yet, I am is" (47). Darl establishes a crucial two-part association in this statement between himself and his mother. First, his existence is still tied to his mother's because if Addie Bundren "must be" then he too must exist. This existential contingency is important because it establishes the connection that exists between Darl and his mother: he cannot escape the loss brought on by Addie's death because he feels inextricably bound to her. He works out his dependency by suggesting that even the existence of her body, perpetuated in the task of delivering her to Jefferson, ensures an "is" state of his own existence, which again is an oppressive force he desires to escape. Second, his statement introduces an even more important element within the text, specifically the way in which materiality stands in substitution for a specific loss. When Darl states, "yet the wagon *is*, because when the wagon is *was*, Addie Bundren will not be," he creates a correlation between Addie and the wagon based on a relationship in which one needs the other equally to exist. In other words, Darl conflates the wagon and his mother. The wagon is emphasized because to destroy the wagon, to make it "was," will, in turn, destroy Addie. Darl gives priority to the materiality of the wagon as he objectifies the body of his mother, rendering it as the same thing as the wagon. Creating such a conversion suggests that his mother's body can only be qualified and controlled if it is objectified into a state of inanimacy similar to the wagon.

In *Nobody's Home: Speech, Self, and Place in American Fiction from Hawthorne to DeLillo*, Arnold Weinstein argues that the coffin, which speaks to Darl, personifies Addie:

> At other moments the tenement that she has moved to, the coffin itself, achieves voice and utterance, renders the speech of its tenant. Here is how it sounds to Darl: "The breeze was setting up from the barn, so we put her under the apple tree, where the moonlight can dapple the apple tree upon the long slumbering flanks within which now and then she talks in little trickling bursts of secret and murmurous bubbling. I took Vardaman to listen. When we came up the cat leaped down from it and flicked away with silver claw and silver eye into the shadow" (143). (149)

Weinstein suggests that we should read this passage as an "index of Faulkner's world" as opposed to a glimpse of "Darl's peculiar psyche" (149). However, we cannot ignore the way that Darl converts his mother's absence into an object, which restores a certain degree of presence. Melanie Klein's object-relation theory helps to clarify the transitional process undertaken by Darl. In "Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms," Klein writes, "The process of splitting off parts of the self and projecting them into objects are thus of vital importance for normal development as well as for abnormal development" (9). As Klein describes, projection is the process by which aspects of the ego become concretized symbolically within a specific object. One could make the argument that the coffin, the wagon, and the barn all serve as a totem, as Freud describes it: "the totem, according to [the psychological] view, represented a safe place of refuge in which the soul could be deposited and to escape the dangers which threatened it" (*Totem and Taboo* 116). The objects that Darl engages with could only be viewed as totems inasmuch as they function as items that protect him from the loss of Addie. However, the "ceremonial" aspect of the objects is based on their destruction. Thus, Darl does not ritualize the totem through loyalty, but rather he conducts his ritual by burning these objects and the projections of his ego.

Dominick LaCapra argues that an object can stand in substitution for a particular absence, which would ultimately convert that absence to loss:

> A crucial way of attempting to allay anxiety[16] is to locate a particular or specific thing that could be feared and thus enable one to find ways of eliminating or mastering that fear. The conversion of absence into loss gives anxiety an identifiable object---the lost object---and generates hope that anxiety may never be entirely eliminated or overcome. (57)

While LaCapra considers anxiety and fear within a Freudian-Heideggerian context, he also establishes an object-relation formula that can help to understand Darl's relationship with the wagon and the barn. In essence, Darl can project his sense of loss onto an object when he conflates his mother's death with the wagon. In other words, he objectifies the loss of his mother through the wagon, and he converts her absence into a lost-object. In spatial terms, Lefebvre's notion of representational space can be seen in the projection of one's self onto a lost or transitional object. Let us revisit an early passage I introduced from *The Production of Space*:

> Words and signs facilitate (indeed provoke, call forth and – at least in the West – command) metaphorization – the transport, as it were, of the physical body outside of itself. This operation, inextricably magical and rational, sets up a strange interplay between (verbal) disembodiment and (empirical) re-embodiment, between uprooting and reimplantation, between spatialization in the abstract expanse and localization in a determinate expanse. This is the 'mixed' space – still natural yet already *produced* – of the first year of life, and, later, of poetry and art. The space, in a word, of representations: representational space. (203)

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[16] In this passage, LaCapra is working with the concepts of anxiety and fear as they relate to Freudian and Heideggerian theory. Most notably, Freud and Heidegger trace out a theorization of anxiety's relationship to nothingness and fear's relationship to some identifiable thing object. In the final chapter of this dissertation, I attend to Freud, Heidegger, and the production of anxiety within the *unheimlich*; and I also revisit LaCapra's theory on object-relation within the context of Freud and Heidegger.

Lefebvre's sense of transporting the physical body outside of itself through the use of symbols is closely related to Klein's sense of projection: the splitting of the self and projecting it into an object represent how the body/self is represented symbolically in a spatialized way. However, a metaphor is not necessarily produced when the self splits and takes on the shape of an object. Rather, personification occurs as the object takes on the human characteristics that a subject places upon it. Personification is precisely how LaCapra's lost-object is produced: the object is personified through symbols of the loss experienced by a subject, and, in turn, it becomes a symbol of the subject. Though the lost-object is not a representational space, per se, it is very much a representational object, which signifies the interiority of a subject. The substitution of the coffin and then the wagon establishes a way for Darl to free himself from the existence that isolates him, which is precisely the destruction of his mother's body. LaCapra explains the transference of one's self onto an object by suggesting, "In converting absence to loss, one assumes that there was (or at least could be) some original unity, wholeness, security, or identity that others have ruined, polluted, or contaminated and thus made 'us' lose. Therefore, to regain it one must somehow get rid of or eliminate […] that sinful other in oneself" (58). First and foremost, we must qualify LaCapra's argument: in the specific context of Darl, or any other Bundren family member, there is no explicit sense that Faulkner offers any potential for a return to plenitude or wholeness. Moreover, I have argued that there is no indication in the novel that an original symbolic unity ever existed. However, one can argue that Darl begins to rid himself of the loss caused by Addie's death through his association with the wagon.

The mixed representational nature of the coffin and wagon (as lost-objects) is a combination of both Darl and Addie: they represent both his loss and the way in which he personifies her absence in material objects. It is the objectification of Addie and the personification of the wagon/coffin that gives Darl the opportunity to relieve himself of Addie's presence because she is represented through something that can be controlled and destroyed. After converting her into an object, there is an important conversation between Darl and Vardaman that helps to contextualize how Addie's disappearance will affect Darl:

> "Then what is your ma, Darl?" I said.

> "I haven't got ere one," Darl said. "Because if I had one, it is *was*. And if
> it is was, it can't be *is*. Can it?"
>
> "No," I said.
>
> "Then I am not," Darl said. "Am I?"
>
> "No," I said.
>
> I am. Darl is my brother.
>
> "But you *are*, Darl," I said.
>
> "I know it," Darl said. "That's why I am not *is*. *Are* is too many for one
> woman to foal." (58)

Darl maintains the necessity of his mother becoming past tense, no longer existing even
as a corpse. He also maintains the connection between his mother's state and his own,
which reinforces that the only way he will be able to escape his own existence is if Addie
no longer exists. However, the language slips and the (erratic) logic breaks down once
again as Vardaman confronts him with the assertion that he is "are." In other words,
Vardaman states that Darl does indeed exist despite Addie's death. Darl then circles back,
further adding to the linguistic labyrinth that he perpetuates at the very same moment that
he tries to navigate it: he suggests that he could never have existed in the first place
because one woman could never give birth to multiple "foal."

Despite his statement, Darl's existence is plainly evident; and he frequently returns to the
idea that so long as Addie Bundren and the wagon exist, even if only as material and
inanimate objects, he too must continue in the present tense. It is at this moment that the
barn becomes essential to the thematic trajectory of the novel. Again, in an important and
equally complicated conversation with Vardaman, Darl prepares the reader for the
eventual incineration of Gillespie's barn. Referring to the coffin and their mother,
Vardaman recounts:

> "Hear?" Darl says. Put your ear close."
>
> I put my ear close and I can hear her. Only I can't tell what she is saying.
>
> "What is she saying, Darl?" I say. "Who is she talking to?"
>
> "She is talking to God," Darl says. "She is calling on Him to help her."
>
> "What does she want Him to do?" I say.

"She wants Him to hide her away from the sight of man," Darl says.

"Why does she want her to hide away from the sight of man, Darl?"

"So she can lay down her life," Darl says.

"Why does she want to lay down her life, Darl?"

"Listen," Darl says. We hear her. We hear her turn over on her side.

"Listen," Darl says. (124)

The exchange between Darl and his youngest brother eerily foreshadows Darl's actions by gesturing toward his decision to put an end to the Bundrens' journey and Addie's objectified body, which he attempts by burning down the barn. However, given the link between Addie and Darl's existence, one could read the desire to hide Addie away "from the sight of man" as his own wish: a self-serving desire that would break the continuum between him and his mother, which would then allow him respite from the oppression created by her death and the awareness of his own existence.

The act of burning down the barn comes to represent a way in which Darl attempts to free his self from the overwhelming sense of existence that afflicts him. In "Fit and Surfeit in 'As I Lay Dying,'" Benjamin Widess draws on Donald Kartiganer's research to illustrate how object-relation theory is evident throughout Faulkner's text:

> Donald Kartiganer highlights the relevance of the psychoanalytic model of mourning elaborated through an extension of D.W. Winnicott's concept of the "transitional object." Winnicott elucidates the way in which a privileged blanket corner, or repeated "word or tune, or mannerism" can help a child first manage its mother's intermittent absences (4). Softening the process of "reality acceptance" (13) that must overcome the infant's illusion of omnipotence, its failure to grasp distinctions between self and other. In an analogous process, Kartiganer writes, each of the Bundrens (except Darl) fixes on "a physical object … the coffin itself, the set of false teeth, the foetus, the fish, the tools, the toy train, the graphophone--- which enables a passage from grief to recovery… (109)

It is true that each character is distracted by an object of one kind or another. However, to suggest that each character uses that object as a transitional device to pass out of mourning might be overstating the gravity and place of those objects for at least two reasons. One, it undercuts the dark humor that is present throughout the novel: an argument can be made that the novel is a tragicomedy, due in part to the way in which each character is so *easily* distracted from the death of Addie. For instance, it would be easier to argue that Anse's desire for new teeth is a reflection of his selfish and self-centered behavior. Thus, delivering Addie to Jefferson is merely a means to get them. In other words, the possibility that the teeth serve as a transitional object that leads him out of mourning is put into question because there is no real indication that Anse is ever truly grieving. Secondly, each character does not fixate on just one object: Cash adopts the coffin, the tools, and the graphophone; Vardaman adopts the fish and the toy train; and Dewey-Dell obsesses over the cash box and fetus that are associated with her pregnancy. The various and changing nature of those items suggests that these transitional objects cannot bear the weight of the actual transition out of mourning because these characters need to move from one object to the next to maintain a distraction.

However, the greatest error that Kartiganer makes is suggesting that Darl does not fixate on a specific object or materiality to help him cope with the loss brought on by his mother's death. On the contrary, one can argue that Darl is the only character that successfully and directly uses objects as a means to transition out of the loss he experiences. Darl does not simply engage in a form of object-relation: he establishes a complex interrelationship between three objects. Darl's engagement with the coffin, the wagon, and finally the barn constructs a representational field that provides him the means to carry out two specific actions: the aforementioned splitting/projection of the self through objectification/personification and the ability to destroy the objects that contain his projected sense of loss. The barn is not simply a barn: it represents a structure on which to act out his desire to rid himself of his mother's body and the connection it maintains to his own loss/isolation. If Darl cannot control language, if Addie draws attention to the fallacious nature of signification, the barn stands firm as a material object that can bend to Darl's will: he can burn it down and, as wood sets fire to wood, his mother's corpse will be hidden from the sight of man. Setting fire to the barn turns

Gillespie's property into a transitional object for Darl. While the wagon and the coffin exist as representational objects, the barn is the object that Darl uses to transition out of the loss that he experiences. Though there is no explicit mention of the effect that burning Gillespie's barn has on Darl, it is precisely after setting fire to the barn that Darl achieves a sense of release or escape, which is entirely brought on by the fact that he goes mad. And Darl seems to surrender himself fully to madness:

> Darl has gone to Jackson. They put him on the train, laughing, down the long car laughing, the heads turning like the heads of owls when he passed. "What are you laughing at? I said.
> "Yes yes yes yes yes."
> Two men put him on the train. (146)

It is not what Darl says in this passage that illustrates his transition into madness. Rather, the third person voice through which he speaks illustrates that his self has become divided, representing a departure from sanity. Referring to himself in the third person represents a disjunction within his subjectivity: he no longer sees himself as Darl, but rather there is a separate, split personality that tries to understand his own motivations: "'Is it the pistols you are laughing at?'" I said. 'Why do you laugh?' I said. 'Is it because you hate the sound of laughing?'" (146). John T. Irwin explains this split in Darl's identity as a form of repetition:

> We should at this point make a clear distinction between the spatial aspect of doubling---the way in which one persona can be a spatial repetition of another person who is his contemporary---and the temporal aspect of doubling---the way in which one person later in time recognizes another person earlier in time as a double of himself and thus sees his own condition as a fated repetition of that earlier life, or the way in which one pair of doubles later in time repeats another pair of doubles earlier in time. (55)

Irwin goes on to state that these sets of doubles and repetition illustrate Faulkner's interest in the "temporal aspect of doubling" that he included in *Sartoris* and *The Sound and the Fury*. However, Irwin does not explain in detail how doubling/repetition relates to Darl at the moment that his personality splits. It is difficult to state that Darl illustrates a strictly temporal or spatial aspect of doubling. I argue that it is a combination of both: the split in personality is spatially motivated, but his conversation is indicative of a temporal doubling as well. Furthermore, this split in his personality illustrates an equally poetic and tragic escape from the extreme consciousness of self that has afflicted him for the entire novel, and this escape is only possible by burning down Gillespie's barn.

The destruction of the barn is the event that produces the split/doubling in Darl's personality, which illustrates that the doubling was effected through spatial conditions. However, the dialogue that Darl carries out between different versions of his self is indicative of a temporal doubling: "Darl describes his departure for the asylum, for Darl talks about himself in the third person, and then the first-person Darl carries on a dialogue with this other self" (Irwin 54-55). The doubling is an effect of setting fire to the barn and illustrates Darl's transition out of the being/existence that oppresses him. Thus, the barn is a modified transitional object because it does not conform directly to Winnicott's formulation. For instance, in *Playing and Reality*, Winnicott describes the transitional object as occupying an important place within a child's life for a prolonged period of time (4). The barn, however, is only useful to Darl for a brief instance: he sets it on fire, and then it becomes of no more use to him; the barn serves its purpose and is then left behind. And yet, the barn corresponds to two important features of the transitional object. First, it is an object through which a "defense against anxiety, especially anxiety of the depressive type," is provided for Darl (4). Furthermore, the transitional object in the life of the infant is an object that defends the child from the absence of the mother, as Widess outlines (109), and burning down the barn relieves Darl's own anxiety over the death of Addie. Second, Winnicott argues, "the transitional phenomena represent the early stages of the use of illusion, without which there is no meaning for the human being in the idea of a relationship with an object that is perceived by others as external to that being" (11). The illusion established by the barn is specifically the doubling of the self. Thus, there is no symbolic/representational illusion between Darl and the barn (those illusions exist

between him, the wagon, and the coffin), but rather the effect of burning down the barn leads to the illusion that Darl is no longer attached to his former existence.

 Furthermore, Darl's fragmented narration illustrates a combination of the classical model of madness (as freedom) and the Renaissance model of madness (as tragedy), which Foucault seems to mourn. In the first sense, Darl is most certainly "a prisoner in the most ultimate freedom:" despite the freedom attained through his split personality, he is literally going to be kept prisoner within the confines of the Jackson mental asylum. The dialogue that Darl has with himself, divided by a set of two different personalities, exemplifies a freedom or abandonment of language because the questions that the third person voice asks have no answers. All answers are completely ignored, and only incoherency meets those questions. Thus, Darl is no longer concerned with organizing different subject-related temporalities because his laughter on the train represents a full submersion into insanity. Within madness, Darl is able to escape the oppressive sense of self that haunts him for the majority of the novel. Foucault describes madness as the process of self de-realization that erases self-consciousness: "Throughout the classical era, [the mad] were a part of the social landscape, a picturesque landscape that served at most to reintroduce a skeptical uneasiness: after all, I myself may be mad, but I know nothing about it because madness is not self-aware […]" (*Language, Madness, and Desire* 13). Darl illustrates the model in which the self is unaware of his own psychological state: he is unburdened by the consciousness and the existence that once oppressed him. Darl's speech reflects a madness that is tragically ensconced within the freedom of insanity where language bears no authority, where questions directed at subjectivity do not need to be answered and are merely laughed at. The tragedy is apparent in Darl's incarceration. Foucault suggests that the freedom of madness is apparent in the way that insanity acts as "a mirror, which reflected nothing real, but secretly showed the presumptuous dreams of all who gazed into it to contemplate themselves […] not about truth of the world, but rather about man and the truth about himself that he can perceive" (*History of Madness* 23).

However, Darl is punished for any truth or self-discovery that he makes as soon as he is incarcerated, and he suffers a "comic punishment of knowledge and its ignorant

presumption" (23). However, what Foucault calls "truth" or "self-discovery" might be better exchanged for the ideas of freedom, self-escape, or self-abandonment because it is precisely an escape from his self that Darl attempts to make. In any case, Darl's relegation to Jackson counterbalances any possibilities of existential freedom that he achieves while mad. Therefore, the punishment that Darl receives ultimately challenges a Foucaultian possibility of madness because his confinement illustrates the pervasive governance of reason over madness (86). At the moment that Darl sets fire to the barn, another drastic linguistic shift occurs within the narrative: the community can incorporate Darl within their symbolic language, at last, and they condemn him as insane. Up until this moment, everyone in the community suffered from a linguistic lack because no one could ever quite define exactly what was wrong with Darl despite their constantly raised suspicions. It is here, within another linguistic deficiency, that materiality steps in again to compensate for language's inability to signify: what the community lacks linguistically to control Darl it gains symbolically based on what the barn represents within their economy.

In spatial terms, the barn acts as a bridge that unites Lefebvre's notions of representational space and representations of space through spatial practice, and it is the connection between these levels of spatiality that allows Darl to transition fully into madness. At the same time, the barn also acts as a bridge between Darl and his community because they are able to finally absorb him into their symbolic structure (as a madman) once he sets fire to Gillespie's property. As Lefebvre explains, it is the way that subjects engage with representational space and representations of space that produces a specific form of knowledge:

> Knowledge falls into a trap when it makes representations of space the basis for the study of 'life,' for in doing so it reduces lived experience. The *object* of knowledge is, precisely, the fragmented and uncertain connection between elaborated representations of space on the one hand and representational spaces (along with their underpinnings) on the other; and this object implies (and explains) a *subject* – that subject who is lived,

perceived and conceived (known) come together within a spatial practice. (230)

Based on Lefebvre's formula, the object of knowledge is the barn. It may be more accurate to state that the object that produces knowledge is Gillespie's property because it is the site from which the community is able to configure Darl's subjectivity as a madman. Darl's engagement with the barn, setting it on fire, is the behavior that the community requires to make sense of him. First, as a representation of space, the barn is a structure that does not belong to Darl. However, it is the immense representational value placed on the barn by the community that allows Darl to be condemned as insane. Thus, I argue that spatiality is able to provide knowledge, in the wake of linguistic deficiency, when we lean heavily upon the representational symbols that we institute into our environments. For the community, too, the barn is not simply a barn, and the structure of the barn holds an important place within the totality of Faulkner's literature, which helps to shed light on the magnitude of Darl's actions. In "Barn Burning" (1939), Faulkner illustrates the destruction of the barn as a crime that levies heavy public scrutiny on the offender. Upon the suspicion that he has burned down Harris's barn, Abner Snopes is excommunicated from his community: the judge tells him, "This case is closed. I can't find against you, Snopes, but I can give you advice. Leave this country and don't come back" (5). Upon exiting the courthouse, Snopes is met with public condemnation: "between the two lines of grim-faced men and out of the store and across the worn gallery and down the sagging steps and among the dogs and half-grown boys in the mild May dust, where as he passed a voice hissed: 'Barn Burner!'" (5). The symbolic weight of the barn is emphasized further through Abner's son, Colonel Sartoris Snopes, who attempts to stop his father from burning down another barn. The significance of the barn causes Sartoris to betray his father and abandon "[his] own blood," leaving his family for good at the end of the short story (8).

In *The Hamlet* (1940), Faulkner elaborates on the importance of the barn within the landscape of Yoknapatawpha, as Abner's legacy follows another one of his sons, Flem, into his new community. After Flem attempts to rent a farm from Jody Varner, Tull warns Varner about leasing his lot to a Snopes: "Snopes? Sho now. So that's him […]

He's the fellow that wintered his family in an old cottonhouse on Ike McCaslin's place. The one that was mixed up in that burnt barn of a fellow named Harris over in Grenier County two years ago" (10). The entire story of "Barn Burning" is then recounted to Varner by Ratliff, which tarnishes Flem's reputation and impedes his ability to rent Varner's land: "'Sho now,' Jody said. He took a tooth pick from the china receptacle on the table and sat back. 'Burning barns aint right. And a man that's got habits that way will just have to suffer the disadvantages of them'" (13). The irony of Varner's statement is that the habits do not belong to Flem – they belong to Abner Snopes. However, this irony stresses the value of the barn in Faulkner's fictional world because the mere association with barn burning is enough to ostracize Flem immediately.

When lamenting Darl's capture into the custody of the Jackson mental asylum, Cash Bundren sheds light on the exact nature of what a barn represents within *As I Lay Dying*:

> It wasn't nothing else to do. It was either send him to Jackson, or have Gillespie sue us, because he knowed some way that Darl set fire to it […] I can almost believe he done right in a way. But I don't reckon nothing excuses setting fire to a man's barn and endangering his livestock and destroying his property. That's how I reckon a man is crazy. That's how he can't see eye to eye with folks. And I reckon they aint nothing else to do with him but what most folks say is right. (*As I Lay Dying* 135)

Cash establishes an important symbolic value that is associated with the barn, and one could say that the representational value it has completely eclipses its importance as a representation of space. Specifically, Cash illustrates that burning down the barn endangers Gillespie's livestock and destroys his personal property, which illustrates how the destruction of the barn signifies, what is essentially, a transgression of Lockean property relations. Locke defines personal property as "[taking] something from the state that nature has provided and left it in" and "[mixing one's] labour with it, thus joining to it something that is his own; and in that way he makes it his property" (10). The relationship between the barn and the livestock gestures towards the way that Gillespie inflects the space of the barn with his labor: cultivating livestock and harvesting their

goods is work conducted by Gillespie as a farmer. The barn simply comes under his ownership as it facilitates the production of labor carried out through Gillespie's farm. Thus, the barn, from the perspective of the community, is a clear representational space: it symbolizes the ethics and rights that surround personal property and ownership, and Darl transgresses this line when he attempts to destroy it. Cash demonstrates Darl's transgression in his pragmatic response that Darl must be insane due to his attempt at burning down Gillespie's property. Furthermore, one can argue that the barn takes on an economic value due to its association with labor and production. Caught up in the production of goods, the barn occupies a place within the economy of the farm system, specifically because it organizes and facilitates the labor that is carried out on a day-to-day basis.

The representational value of the barn and what it represents within the topography of Yoknapatawpha provides the community a language, built from materiality, which allows them to reabsorb Darl into the symbolic order that governs their town. Cash's final monologue is emblematic of madness's reabsorption into reason: the family will be pardoned for Darl's actions if they agree to qualify him as insane. A trade occurs: Darl's sanity for a financial pardon, which suggests that the only way the act of barn burning could be excused is if Darl is crazy. This trade, then, is based on a pre-given agrarian/personal property logic that organizes the community. Essentially, Darl steps outside of the accepted codes of the community, which structure a model of moral behavior that ensures each citizen's ability to subsist through his or her labor. It is based on this economic transgression that Cash agrees, indeed feels forced, to give his brother up to the opinions of the community and label him as insane. Thus, it is only through an association with the barn that Darl is able to be thought of as mad, which then allows the town to control him based on the discourse and law that dictates what should be done with the mad. The aforementioned passage that I quoted from *The Production of Space* helps to identify that the community can make sense of Darl through his engagement with the barn: the knowledge that they gain is that Darl Bundren is insane. No longer does he exist on the fringes of the community, outside of linguistic comprehension. Rather, in setting fire to the barn, Darl becomes a subject lived through discernible actions that can be organized by those who surround him: he is a being that is conceived and perceived to

be mad, and he is punished accordingly. Ultimately, the town puts Darl through the same type of conversion that he enacted earlier in the text because public perception associates him with the ideological properties of the barn: he is a *transgressor* of those properties and laws. The symbol of the barn restores the linguistic absence felt by the town when trying to understand Darl: it gives them physical evidence of what they can call insane behavior. In other words, the barn offers the town the means of re-inscribing Darl within "the language of reason, which itself is the language of order…" ("Cogito and Madness" 34).

The representational quality of the barn comes to symbolize a contingent relationship between madness and reason that Foucault and Derrida seem not to think possible: it offers both a site where particular actions can give way to madness as well as a structure that can rein that madness back into the symbolic realm of language. There is a co-dependency between madness and reason in which one necessarily needs the other to exist – each concept needs its counterpart to ensure its own meaning. Without reason there can be no madness and vice versa. As a symbolic site, the barn amalgamates this contingency, uniting both reason and madness as being built of the same thematic structure. Surely there is an antagonism between madness and reason, which Foucault and Derrida maintain. And as Shoshana Felman points out, literature takes up this antagonism by directing us to ways in which linguistic breakdowns challenge the rigidity of language's relationship with reason. However, it also directs us to the degree that symbolic language fights back and struggles to reinforce reason and signification. What the barn ultimately comes to represent is the ambiguity that exists between madness and reason as separate conceptual entities. By breaking down the boundaries that separate madness and reason, attacking those boundaries at the level of language, the representational materiality in Faulkner's text creates the theoretical space in which to question the existence of both by organizing them as mutually contingent. Cash echoes the relationship between madness and reason as Darl is taken away to Jackson: "But I aint sho that ere a man has the right to say what is crazy and what aint. Its like there was a fellow in every man that's done a-past sanity or the insanity, that watches the sane and the insane doings of that man with the same horror and astonishment" (*As I Lay Dying* 137).

3.

3.   Of What He Built in the Jungle: *Apocalypse Now* and the Landscape of Compulsive Repetition

In the immediate space of this chapter, I would like to establish a sense of the criticism that shapes American war cinema, specifically in regards to depictions of the Vietnam War. Additionally, I would like to offer a provisional analysis that links particular Vietnam War films to the psychoanalytic model of compulsive repetition to consider how subjectivity is affected by war. Vietnam War films are important to conceptions of American subjectivity because of the ways that they tend to challenge political, militaristic, and imperial exceptionalist mythologies that existed at the heart of American culture. In "Vietnam and the Hollywood Genre Film: Inversions of American Mythology in *The Deer Hunter* and *Apocalypse Now*," John Hellman analyzes Michael Cimino's *The Deer Hunter* (1978) via a reading of James Fennimore Cooper's *The Deerslayer* (1841) to illustrate "a central myth in dealing with Vietnam as a collective American trauma" (58). According to Hellman, *The Deer Hunter* uses the specific western mythological trope of pitting a "symbolic landscape, a frontier between civilization" against a "lonely hero" (57): "Vietnam as yet another historic projection of an internal struggle of white American consciousness, but one where the dream of mastery over nature and the unconscious, or alternatively benign communion with them, is turned upside down into a nightmare of captivity" (59). In a similar reading, Leo Cowley argues in "The War about the War: Vietnam Films and American Myth" the depictions of the Vietnam War subvert popular mythologies that concern American identity: "The Vietnam film continues the World War II film tradition of portraying war as an arena for the display of man's ferocity, courage, capacity for sacrifice, altruism, and the like. But these martial qualities are now treated as though they had important, even decisive, military consequences" (70). The idea of consequences is important here because Crowley suggests that violence determines the outcome of war. Specifically, operations in Vietnam marked a shift from former U.S. militaristic behavior that prided itself on an aversion to "martial" qualities. In

other words, the traditional and propriety rules of engagement had no place in the Vietnam conflict, and soldiers were disadvantaged by their own reservations to commit violence:

> In films on the World War II era, the brutal German and Japanese were contrasted with the personally decent Americans. Is there any Hollywood film scene where enemy troops are shown assisting their own wounded? We always try to help ours and we lacked the icy sadists of the German and Japanese officer corps. But there was no implication then that Americans could not bear them anyway without imitating them. American audiences are now being told that they have been disadvantaged by their past decency, whether real or imagined. (70)

Again, Cowley emphasizes how decency and morality are misplaced values within the context of war: it was a tactical error to stop oneself from committing brutal acts of violence. Cowley's argument is effective because he demonstrates that Vietnam War films, such as *The Deer Hunter*, de-mythologize the idea that war is composed of stark differentiations between winners and losers, good and evil, and they challenge U.S. self-conceptions that always plot America on the side of the victorious good.

If films about the Vietnam War participated in the re-evaluation of the U.S. military's virtuous nature, these films also began to cast a speculative glance at the ways in which the military affects and shapes subjectivity. For instance, much of Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket* (1987) takes place in a Marine boot camp, in which new recruits are transformed into soldiers. In *The Hollywood War Film*, Robert Eberwein argues that Kubrick focuses on the production of militarized subjects through emotional and psychological breakdown. Examining the murder of Gunnery Sgt. Hartman committed by Private Leonard Lawrence, Eberwein argues:

> the form this event takes represents a first for the war film [...] *Full Metal Jacket* is the first war film in which a soldier driven insane during the

training process murders a sergeant. The event demonstrates how

successful Hartman has been: [Leonard] has in fact become the ultimate

killing machine, one who has lost his reason (105).

The opening portion of *Full Metal Jacket* emphasizes the fragility of the psyche as the subject is converted from civilian to soldier. Furthermore, Leonard Lawrence's isolation at the bootcamp is emblematic of the turn that Vietnam films make away from collective portrayals of militarized conflict. Specifically, Vietnam cinema represented individualized experiences of violence that soldiers faced at war. Captain Benjamin L. Willard's journey down the Nung River, in *Apocalypse Now*, illustrates another example of the individual at war, and Colonel Walter E. Kurtz's secession from the U.S. military is yet another depiction of one man moving away from the collectivity of the state in order to exercise his own will. Even Oliver Stone's *Platoon* (1986) can be said to represent the dissolution of group camaraderie. Bearing an association with William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954), Stone's narrative concerns the splitting of Bravo Company into two separate factions, which are led by Sgt. Barnes and Sgt. Elias. While the film maintains a shared sense of the war, the factionalism within the platoon illustrates the breakdown of the collective order that was the bedrock of earlier war films such as *The Dirty Dozen* (1967), *The Great Escape* (1963) and more contemporary films such as *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), *The Thin Red Line* (1998), and *Band of Brothers* (2001).

 In this chapter, I attempt to contribute to critical readings of Vietnam War cinema by arguing that Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* translates the spatialized practice of war through different forms of neurotic repetition. While I introduced the specific philosophical dimensions of my analysis in the theoretical introduction, it will be productive to situate *Apocalypse Now* alongside other Vietnam War films that are concerned with various forms of repetition. To begin, Cimino's *The Deer Hunter* illustrates different forms of repetition that mark the three characters who go to Vietnam. However, Nick Chevotarevich's continued participation within an underground Russian roulette organization is, arguably, the most impactful set of repetitions within the film. The central violent events that dramatically affect the three friends who go to war

(Michael Vronsky, Steven Pushkov, and Nick Chevotarevich) are their capture and the games of Russian roulette they are forced to play while held captive in a POW camp. In captivity, Michael is the only one who can withstand the psychological effects of the games. For example, Steven is, by contrast, completely mentally broken even before a gun is forced into his hand: while listening to other prisoners play, each sound the gun makes, whether the click of an empty chamber or the blast of a full round, pushes Steven's psyche further and further away from sanity. Nick, for his part, is able to play the game with Michael, but he cries and crumbles under the weight of impending death after each pull of the trigger clicks empty.

After their escape from captivity, prompted by luck and Michael's plan to kill their captors, Nick eventually disappears and is the only one of the friends who does not come back home to Pennsylvania. Subsequently, however, Michael returns to Vietnam to find Nick after discovering that he is alive. Upon arriving in Saigon, Michael quickly discovers that Nick has become a notorious roulette player during his absence from home. It is important that Nick chooses to continually re-engage with Russian roulette because it suggests a preoccupation with the original violence that he experienced along with Michael and Steven. When Michael finds him about to play another game, he stops and demands that Nick tell him who he is: after asking, "Mike, who? Mike, who?" Nick replies, "Mike, who? I don't know" (Cimino). Refusing to believe that his friend does not recognize him, Michael states, "I came twelve thousand miles to get you, don't you do that to me, don't do it […] what's the matter, don't you recognize me? Nicky, I love you, you are my friend. What are you doing?" To which Nick replies by spitting in Michael's face (Cimino).

In a final attempt to bring his friend home, Michael sits across from Nick to play a last game of roulette. Watching Nick point the gun at his head, Michael implores him, "don't do it" before Nick pulls the trigger on an empty chamber. Taking his own turn with the gun, Michael asks, "is this what you want?" He then states, "I love you, Nicky," and pulls the trigger on another empty round. By putting the gun to his own head and pulling the trigger, Michael, too, enacts a repetition of the events he was forced to endure while being a prisoner of war. It is as though watching his friend repeat the danger of the game

signals to Nick that there is something wrong with his behavior because it is after Michael pulls the trigger that he begins to cry. Encouraged by the first display of emotion from Nick, Michael tries to compel him to come home once again: "Come on, Nicky, come home. Just come home. Home? Talk to me, Nicky" (Cimino). Stopping Nick from putting the gun back to his head, Michael says, "Nicky, you remember the trees? You remember all the different waves in the trees? You remember that? The mountains? You remember all that?" (Cimino). Nick finally breaks his silence, stating, "One shot," which echoes Michael's hunting advice that a deer should only be shot once, before putting the gun to his head and killing himself. The sequence between Michael and Nick illustrates the degree to which Nick has lost his sense of identity to the violence he experienced while in captivity. The constant repetition of that violence through different games of roulette ensures that his identity remains lost, fractured by the constant repetition of the action that psychologically broke him. It does not truly matter whether Nick did or did not recognize Michael, at first, because the eventual recognition of his friend and the thought of returning home is not enough to stop his compulsion to continue the violence of the roulette game.

In a similar vein, the opening act of *Full Metal Jacket* can be read as another example of the destructive nature of repetition. As outlined by Eberwein, Kubrick's film illustrates the process of becoming a soldier within the space of the training facility. Though I agree with Eberwein's assessment of this section of the film, I argue that the training conducted by Leonard is represented through the treatment of repetition: specifically, Hartman enacts the psychological breakdown of Leonard through repeated verbal attacks, physical punishment, and public shaming. Leonard's entire experience of becoming a soldier is one cycle of repeated abuse: his performance on the training field results in punishments he cannot hope to complete; Hartman slanders him with explicit derogatory remarks; and his fellow recruits hold him down at night and beat him with soap wrapped in towels after he has the entire regiment punished for eating donuts (Kubrick). It is at the end of all this constant abuse that Leonard finally snaps and, as Eberwein puts its, loses his reason. The constant repetition of abuse and failure that Leonard experiences is different from the repetitions carried out by Nick Chevotarevich because Nick's behavior is self-inflicted and carried out by the unconscious operations that drive his compulsion. Leonard too

kills himself after he murders his superior officer. However, his suicide is a result of the repetitions carried out on him, and it is the repeated abuse that irreparably alienates him from the collective group of recruits. It is specifically this alienation that extends Leonard beyond the boundaries of sanity, which causes him to kill Hartman.

I structure my examination of *Apocalypse Now* as another example of repetition within the context of the Vietnam War and the practice of warfare more broadly. Specifically, I argue that Coppola's film treats the spatial practice of war in the context of the repetition compulsion. This chapter is an outlier of sorts: it acts as a cinematic interlude between the literary texts that I analyze. However, the departure is propelled by the fact that *Apocalypse Now* is an ideal text with which to analyze the spatialized function of compulsive repetition due to the deeply nuanced place it holds in the film. As a film, *Apocalypse Now* is delivered through a different medium, but Coppola's depiction of Willard and Kurtz offers a unique glance into the complex relationship between space and the compulsion to repeat.

The discourse of war seems inextricably spatial: it is a systematized network comprised of territorialization, the mobilization of forces into advancement, retreat, simultaneous theatres of operation, invasion, defensive blockades, various outposts, and strategic militaristic movement. The role of the soldier is also spatially constituted because he or she is dependent on these shifting boundaries of conflict. These dimensions are spatial in nature, determining a field in which a soldier must perform the function of "winning" the war. It is the battlefield that sustains the identity of the soldier by providing him a place where he can perform his subjectivity: it is on the field of combat that he will turn the training he acquired in bootcamp into action. Thus, the terrain of conflict is the place where the subject-at-war makes his transition from trainee to soldier, which suggests that the militarized subject is a spatially enacted being. Henri Lefebvre sheds light on the ways in which subjects become spatially enacted beings by arguing that a subject's basic interaction with space is based on particular sequences of articulation and performance: "'nature' can only be apprehended through objects and shapes, but this perception occurs within an overall context of illumination where bodies pass from their natural obscurity into the light, not in an arbitrary manner but according to a specific sequence, order or

articulation" (183). He elaborates on the transition from obscurity to light by suggesting that articulation within space occurs in a perpetual "process of decipherment" (183). The act of decipherment is important because it suggests that one's ability to act in space is contingent upon one's ability to "read" space. The defined terrain of war exemplifies how subjects must decipher spatial codes because the militarized field is equipped with its own sets of significations. One could say that the field of war prescribes a certain set of militaristic actions and expectations: missions, orders, duties, and instructions that are tied to navigating and understanding the spatiality of conflict. How then does a soldier (or any subject for that matter) come to decipher space?

Lefebvre argues that reading space comes from understanding a three-tier model of spatialization: spatial practice, representations of space, and representational spaces (*The Production of Space* 33). Spatial practice, the most straightforward of Lefebvre's levels, is simply the everyday movements a subject makes through spatial constructions, which he refers to as "perceived space:" it is the navigation between "daily reality (daily routine) and urban reality (the routes and networks which link up the places set aside for work, 'private life,' and leisure)" (38). Representations of space and representational spaces are two concepts that are more difficult to differentiate, despite Lefebvre's attempts to distinguish them as separate levels of spatiality. As I began to explain in the previous chapter, representations of space are intimately connected to "the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers, as of a certain type of artist with a scientific bent – all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived" (38). Alternatively, representational spaces are explicitly related to symbols and signs: "space as directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols […] it overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects" (39). Representational space is a condition of subjectivity; it is a level of space constructed by subjects – it is the level of discourse. In psychoanalytic terms, representational space is the space of the symbolic order and language. Part of the discursive element of representational space is the dialogue created by the subject who participates in space. This symbolic layer converts spatiality into phenomena that are reflective of subjects and their already-present language. Essentially, representational space is a construction that subjects create so that spatiality can be read and

comprehended through symbolic language. In the first chapter, I used Darl as an example of how representational space and objects are created. In this chapter, I shift the focus onto the theorization of how representational spaces are read.

I should emphasize here that reading space begins with comprehending the linguistic make-up of what Jacques Lacan refers to as the symbolic order: the level on which subjects sustain subjectivity through the acquisition of language. Lefebvre's notion that space is a network of signs and symbols suggests that spatiality is, at least in part, a linguistic construction: representational space is the level of the symbolic order, which governs the cohesion of subjectivity. As Lacan maintains,

> This is why I have decided to illustrate […] a truth which may be drawn from the moment in Freud's thought we have been studying---namely, that it is the symbolic order which is constitutive for the subject---by demonstrating in a story the major determination the subject receives from the itinerary of the signifier. ("Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter'" 7)

The symbolic order offers a subject direction based on an inherited language that "hands down its sentence to those who know how to hear it: through the use of the particle employed as a partitive particle" (16). Language, then, constitutes subjectivity, and it is passed down from subject to subject as we learn to utilize the linguistic system in which we are born. Representational space is an experience of the symbolic that helps us control our environment: we filter space through the symbols that we are taught so that we can understand where we live. Why would we do this? The answer is clear: to turn space into a signifying system that reflects ourselves and reinforces our language. Amalgamating space with language creates a harmonious existence in which those who inhabit it can understand the world.

According to Lefebvre, the relationship between linguistic and spatial signification constructs space. When addressing the question of whether or not space can be read, Lefebvre answers:

Yes and no. Yes, inasmuch as it is possible to envisage a "reader" who deciphers or decodes and a "speaker" who expresses himself by translating his progression into a discourse. But no in that social space can in no way be compared to a blank page upon which a specific message has been inscribed […] both natural and urban spaces are, if anything, "over-inscribed" (142).

Space is representational; it can "speak" a particular discourse that has been inscribed into its form, and one can be able to "read" that discourse. However, reading space becomes complicated by over-inscription, a multiplicity of different discourses being laid on top of one another. I argue that over-inscription turns reading space into a process of not only decoding symbols but also a practice of tuning one's ear: one must discern an individual discourse among the others that attempt to signify something else at the same time. Lefebvre argues that space is difficult to decipher because the meaning of spatial signification is hidden in the plurality of symbolic voices. While he admits that it is "incontestable" that spatiality serves as a system of signification, Lefebvre envisions space as ultimately signifying only structures of power: "But what it signifies is dos and don'ts – and this brings us back to power" (142). This structure of power is based on the proscription of action: "space 'decides' what activity may occur, but even this 'decision' has limits placed on it. Space lays down the law because it implies a certain order – and hence also a certain disorder […] Space commands bodies, prescribing or proscribing gestures, routes, and distances to be covered" (143). The spatial distribution of power gestures towards a form of space that is divorced from the representational/symbolic order. For spatiality to exert its influence over subjects, it *must* become separated from representational space, which would prevent subjects from reading its forms and contours. Lefebvre suggests that this separation is made possible through the distinction between readable and lived in space:

No "reading of the space" of Romanesque churches and their surroundings (towns or monasteries), for example, can in any way help us predict the space of so-called Gothic churches or understand their preconditions and prerequisites: the growth of the towns, the revolution of the communes,

the activity of the guilds, and so on. This space was *produced* before being read; nor was it produced in order to be read or grasped, but rather in order to be *lived* by people with bodies and lives in their own particular urban context. (143)

In this section of *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre concludes, "reading follows production in all cases except those in which space is produced especially in order to be read. This raises the question of what the virtue of readability actually is" (143). He answers this question by stating that readable spaces are the most "deceptive and tricked-up imaginable" because "the graphic impression of readability is a sort of *trompe-l'oeil* concealing strategic intentions and actions" (143). Lefebvre then explains these intentions and actions by analyzing the power structure that he sees as being hidden behind monuments: "Monumentality, for instance, always embodies and imposes a clearly intelligible message: being political, military, and ultimately fascist in character, monumental buildings mask the will to power and the arbitrariness of power beneath signs and surfaces which claim to express collective will and collective thought" (143).

The distinction between readable space and lived in space is based on agency. Readable space stresses the agency of the subject who can create linguistically-derived symbols. Lived in space, on the other hand, limits the agency of the subject by resisting representational space, which reconfigures the field on which we must contend with our existence. However, there is a concern with what Lefebvre calls the "virtue of readability": is not lived in space still a space that needs to be read? Furthermore, is not lived in space one that is produced through the construction of linguistic signifiers, which are then converted into spatial symbols? Lefebvre's terminology is contradictory to some degree because from the outset of his work he describes representational space as "directly lived through its associated images and symbols […]" (39). Thus, representational space *is* lived in space. Furthermore, Lefebvre argues that living in space is predicated on "a guaranteed level of *competence* and a specific level of *performance*" (33). What is living in space if not a competent performance within the world? If spatial practice demands competence, what is the nature of that competence? The answer seems pretty clear: a competent performance is one that successfully reads the signifiers and

significations that compose the symbolic order. Let us return to Lefebvre's reading of monumentality to see how he ironically stresses the symbolic nature of spatial structures. The fact that monuments pose as a symbol of collectivity, and even celebration, only to conceal a militaristic "will to power" proves the readability of those structures: Lefebvre identifies at least two forms of discourse that can be seen symbolically within a monument. Ultimately, the explicit and hidden meanings within monuments bring us back to Lefebvre's original, and somewhat contradictory, idea that space incontestably signifies: reading space is possible. However, we must be acutely aware of the complexity and tension built into the significations that we confront.

The fact that space is inextricably bound to the articulations of language does not, however, mean that spatiality cannot assert some form of power or influence over subjects. Representational space is a form of spatiality that can participate in the production of meaning within our environments: as previously stated, competent performance within the world necessitates comprehension of the symbols placed within the world. However, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, language is not an infallible system, but rather it is subject to particular vulnerabilities that result in the breakdown of signification. As a supplemental feature of linguistic signification, space can reinforce the descriptions created by subjects to understand the world. However, at the same time, spatial arrangements can assert their own independence by falling out of congruence with the symbolic order, thereby challenging its stability. Thus, there is a possibility that space can destabilize subjects and subjectivity. This possibility is not based on abandoning linguistic systems and declaring spatiality to be some raw phenomenon. Rather, a subject becomes destabilized when the relationship between space and the symbolic order is undermined through a far more insidious process: the effacement of signification and the meaning it seeks to convey.

The primary aim of this chapter is to theorize how spatiality produces the compulsion to repeat through spatial practice. In Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*, the jungle serves as an exemplary site of contradictory significations. Coppola's landscape is a site that destabilizes the symbolic order of warfare, which is brought on by the effacement of both linguistic and spatialized signification. Since representational space is a product of

multiple discourses attempting to speak at the same time, there is a possibility that contradicting significations would confront subjects, which would make it impossible to read the landscape and perform one's duties. For instance, without the ability to act out what it means to "be" a soldier, the participants of a war cannot use spatial practice to fulfill their duties. Furthermore, those contradictions produce over-signification within the landscape that greatly affect the soldiers who are deployed within its boundaries.

Absence is another governing theme that structures the film: *Apocalypse Now* is set in the Vietnam War, but a historically accurate account of the war and its events is mysteriously absent from the film's story.[17] At most, the war remains at arm's length from the central storyline: the plot begins at the fringes of the war and moves farther and farther from the conflict as it progresses. Thus, it is important to note that Coppola's film, while set in the Vietnam conflict, is ironically unconcerned with the actual events of the war. However, some critics have argued that the poetics of the film have masked the historicity the film gestures towards. For instance, in "*Apocalypse Now* and *Charm School*: Film and Literature in the Making of CNN's Tailwind Tale of Nerve Gas and Defectors," Jerry Lembcke argues, "*Apocalypse Now*'s often cited allegorical quality veils the more political agenda of the film that foretells some of the intrigue surrounding […] the split between the CIA and the military over how the war would be fought […]" (305). While Kurtz's relationship with his commanders certainly speaks to the tension that Lembcke identifies, it is clear that, at its core, *Apocalypse Now* is not a film concerned with verisimilitude. Furthermore, the ambivalent nature of the actual Vietnam War makes it difficult to contend that Coppola's film is an expressly anti-war film like other Vietnam narratives that began to "pervade American filmmaking" (Kagan 98). While there are moments within the film that gesture toward the inhumane actions that sparked civil protest in America and beyond, I argue that the Vietnam conflict functions more as a backdrop used to contextualize the breakdown of representational space and the subjects that rely upon its stability. Essentially, the film mobilizes a separation between

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[17] In "Filming War," Jay Winter describes *Apocalypse Now* as belonging to a "third generation" of war cinema that trades in realistic portrayals of history for less patriotic tales of "madness and savagery" (166).

representational space and spatial practice, which transforms the jungle into an almost completely incomprehensible landscape. This is what makes *Apocalypse Now* an ideal text from which to consider the disassociation between symbolic and physical signification: soldiers are placed within a jungle that is bereft of the representational space of warfare, replacing it with something altogether different and unknown. In other words, the soldiers cannot decipher the representational space of the landscape, and the terrain of the film runs counter to the language that organizes the practice of warfare.

I situate the compulsion to repeat within what Freud refers to as the war neuroses or traumatic neuroses, more broadly: "The conflict [of the self] is between the soldier's old peaceful ego and his new warlike one, and it becomes acute as soon as the peace-ego realizes what danger it runs of losing its own life to the rashness of its newly formed, parasitic double" ("Introduction to Psychoanalysis and the War Neuroses" 209). I argue that the compulsion to repeat can be explained as a form of spatial practice that enacts the transformation from peace-ego to war-ego: the repeated participation in the war, the perpetual exposure to its violence, de-regulates the peace-ego and ushers in the war-ego. In one aspect, the war-ego benefits from the compulsion to repeat because it facilitates the overthrow of the peace-ego. The nature of the compulsion has its origins in the repetition carried out by the war/traumatic neuroses. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud writes that the traumatic neurotic suffers from "the traumatic experience […] constantly forcing itself upon the patient even in his sleep […] The patient is, as one might say, fixated on his trauma" (13). Freud further theorizes the nature of the traumatic neurotic's fixation in *A General Introduction to Psychoanalyses*: "The traumatic neuroses demonstrate very clearly that a fixation to the moment of the traumatic occurrence lies at their root. These patients regularly produce the traumatic situation in their dreams […] it appears that the attack constitutes a complete reproduction of this situation" (243). The Freudian model of compulsive repetition is based on the function of the unconscious, which continually presses a traumatic experience back upon the psyche of the traumatized neurotic. Since Freud suggests that the individual reproduces the terrible event within dreams, his argument implies that the individual experiences these memories passively, as the unconscious refuses to let one forget. However, I will argue that Willard and Kurtz actively set the compulsion to repeat in motion via a conscious spatial practice.

Thus, I will slightly augment the Freudian model of compulsive repetition to illustrate how compulsive behavior can be enacted intentionally within space.

Captain Willard, for example, has a unique relationship with the compulsion to repeat, which is shaped by the constant desire to be a soldier participating in the war. To fulfill this desire, Willard must situate himself within the physical landscape of the conflict, which means he must find a place within the symbolic/representational space that overlays the jungle. However, it is impossible for the captain to occupy the representational space of warfare because he exists outside of the symbolic order of the war. Thus, two specific occurrences perpetuate Willard's repetitive compulsion: being removed from the jungle and performing within a representational space that is outside of the official regulations of the war. Willard's journey into the jungle demonstrates the relationship that I will argue exists between readable and lived in space because he cannot adequately "live" in the jungle without being sustained through the symbolic level of space. Furthermore, I will argue that Willard's compulsion embodies a complex relationship between the death and life drives, which Freud outlines in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Willard's compulsion to return to the war is based on the desire to be in action, to fulfill his own personal sense that he is a soldier. The obsession becomes so severe that separation from the war threatens his sense of self, and he begins to deteriorate physically. Willard converts the compulsive need to practice space into a life drive: an instinctual "life-preserving" force (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle* 83). However, Willard's proximity to the war complicates the function of the life drive: ironically, the captain finds the will to live within the war, which could take his life at any moment. Therefore, the life/death drives and the peacetime/war ego become inextricably bound because he finds peace and life within what could be described as a drive towards death (i.e. the war). The compulsive act of being in a warzone, therefore, is the process that sustains him at the same time that it facilitates the transition from peacetime-ego to war-ego.

If Willard embodies the process through which the ego becomes a war-ego, Colonel Kurtz is the war-ego incarnate. The colonel illustrates the inevitability of Willard's struggle with those forces that "conduct life into death" (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*

83): he dedicates himself completely to the war-ego, acting in accordance with its brutal law, and he becomes an embodiment of the drive towards death. Kurtz embodies the war-ego and signifies it within the representational space of the jungle, further disrupting the symbolic order of the film. His place within the symbolic is chaotic: the colonel is a character that cannot be defined by a single set of significations because he combines contradictory discourses that cannot possibly produce representational coherence. In other words, Kurtz, as a symbolic element of the film, is a representation of what Lefebvre refers to as over-signification, which comes in the form of a subject. Furthermore, the chaos that Kurtz creates in the symbolic order is mediated by the space that he builds deep within the jungle. Kurtz enacts his own spatialized compulsion to repeat via the construction of his compound, which I will argue is a repetition of the hysteria that he suffers in the jungle as a Special Forces officer for the U.S. military. And yet, Kurtz is different from a traditional hysteric because he converts the hysterical moment into the material necessary to construct the war-ego, and he does so through a conscious decision to reproduce the violence that once threatened him. Thus, the compulsive behavior exhibited by Kurtz is a spatialized repetition of the brutality he witnesses and with which he aligns. Essentially, I suggest that Kurtz's actions and presence in the jungle create a fundamental irony: he reproduces the very imperialistic state that drives him away from the U.S. military. I will argue that Kurtz's relationship to spatial practice illustrates how the colonel is caught between what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as the "war-machine," on one side, and the "machinic enslavement" that lies in the heart of State Apparatuses, on the other (354).

Ultimately, Coppola's jungle allows us to conceptualize the complexity of spatial practice as it relates to representational/symbolic space, compulsive repetition, and the violence of warfare. *Apocalypse Now* is a unique film because it illustrates the impossibilities of representing war by abandoning a coherent narrative or representation of the Vietnam conflict. I do not mean to suggest that the Vietnam War is completely absent, but there is no re-enactment of Operation Rolling Thunder, no direct mention of the Tet Offensive, and no representation of the other major historical moments of the war. Coppola's film is drastically different from Steven Spielberg's historiographic depictions of World War II: the opening of *Schindler's List* (1993) offers a hauntingly realistic illustration of Nazi-

occupied Poland and the inhumanity found in the concentration camps and the opening of *Saving Private Ryan* begins with a violent re-enactment of U.S. troops arriving on Omaha beach. *Apocalypse Now* is different, too, from contemporary war films concerned with the conflicts in the Middle East: Clint Eastwood's *American Sniper* (2015) recasts the life of U.S. Navy Seal officer Chris Kyle, and Kathryn Bigelow's *Zero Dark Thirty* (2013) begins with archival audio of the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and then re-enacts the brutal interrogations conducted at Abu Ghraib. Perhaps the most emphatic moment in the film, Bigelow goes so far as to dramatize the raid and assassination of Osama Bin Laden carried out by Seal Team Six. Instead of focusing on the accuracy of the timeline of the Vietnam War and its events, Coppola's narrative focuses on the microcosmic experiences of individual mental deterioration of those who become lost in the spatial frenzy of combat.[18]

Within the symbolic order of Coppola's film, Willard desires to occupy a singular position: an active duty officer within the U.S. military. Late in the film, when Kurtz questions his position in the war, accusing him of being an assassin, Willard defends himself by plainly stating: "I am a soldier" (Coppola). To state that he is a soldier is to declare a position within the symbolic order of the film, which comes with a prescribed set of significations to perform. In *The Seminars of Jacques Lacan Book III: The Psychoses 1955-1956*, Lacan states that the symbolic order is a "system of language" which constructs meaning that must be understood by comprehending a "reality that is covered by the entire network of language" (32). Spatialized warfare and the militaries that occupy the boundaries of war have their own discourses composed of specific signifiers and signifieds – their own networks of language – that compile particular structures of meaning. Militaries themselves are stratified from the top down and organized into defined components: the hierarchy of rank situates soldiers, distinguishes officers with various titles of authority, and establishes a language or chain of command

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[18] While not the only genre of war films to engage with psychological deterioration, the cinema on the Vietnam War is often concerned with an individual's mental breakdown. As I mentioned earlier, both *The Deer Hunter* and *Full Metal Jacket*, to a lesser extent, focus on the psychical damage done to the main characters. Adrian Lyne's *Jacob's Ladder* (1998) also depicts the effects that the Vietnam War had on those who fought in its battles.

that must be obeyed; the division of soldiers into different branches and sections of the military disseminates the population of incoming bodies across multiple fields of action and theatres of war; and the very structure of the U.S. military cross-sections the totality of its forces into defined groups (army, navy, air force, and marines), which contain their own specific identities and duties. Military organization is a system of language, and Willard desires to situate himself in that system – to operate as a signifier that participates within the overall meaning of the military and the war itself.

To be a soldier is to be one type of signifier within combat: as an active body in the war, a subject signifies his or her presence. Furthermore, it is by acting in the war that the subject takes on meaning and becomes a signifiable being. Thus, the soldier establishes his or her subjectivity by attaining a meaningful identity through active duty. *Apocalypse Now* translates the necessity of spatial practice from the beginning of its narrative by demonstrating Willard's separation anxiety, which occurs when he is absent from the war. Initially, absence organizes Willard's position in the film from the opening credits: he is absent from the war, isolated within a hotel room in Saigon. The physical separation from the war causes the sensation that Willard is separating from his self because he has no place to exercise his rank; he has no place to perform his status, and his existence becomes diminished. Separation from the war leads to a literal deterioration of Willard's sense of being: "Been here a week now," Willard laments, "waiting for a mission. Getting softer, every minute I stay in this room I get weaker and every minute Charlie squats in the bush he gets stronger" (Coppola). To be a soldier, Willard must be present within the jungle, and he experiences separation anxiety as a result of being removed from the war.

While he is isolated in his Saigon hotel room, Willard's experience is delivered through a sequence which depicts the impact that inertia has on the captain. Furthermore, this sequence immediately introduces the conflict between peacetime-ego and war-ego, which is carried out within Willard's psyche throughout the film. Coppola uses the apparatus of film to cut back and forth abruptly between scenes of Willard's behavior to render cinematically the "conflict [that] is between the soldier's old peaceful ego and his new warlike one, and it becomes acute as soon as the peace-ego realizes the danger it runs of

losing its life owing to the rashness of its newly formed, parasitic double" ("Introduction to the War Neuroses" 209). The editing technique of this sequence transitions back and forth between different sets of behavior and emotion, which, I argue, illustrates the conflicting sides that seek to control Willard's ego: scenes of the captain staring off into a void, crying on the floor beside his bed, and drinking heavily are interspersed with images of him standing in full face paint, squaring off against an imaginary foe in hand-to-hand combat, striking a mirror and rubbing blood from his hand on his face. I argue that this sequence establishes two conflicting sides of Willard's personality. First, the images of him crying, staring off into nothing, and drinking symbolize the peace-ego. Those images are then juxtaposed against the war-ego that Willard expresses through acts of violence in the hotel.

It is the war-ego's connection to the life and death instincts that drives Willard's compulsive obsession to return to the war. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud describes the dynamic between life and death drives:

> The upshot of our enquiry, so far, has been the drawing of sharp distinctions between the ego instincts and the sexual instincts, and the view that the former exercise a thrust towards death, and the latter towards a prolongation of life […] Moreover, it is actually only of the former group of instincts, that we can predicate a conservative, or rather retrograde, character corresponding to a compulsion to repeat. (73)

Freud suggests that the death drive can be associated with a compulsion to repeat because our bodies, over time, seek to return us to the "inanimate state" from which we came (73). In death, "the ego instincts arise from coming to life from inanimate matter, and they seek to restore the inanimate state" (73). However, the formulation of Willard's war-ego complicates the relationship between these two instinctual forces. For instance, Willard's separation from the war results in diminishment that weakens him physically and mentally. We can interpret Willard's weakened state as the weakening of the war-ego, which fights back while he is isolated in the Saigon hotel. Thus, the war-ego creates

an obsessive desire to return to conflict so as to prolong its strength and vitality. In other words, as an agent of war, Willard sustains his existence by participating in combat.

In *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, Freud elaborates on the nature of obsessive behavior, stating that each obsession contains its own set of meaning: "The obsessive act is full of meaning; it *seems* to be a representation, a repetition of that all-important scene" (233). In the case of Captain Willard, this meaning is somewhat complex. Given the veracity of the war-ego, it would be tempting to say that the meaning behind Willard's compulsion is solely driven by the parasitic twin of the peace-ego and its will to live. However, such a statement only attends to half of the dynamic between the life and death drives in relation to Willard's compulsive behavior. A basic irony exists in the drive towards life produced by the war-ego: the drive towards life can sustain itself only by coming into proximity with death. In other words, to be driven compulsively back to the war is, in a manner of speaking, a compulsion towards death itself. Willard's entire journey towards Kurtz is a sequence of multiple near-death experiences that would ultimately return him to an inanimate state: meeting Lieutenant Kilgore during the bombardment of the Vietnamese countryside, the multiple attacks on the river from unseen enemies, and the barrage of heavy artillery being carried out on the Do Lung bridge are all examples of how close Willard comes to death. Thus, Willard's compulsion is propelled by a life instinct that is directly related to a movement towards death, and the all-important scene of the war-ego is reproduced in every brush Willard has with losing his life.

It would seem that Willard's desire is fulfilled when he is given a new mission, and can return to active duty. At this moment, the compulsion to repeat is converted into spatial practice because Willard is invited back to the theatre of war with a specific role to act out. When Willard receives a call back into duty, he is called back into being because the energy that he feels depleting in the hotel room is replenished when he re-enters the war. It is clear that Willard believes himself to be a soldier inasmuch as the new mission restores his existence. However, we must pause to ask specific questions that will necessarily complicate his belief. First, does Willard misidentify as a soldier? What is the nature of his position in the war? Second, will the jungle, as a representational space,

sustain his presence? Referring to himself as a soldier is a tenuous claim for two important reasons. First, the meeting that Willard has with his commanding officers in Nha Trang immediately removes him from the symbolic field of the war. Second, Kurtz calls Willard's place in the war into question by challenging his claim that he is a soldier and by suggesting that he and the captain occupy the same fringe position.

During the lunch at Nha Trang, Willard is asked to discuss his previous missions, but he declines to address them due to the "classified" nature of his actions (Coppola). This refusal to address his previous combat history directly also implies that Willard's actions have existed outside of the boundaries of acceptable military operation. These classified missions have a specific impact on Willard's position in the film: they remove the captain from the official language of the war, pushing him beyond the margins of the conflict's official record. When Willard re-enters the war, he does so as an exception to the rules: the classified nature of the captain's mission returns him to the fringes of warfare because he acts outside of the limits of every soldier he comes into contact with: even his own crew cannot know the details of his mission. I am not attempting to suggest that Willard does not physically exist in the Vietnam War. He very much occupies the same setting as the rest of the regular soldiers, the same jungle. However, the rules of the jungle are different: Willard's orders allow him certain privileges that other soldiers do not possess. And, on the other hand, these soldiers have their own sets of orders that will necessarily conflict with Willard's fringe position. In this sense, Willard exists outside of the symbolic order that governs the organization of every other soldier. No record will be kept of his mission, nothing to mark his duty officially in the history of the war. For instance, while traveling up the Nung River, Willard tears up the classified dossier that contains information on his mission and Colonel Kurtz, and, as the pages wilt and sink into the river, the record of his own action, too, disappears.[19]

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[19] At this point in the film, Willard's crew is the only link that binds the captain to the war by confirming that he was actually there. However, even the crew cannot fully signify Willard's presence in jungle as each member meets his own death and so too disappears from the history of the war.

Furthermore, to be clear, I do not mean to quarrel over semantics when I say that Willard cannot be considered a "soldier." Rather, I mean that a problem exists between Willard and the representational/symbolic space in the film, which illustrates how the captain does not occupy a standard position in the same military as every other character in the film, with the possible exception of Kurtz. The conflict between Willard and Chief Phillips over who is in command of the boat exemplifies the conflict between Willard and the representational space of the war. There are at least two representational spaces contained within the boundaries of the boat: the official record of the war, which is occupied by Chief Phillips and the rest of his crew, and Willard's own classified mission to which only he is privy. The distinction between these two sets of spaces is organized by their own individual and conflicting discourses. For instance, when Chief Phillips decides to stop the boat because the fog makes it too dangerous to continue, Willard responds, "You're not authorized to operate this boat, chief" (Coppola). Phillips then states, "I said, I can't see a thing, captain. I'm stopping this boat; I ain't risking no more lives" (Coppola). However, Willard reasserts his rank, "I'm in command here, goddammit. You'll do what I say" (Coppola). This short argument illustrates two conflicting discourses. First, Phillips, who is responsible for the well-being of his crew, refuses to jeopardize any more lives after losing crewmember Tyrone "Clean" Miller. As the commanding officer of the boat, Phillips attempts to act in accordance with his duties of ensuring the safety of his crew. However, Willard's sole concern is reaching his drop point up river because only then can he actually begin to carry out his own mission. Thus, there are two jurisdictions at play: Chief Phillips's and his command over the boat and Willard's exterior position, which will be enacted once he reaches the end of the river.

Earlier in the film, Phillips identifies these two spaces by pointing out the irony of Willard's claim that he is in command. When pulling the boat over to check Vietnamese envoys, the following exchange occurs:

> Willard: Let's forget routine now and let them go.
> Phillips: These boats are running supplies in these deltas, captain. I'm going to take a look.

> Willard: Chief, my mission has got priority here. Hell, you wouldn't even be in this part of the river if it wasn't for me.
>
> Phillips: Until we reach your destination, captain, you are just along for the ride. (Coppola)

Phillips identifies the problem with Willard attempting to take control of the boat by pointing out that the captain has no jurisdiction on the river. While on the boat, Phillips is in command because the river is the space that he has been ordered to patrol. Willard, then, exists in the domain of Phillips's authority, and he will remain there until he reaches his destination and disembarks. The feud carried out by these two men represents the first example of "over-inscribed" space found in the film (*The Production of Space* 142). Describing the nature of over-inscribed space, Lefebvre writes, "everything therein resembles a rough draft, jumbled and self-contradictory. Rather than signs, what one encounters here are directions – multifarious and overlapping instructions" (142). Both the river and the boat become over-inscribed spaces due to the conflict between Phillips and Willard who represent contradictory, multifarious, and overlapping instructions. Specifically, Willard's presence on the boat disrupts the symbolic order in which Phillips participates: Willard is, at most, a half sign; he is a body on the chief's ship, and he has a specific mission. However, the nature of that mission is cloaked under the veil of classified action, and Phillips expresses the impact produced by Willard's presence. When Willard asks the chief for his opinion on which direction to take, the following exchange occurs:

> Phillips: I don't think. My orders say I'm not supposed to know where I'm taking this boat so I don't. But one look at you, I know it's going to be hot, wherever it is.
>
> Willard: We're going up river, about seventy-five clicks, up along the Do Lung bridge.
>
> Phillips: That's Cambodia, captain.
>
> Willard: That's classified. We're not supposed to be in Cambodia, but that's where I'm going. You just get me close to my destination, and I'll cut you and the crew loose.

Phillips: Alright, captain. (Coppola)

This conversation contains two important statements. First, Phillips admits that his orders forbid him from knowing where he is supposed to deliver Willard. In essence, Phillips is blindly steering the ship up river, waiting for Willard to disembark. Willard's presence, then, disrupts the control the chief has over his boat because he does not know the ultimate destination. Second, Willard breaks order and tells Phillips where it is that they are heading. However, the information that Willard provides is only partially constructed because he retains the secrecy of his mission even though he admits they are traveling to unsanctioned territory. Thus, Willard is both absent and present on the boat: he exists as a body, but does not signify a position that Phillips can fully comprehend. In other words, Willard, as a sign of the war, is fundamentally different from Phillips and the other "ordinary" soldiers.

Willard's eventual confrontation with Kurtz, too, challenges the conception of what it means to be a soldier. Upon his first meeting with Kurtz, Willard tries to uphold his mission while being questioned by the colonel. When the colonel asks Willard, in reference to the officers in Nha Trang, "Did they say why, Willard, they want to terminate my command?" Willard responds, "It's classified, sir." However, Kurtz does not accept Willard's statement and challenges the nature of his mission: "It's no longer classified, is it?" Kurtz's line of questioning then turns directly to Willard: he asks, "are you an assassin?" It is at this moment that Willard declares, "I'm a soldier." Kurtz then immediately rejects Willard's claim: "You're neither. You're an errand boy sent by grocery clerks to collect a bill" (Coppola). In this exchange, Kurtz forces Willard to consider the reality that he has drifted from what it means to be a soldier and has become something else: an agent of the war, without question, but an agent that operates outside the boundaries of sanctioned militarized action. If Willard separates from the military and becomes something else, this separation can be explained by Freud's theory as to how the war neurosis develops:

It would be equally true to say that the old ego is protecting itself from a mortal danger by taking flight into a traumatic neurosis or to say that it is

defending itself against the new ego which it sees threatening its life. Thus

the precondition of the war neuroses, the soil that nourishes them, would

seem to be a national army; there would be no possibility of their arising

in an army of professional soldiers or mercenaries. Apart from this, the

war neuroses are only traumatic neuroses […] ("Introduction to

Psychoanalysis and the War Neuroses" 209).

The distinction that Freud makes between a national army and professional soldiers or mercenaries is immediately striking in this passage. Freud does not detail the nature of the distinction between these two entities. However, I interpret his claim as distinguishing differing types of subjects. Freud's claim implies that there is a difference between professional soldiers and the soldiers of the national army, which is founded upon the formation of the ego. Writing in the aftermath of World War I, Freud would have been acutely aware of conscription and its process of calling average citizens into active duty. Whether conscripting subjects into action or accepting volunteers, these national armies were comprised of subjects that were organized by the peace-ego. The war neurosis is the explanation that Freud and his contemporaries[20] used to understand how normal citizens could not bear the level of violence they had to commit and witness while at war. In *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character*, Jonathan Shay also describes the breakdown that occurs due to the experience of war:

> Combat trauma destroys the capacity for social trust, accounting for the
> paranoid state of being that blights the lives of the most severely
> traumatized combat veterans. This is not a selective mistrust directed at a
> specific individual or institution […] but a comprehensive destruction of
> social trust. (33-34)

In describing the breakdown of social trust, Shay describes the breakdown of the peace-ego and the breakdown of the soldier who can no longer occupy his or her place in

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[20] In particular, Sandor Ferenczi, Karl Abraham, Ernst Simmel, and Ernest Jones all contributed to formulating the war neuroses and its nuances. See: *Psychoanalysis and the War Neuroses*.

society. The professional soldier, on the other hand, is something altogether different.[21] I argue that Willard moves away from the national army or any collective identity that informs what it means to be a soldier, and he slowly drifts towards becoming a mercenary. Kurtz illustrates that Willard misidentifies as a soldier, and he does so by pointing out that the captain is becoming an isolated, specialized killer: Kurtz reminds Willard that he is merely an assassin coming to collect a "bill," which is precisely the colonel's life.

I began this chapter by stating that war is a spatialized phenomenon, and it would be beneficial to reiterate the importance of this point: the organization of space dictates the organization of war and the soldiers who act out a war. The prescriptive quality existent in the space of war returns this analysis to Lefebvre's argument that space exerts control over subjects: "But what [space] signifies is dos and don'ts – and this brings us back to power" (142). Lefebvre argues that space is a structure of power based on the ability to direct and proscribe action:

> Activity in space is restricted by that space; space 'decides' what activity may occur, but even this 'decision' has limits placed on it. Space lays down the law because it implies a certain order – and hence also a certain disorder […] Space commands bodies, prescribing or proscribing gestures, routes, and distances to be covered. (143)

Within the context of war, spatiality becomes a principal signifier by determining how all action will unfold: spatial boundaries organize the sides of a war and the combatants, and every individual soldier takes cues from that space in the positions that they occupy, the strategic territory they claim, and the land that they conquer.

I argue that we can understand Coppola's jungle much like Jacques Lacan understands the letter in Poe's "The Purloined Letter" (1844), specifically in regards his argument that the letter unites different perspectives under its own signification. In "Seminar on the

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[21] I will address the mercenary's difference in detail when I shift the analysis towards Colonel Kurtz.

Purloined Letter," Lacan suggests that the eponymous letter is a "pure signifier" that governs the characters in Poe's story through the compulsion to repeat: the letter dictates the actions of each character, and each experiences a "displacement" caused "by the place that a pure signifier---the purloined letter---comes to occupy in their trio. This is what will confirm for us that it is repetition automatism" (10). The letter, as a pure signifier, controls the course of each character's action within the story and produces what Lacan calls an "intersubjectivity" that unites them through repetition (10). The repetition that occurs within Poe's narrative distils the letter of any independent meaning – the contents of the letter mean nothing to the story. Rather, it is the symbolic arrangements produced by each character that give context to the letter: the queen, the magistrate, and Dupin repeatedly give new meaning to the letter depending on their position in the narrative. Thus, the letter propels the characters of the story to repeat constantly the process of ascribing meaning to the letter, which unites them within an intersubjective repetition automatism.

Coppola's jungle exercises the power dynamic exerted by spatiality, as suggested by Lefebvre, and it does so under the banner of a pure signifier. However, there is a difference between Poe's letter and Coppola's landscape, specifically in the way that these signifiers construct meaning. While Lacan argues that the letter lacks meaning outside of the symbolic structure created by each of Poe's characters, Coppola's jungle produces its own symbolic meaning in the film: the landscape has the ability to link characters within an intersubjective experience via the war-ego, which facilitates the repetitive behavior. Therefore, I argue that Coppola's jungle is a signifier of the war-ego, which filters subjectivity through the production of its violence. Building on Freud's work, Ernest Jones defines the war-ego as a phenomenon that reshapes subjectivity:

> Indeed, one may say that war is an official abrogation of civilized standards. The manhood of the nation is in war not only allowed, but encouraged and ordered to indulge in behavior of a kind that is throughout abhorrent to the civilized mind, to commit deeds and witness sights that are profoundly revolting to our aesthetic and moral disposition. (*Psychoanalysis and the War Neuroses* 48)

Furthermore, Jones explains, "All sorts of previously forbidden and buried impulses, cruel, sadistic, murderous and so on, are stirred to greater activity […]" (48). Using Jones's criteria, I argue that the signifier of the war-ego transforms subjects into its own image through the performance of extreme acts of brutality and violence, which necessarily pushes subjects beyond the boundaries of morality. *Apocalypse Now* renders the transformation into the war-ego in spatial terms: specifically, the journey up the Nung River represents a conversion from peace-ego to its warlike twin. The boat itself seems to be the only protection from the landscape and its ability to alter subjectivity; Willard warns us, "Never get out of the boat, absolutely goddamn right…unless you were going all the way. Kurtz got off the boat. He spilt from the whole fucking program" (Coppola).

The intersubjective relationship that the signifier of the war-ego produces is also spatially organized because it is within the Vietnamese jungle and the boundaries of war that subjects are exposed to the coercion of the war-ego and its drive towards death. No two characters better illustrate this intersubjective relationship than Willard and Colonel Kurtz because they represent the journey of passing into the "itinerary of the signifier" and the effects that are produced once one has been subsumed by its sign ("Seminar on the Purloined Letter" 7).[22] As I have argued, Willard's journey into the jungle is indicative of a struggle: the movement closer and closer to the war-ego, which was originally propelled by a compulsive obsession to return to the war. Kurtz, on the other

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[22] It should be stated that an intersubjective experience based on an unsuccessful transition into the war-ego unites many characters within the film. The boat's entire crew, except for Willard, is propelled into traditional traumatic neuroses as their peace-egos come under attack from the brutality and chaos of the war. For instance, after almost being killed in the jungle by a tiger, "Chef" Hicks screams in a hysterical fit, "I didn't come here for this shit. I don't fucking need it; I don't fucking want it. I didn't get off the goddamn H-train for this. All I want to do is fucking cook. I just want to learn how to fucking cook, man" (Coppola). Hicks illustrates how the peace-ego rejects the war because he desires to go back home to his vocation outside of the conflict. Furthermore, "Clean" Miller's discipline snaps, and he kills a boatful of Vietnamese civilians, and Lance Johnson fully loses his mind through the use of hallucinogenic drugs and the inability to cope with the violence to which he is exposed. Chief Philips literally succumbs to the death drive of the war-ego when his life is claimed on the boat during an attack. Additionally, when Willard meets a regiment of black soldiers up the river they cannot identify a commanding officer for the captain. Whether due to some form of shell shock or sheer indifference to Willard's question, their muted response emphasizes how irrelevant reason and order are when faced with the bombardment of heavy artillery. Collectively speaking, the total population of soldiers creates a composite intersubjectivity that is united within the jungle and under the sign of the war-ego.

hand, illustrates the inevitable end to Willard's journey, which is the complete overthrow of the peace-ego and the full transition into the war-ego.

To say that Kurtz comes under the sign of the war-ego is another way of stating that he compulsively repeats the death instincts as a means to sustain a will to live. Kurtz's movement towards the war-ego begins with an acute experience with hysteria, which he describes to both Willard and the audience:

> It's impossible to put into words, to describe, what is necessary to those who do not know what horror means. Horror. Horror has a face, and you must make a friend with horror; horror and moral terror are your friends and if they are not then they are enemies to be feared. They are truly enemies. I remember when I was with Special Forces, it seems a thousand centuries ago. We went into a camp to inoculate young children. We left the camp after we inoculated the children for polio and this old man came running after us, and he was crying, he couldn't say… We went back there, and they had come and hacked off every inoculated arm. There they were in a pile, a pile of little arms. And I remember, I cried, I wept like…some…grandmother. I wanted to tear my teeth out; I didn't know what I wanted to do. And I want to remember it; I never want to forget. And then I realized like I was shot, like I was shot with a diamond, a diamond bullet right through my forehead. And I thought, "my God, the genius of that." The genius, the will to do that---perfect, genuine, complete, crystalline, pure. Then I realized that they were stronger than we because they could stand that---they were not monsters these were men, trained cadres. These men who fought with their hearts, who have families, who have children, who were filled with love, they had the strength – the *strength* – to do that. If I had ten divisions of those men then our troubles here would be over very quickly. (Coppola)

Kurtz's memory illustrates what Lacan would call a traditional traumatic moment: witnessing the pile of arms exposes Kurtz to "an image which summarizes […] that

which is least penetrable in the real, of the real lacking any possible mediation, of the ultimate real, of the essential object which isn't an object any longer, but this something faced with which all words cease and all categories fail, the object of anxiety *par excellence*" (*Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis, 1954-1955*, 164). Paul Virilio theorizes that the performance of extreme measures of violence is a crucial element to the practice of warfare: "War can never break free from the magical spectacle because its very purpose is to *produce* that spectacle: to fell the enemy is not so much to capture as to 'captivate' him, to instil the fear of death before he actually dies" (*War and Cinema* 5). What Kurtz witnesses is the magical spectacle of warfare: he is subjected to incomprehensible levels of violence when he is confronted by the spectacle of severed arms. For Kurtz, the impact of the spectacle produces immediate symptoms of hysteria. In *Studies in Hysteria*, Freud and Joseph Breuer attend to the hysterical symptoms that they have viewed while treating a number of patients. Their text organizes these symptoms into two primary groups: physical manifestation and verbal manifestation. Breuer recounts his treatment of Anna O. and describes her neurosis in the following manner:

> There were only very short periods during the day when she was to any degree normal. But even these moments were invaded by disturbances: the most rapid and extreme changes in mood; fleeting instances of high spirits; but in general severe feelings of anxiety, stubborn opposition to all therapeutic measures, frightening hallucinations in which her hair, laces and so on would appear as black snakes. And yet at the same time she would tell herself not to be so stupid, that it was only her hair, etc. (28)

Later in his descriptions of Anna, Breuer states that, alongside the physical manifestations of her hysteria, she suffered from linguistic impairments as well: "For as the contractures developed, a deep functional disorganization of speech set in. The first thing that became noticeable was that [Anna] could not find words and gradually this became worse. Then her speech lost all grammatical structure, the syntax was missing […]" (28-29). Kurtz's initial reaction to the children's arms encompasses both physical and verbal symptoms: he experiences the sudden onset of tears and desires to "tear his

teeth out," and he cannot linguistically describe nor comprehend the scene (Coppola). However, the majority of Kurtz's monologue describes how he moves beyond hysteria and adopts another psychological condition. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud explains the close relationship that hysteria maintains with traumatic neuroses, stating, "Fixations to start [traumatic neurosis] have long been familiar to us in hysteria. Hysterics are, to a great extent, suffering from reminiscences. In the war neuroses, too, observers like Ferenczi and Simmel have been able to explain certain motor symptoms by fixations to the moment at which the trauma occurred" (13). And yet, I argue that the war/traumatic neurosis is not what ails Kurtz.

The most important feature of Kurtz's monologue is his realization that the war-ego and its ultra-violence govern the trajectory of war. In the wake of his epiphany, the colonel makes a commitment to act on behalf of war's only pure signifier. It is important to note that when the colonel refers to horror, he is referring to the war-ego and its symptoms. Essentially, Kurtz illustrates a willingness to internalize completely the hysterical symptoms that afflict him so that he can convert them into conscious performances of violence. In this sense, Kurtz recasts his self in the image of horror at the moment that he decides to maintain a friendship with it. The force of Kurtz's "diamond bullet" is the profound realization that he must consciously adopt horror and moral terror as features that will constitute a new self. And this decision illustrates how he comes under the directive of the war-ego, as opposed to developing a traditional traumatic neurosis. The problem with suggesting that Kurtz suffers from a war neurosis is that he consciously decides to perform violence. As Ernst Simmel explains, "the functions of the unconscious are the deciding factor in the formation […] of the war neuroses" (*Psychoanalysis and the War Neuroses* 31). I argue that Kurtz's commitment to violence is better contextualized through what Dominick LaCapra refers to as a "fidelity to trauma, a feeling that one must somehow keep faith with it" (22), which occurs at a conscious level. Kurtz becomes faithful to horror, and he commits to the reproduction of the violence he experienced as a special-forces officer: "And I want to remember it. I never want to forget" (Coppola). The result is a decision to embrace the sensations that are hostile to the ego, which converts its peacetime structure into its wartime counterpart. By coming under the sign of the war-ego, Kurtz begins to operate in accordance with its

directives, and, subsequently, he immediately enacts a compulsion to repeat. As I explained earlier, Willard's compulsive behavior is a repetition based on the desire to return to the space of the war. Once he enters the jungle his compulsion is fulfilled, and he orchestrates a complex relationship between the life and death instincts, which puts him closer and closer to the sign of the war-ego. However, the nature of Kurtz's repetition is translated specifically through a performance in the jungle, which repeats his original experience with incomprehensible levels of violence.

To make sense of Kurtz's repetitions, I would like to turn to *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and Freud's discussion of Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*. In his analysis of the story's principal character, Tancred, who "unwittingly kills his beloved Clorinda in a duel […]," Freud outlines the process of compulsive repetition (32). After Clorinda is buried, "[Tancred] makes his way into a strange magic forest which strikes the Crusaders' army with terror. He slashes his sword at a tall tree; but blood streams from the cut and the voice of *Clorinda*, whose soul is imprisoned in the tree, is heard complaining that he has wounded his beloved once again" (32). Cathy Caruth elaborates on Freud's formulation of Tancred and repetition by writing, "the actions of Tancred, wounding his beloved in a battle and then, unknowingly, seemingly by chance, wounding her again, evocatively represent in Freud's text the way the experience of trauma repeats itself, exactly and unremittingly, through the unknowing acts of the survivor and against his very will" (*Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* 2). Caruth draws the reader's attention to what is particularly important in Freud's theory: repetition occurs at the level of unconsciousness because the "unknowing acts of the survivor" are committed "against his very will." Thus, traditionally speaking, the compulsion to repeat cannot be controlled by the subject because he or she has no control over his or her ability to repeat or not repeat a traumatizing event.

The unconscious repetition of some traumatic event is precisely what Kurtz avoids by not forgetting the original violence of the severed arms. To protect himself from the memory of the arms, Kurtz must repeatedly act it out so as to exert the influence of the war-ego consciously as opposed to suffering from its effects. Refusing to forget forbids the memory of those severed arms to seep into the unconscious, which in turn forbids the

memory to return uncontrollably. Kurtz does not allow repression to occur, and, in doing so, he exercises a degree of control over the memory by keeping it at the forefront of his mind. Repetition automatism is the process through which Kurtz can keep the memory from sinking into the unconscious. Understanding the transition that Kurtz makes into the production of the war-ego means coming to understand the nature of the repetition that he conducts in the jungle. Kurtz's repetition is spatialized: it exists in the compound he builds at the end of the Nung river. What is most alarming about Kurtz's compound is the sheer volume of corpses and dismembered body parts that make up its interior space. Upon entering Kurtz's compound, Willard and the viewer immediately witness the spatialization of the war-ego that the colonel has created in the jungle: the heads, arms, and legs that are strewn about the compound mirror the original violence that Kurtz experienced at the sight of the children's cleaved arms. The display itself is greatly important because it too repeats the performance of violence originally conducted by the cadres who left the arms of children to be discovered. In other words, Kurtz reproduces the spectacle of war, to which Virilio refers, and brutality confronts both Willard and the audience. The repetitions of violence that Kurtz carries out in his compound illustrate his production of horror because he uses his own spatial practice to unite himself with the representational space of the jungle, which organizes itself through the signifier of the war-ego. The colonel is able to act out the directive of the war-ego through spatial practice, which serves as a method of repetition that ensures that the original hysteria is controlled. Essentially, the conversion that Kurtz undertakes is perpetuated through repetitions of violence, which he believes are necessary when at war.

Kurtz is not like Willard who seems to be caught between a sense of the national army and the professional soldier described by Freud. Rather, the colonel is the quintessential mercenary, who would be impervious to the war neurosis because he moves beyond the control of the national army and performs the directive of the war-ego. Thus, Kurtz differentiates himself by adopting abject brutality as an essential component of his being, which makes it impossible for the military to comprehend his behavior. In a letter to his son in which he defends himself against the army's accusation that he committed murder, Kurtz describes the fundamental characteristics that separate him from the U.S. military:

> The charges are unjustified. They are in fact, under the circumstances of
> this conflict, completely insane. In a war […] There are many moments
> for ruthless action. What is often called ruthless, what may in many
> circumstances only be clarity: seeing clearly what needs to be done and
> doing it. Directly. Quickly. Awake. Looking at it. […] As for the charges
> against me, I am unconcerned. I am beyond the line of their timid
> morality, and so I am beyond caring.

Kurtz moves into a space that is "outside [the state's] sovereignty and prior to its law" (Deleuze and Guattari 352) by transgressing the "weak" line of morality that structures the U.S. military. Kurtz's separation from the state control of the military can be explained through what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as the "war machine," which is "external to the apparatus" of the state (354). In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari describe the relationship between the war machine and the State apparatus as a difference between interiority and exteriority: "It is necessary to reach the point of conceiving the war machine itself as a pure form of exteriority, whereas the State apparatus constitutes the form of interiority we habitually take as a model, or according to which we are in the habit of thinking" (354).

Deleuze and Guattari explain their model of exteriority and interiority based on the location of the war machine: "*The State has no war machine of its own*; it can only appropriate one in the form of a military institution, one that will continually cause it problems. This explains the mistrust States have toward their military institutions, in that the military institution inherits an intrinsic war machine" (354-355). *Apocalypse Now* thematizes the relationship between the State and the war machine in the conflict between the U.S. military and Kurtz inasmuch as the colonel represents himself as belonging to an exterior war machine. Furthermore, the conflict itself is caused by the military's failure to control Kurtz and his conduct in the war. Willard describes Kurtz's exteriority when he discovers the context surrounding the colonel's execution of the Vietnamese officers:

> Kurtz's patrols in the highlands are coming under frequent attacks. The
> camp started falling apart. November: Kurtz orders the assassination of

three Vietnamese men and one woman. Two of the men were colonels in the South Vietnamese army. Enemy activity in his old sector dropped off to nothing. Guess he must have hit the right four people. The army tried one last time to bring him back into the fold […] but he kept going, and he kept winning at it his way. (Coppola)

The state can no longer control Kurtz's exterior position nor his behavior, which causes his superiors to order his execution because he refuses to adopt their interior/moral identity. Furthermore, as a consequence of his perpetual disobedience, the State is forced to label him as being insane because they can no longer comprehend Kurtz's violence.

The war machine itself is a spatialized phenomenon, and Kurtz establishes his exteriority by taking up an outpost at the end of the Nung river. The location of the compound itself is an expression of defiance as Kurtz takes up residence in Cambodia, a territory which exists outside the jurisdiction of the war.[23] Deleuze and Guattari differentiate the space of the State and its exterior as "striated and smooth" spaces:

> The smooth and the striated are distinguished first of all by an inverse relation between the point and the line (in the case of the striated, the line is between two points, while in the smooth, the point is between two lines); and by the nature of the line (smooth-directional, open intervals; dimensional-striated, closed interval. (480-481)

The space of the war machine is the space of the nomad, which manifests itself in a smooth trajectory: "In the smooth […] the points [of the destination] are subordinated to the trajectory […] The dwelling is subordinated to the journey; inside space conforms to outside space" (478). Initially, Deleuze and Guattari's definition of smooth/nomadic space corresponds to Willard more than Kurtz. For instance, Willard's existence in the war is nomadic in nature: each mission he takes sets him on a new trajectory. In other

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[23] Earlier in the chapter, I cited Chief Phillips claim that "we're not supposed to be in Cambodia […]" (Coppola), which he makes in response to Willard's mission taking him to unsanctioned territory. However, recalling Willard's admission that he is to be taken to a forbidden location emphasizes Kurtz's exteriority from the U.S. state and the military it attempts to control.

words, as a specialized officer, whose missions set him on various courses, Willard is always the point that exists between two paths: the journey there and the journey home. Furthermore, Willard converts inside space to outside space because his dwelling is specifically the jungle. Remember: the interior space of the hotel in Saigon diminishes his strength, and the open world of the jungle restores him. The river itself can be read as the line/trajectory that delivers him to and from his destination. Kurtz, on the other hand, is more stationary than Willard, less nomadic, which is due to his residency at the end of the river. However, his secession from the U.S. state is nomadic until he takes up residence in his compound. It should also be noted that Willard seems to suggest that Kurtz exerts some sort of control through the jungle: "He was close. He was real close. I couldn't see him yet. But I could feel him, as if the boat was being sucked up river and the water was flowing back into the jungle" (Coppola). This brief description of Kurtz conflates him with the action of the jungle, suggesting, at some level, that they are inseparable.

Though to state that Kurtz occupies an explicitly striated space would be incorrect. Deleuze and Guattari add a third dimension, "concerning the surface," to their definition of smooth/nomadic space, which corresponds to the colonel's own spatial practice (481): "In striated space, one closes off a surface and 'allocates' it according to determined intervals, assigned breaks; in the smooth, one 'distributes' oneself in an open space […]" (481). Kurtz's connection to the war machine is distributed within the open, outdoor space of his compound: it is here that he spatially performs the violence and horror of the war-ego. Furthermore, Kurtz attempts to illustrate his pure exteriority through the performances of horror that he orchestrates in his compound. In both philosophical and pragmatic terms, Kurtz has no moral or ethical problem with violence itself. Rather, his problem lies with the disavowal of those actions or the refusal to take responsibility for that violence. When first speaking to Willard, the colonel declares, "I've seen the horrors, the horrors that you've seen. But you have no right to call me a murderer; you have a right to kill me. You have a right to do that. But you have no right to judge me" (Coppola). The problem with calling Kurtz a murderer is the moral judgment that accompanies the accusation. The colonel tells Willard that he does not have the right to judge him because Willard too is an assassin. At this moment, the colonel illustrates to Willard that he also occupies a place in the war machine, as opposed to a place in the

nationalistic side of the State. To cast judgment would require a disavowal of the shared horrors between them: the horrors they have seen, and, more importantly, the horrors they have committed while in and outside the boundaries of the State's war. In his declaration that he cannot be judged, Kurtz forbids Willard from disavowing the horrors that they share. Willard's right to kill Kurtz is completely dissociated from morality as the officers in Nha Trang seek to define it because Kurtz identifies with only the morality of the war-ego. Thus, Willard's right to kill Kurtz must be contextualized in a different way: he and his commanding officers have a right to kill those who they perceive to be their enemies, nothing more. Thus, Kurtz equates his own actions with Willard's by illustrating that his execution is no different from the colonel's own decision to assassinate the Vietnamese officials: to kill one's enemy is the only real morality in war.

In specific regard to the State, Kurtz's outpost can be said to be a landmark that openly challenges the hypocrisy of the U.S. military. In *The New American Exceptionalism*, Donald Pease works towards a definition of exceptionalism in an American context by stressing the function of "state fantasy": building on Jacqueline Rose's theorizations, Pease writes, "state fantasies incite an operative imagination endowed with the power to solicit the citizens' desire to believe in the reality of its productions" (4). American exceptionalism itself is akin to state fantasy: it is a mythology that defines America as "having already achieved the condition of the ideal nation…" (Pease 22). State fantasies facilitate the imagined belief that America is exceptional, the ideal nation. At the same time, exceptionalism creates necessities that demand the preservation of that idealism by creating some exterior threat to the nation itself. Creating the fantasy of a state enemy is a primary way that wars are justified by the state and then accepted by the civilian population:

> Exceptionalism became a fantasy when it caused U.S. citizens to want to participate in the state's imperial will by changing the objective cause of their desire. The imperialism that the state in fact practiced intensified the need within U.S. citizens to disavow those practices. The need in its turn produced a counterloop of desire for the recovery of the ideal nation. But the latter desire could only be acted upon by renewing the practice of

> disavowal through which the U.S. national identity was produced. What
> was important in the practice of this desire was not whether or not the
> fantasy of American exceptionalism was "true." What mattered was the
> way that the *fantasy* of exceptionalism overwhelmed the question of the
> truth. (21)

American exceptionalism is fantasized through the participation of U.S. citizens and the disavowals that they make in order to subscribe to the illusion of U.S. idealism.[24] Disavowal is crucial to the process because it allows U.S. citizens to reclaim their idealized national identity in the wake of "U.S. imperialism at home and abroad" (21). The outpost that Kurtz creates upon his secession from the U.S. state can stand as a physical representation that opposes disavowal. When Willard first steps into the compound, he sees an altar made of stone steps that has decapitated heads littered on it. The nameless American photojournalist, played by Dennis Hopper, attempts to justify the scene: "The heads…you're looking at the heads. Sometimes he goes too far. He's the first one to admit it" (Coppola). This statement is important because it gestures towards the depth to which Kurtz engages with violence, and it indicates his willingness to admit or acknowledge those extremes. Admitting to the severity of beheading his subjects suggests that Kurtz is compliant with violence. It suggests an acceptance of violence. Furthermore, reconsider the other limbs and torsos that decorate the enclave: not only are these corpses a repetition of the horror that Kurtz found in the jungle, but each severed limb acts against the process of disavowal by simply lying out in the open.

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[24] It would be profitable to note that American exceptionalism and the might of U.S. imperialism has a unique relationship with the war in Vietnam. The Vietnam conflict was the first major war where U.S. exceptionalism was challenged both at home and abroad. On U.S. soil, protests against the war were carried out in the public domain. Within the conflict itself, the U.S. military sustained its first real challenge. In *Between Virtue and Power*, John Kane describes the problematic nature of the Vietnam war as it relates to U.S. identity: "The war was doubly damaging because American might was not only perceived to be employed in a wrong cause but was effectively vanquished. America's martial virtue was humbled by an inferior but determined foe, with the result that pride received as deep a wound […]" (162). Coppola's film certainly illustrates the challenges faced by the military as widespread chaos fills the landscape as opposed to strategic warfare. Again, it would be difficult to say that *Apocalypse Now* is anti-war film. However, Coppola's narrative certainly renders the problems that the U.S. military faced while fighting guerrilla warfare in a completely foreign territory.

However, it would be incorrect to accept a reading which argues that Kurtz carries out a successful protest against U.S. imperialism that comes in the form of his compound. Furthermore, the representational space of the film does not allow such a straightforward reading. The symbolic space of Kurtz's compound is organized through contradictory signs and symbols that further illustrate Lefebvre's notion of over-signification. Again, over-inscribed space is a result of plural discourses colliding in the symbolic structure of representational space. Furthermore, since representational space cannot, in fact, be separated from spatial practice, over-signification is perpetuated by the way subjects perform in space. The symbolic nature of Kurtz's compound is contradictory at best, which can be seen in the motivation that pushed him away from the U.S. military. The tension between Kurtz's adopted position in the war machine and what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as "machinic enslavement and social subjection" (456) lies at the heart of the over-inscribed space of the compound:

> There is enslavement when human beings themselves are constituent pieces of a machine that they compose among themselves and with other things (animals, tools), under the control and direction of a higher unity. But there is subjection when the higher unity constitutes the human being as a subject linked to a now exterior object, which can be an animal, a tool, or even a machine. (457)

In one sense, the idea of the war machine enslaves Kurtz, and his connection to the war-ego ensures that enslavement. In other words, Kurtz's commitment to the production of horror is a performance of the war-machine because he believes his actions belong to a morality that is exterior to the values of the State/military. However, the contradictions found within his compound illustrate how he remains subjected to a "higher unity." I argue that the nature of this unity is, ironically, an intimate association with the U.S. state. Specifically, the spatiality of the compound and its representational space is a repetition of the imperialism that is carried out by the U.S. military. The native Cambodians that populate his compound are the primary example of the imperialism that Kurtz reproduces spatially. While not a part of the landscape proper, the film aestheticizes these natives with symbolic value to the extent that they blend with the

landscape to the point of inseparability. Furthermore, not one aboriginal has a voice within the film, and each remains a silent fixture, objectified to some degree. While there are a variety of indigenous Cambodians that live with Kurtz in his outpost, those adorned with army rifles, bullet belts, and loincloths symbolically represent the rupture that has occurred on the landscape via the presence of the colonel. These aboriginals are numerous within the compound, and each person symbolizes a material or bodily rendition of Kurtz's intervention within the jungle. They are fragmented subjects connected to both an original past, symbolized by the loincloth that they don, and the militaristic present that Kurtz imposes on them, which is apparent in the weaponry they hold and the camouflage painted on their faces. It is as if Kurtz creates a split personality in each of these natives that symbolizes a tear between indigeneity and the western military.

Furthermore, Lieutenant Richard M. Colby is another example of the violent fragmentation that Kurtz is able to produce. When Willard meets the lieutenant, who is the captain's predecessor also sent to kill Kurtz, he witnesses the same fracturing seen in the native Cambodians, but the process is reversed: coated in camouflage and blood, Colby does not respond to Willard's attempts at conversation. He only stares at the Captain maniacally, gripping an army shotgun with a blood soaked hand. Colby is caught in the breakdown of his subjectivity, torn between the soldier he once was and the violence produced by Kurtz. At the same time, Colby represents another example of repetition towards the end of the film. It might be better to say that Colby presents the threat of repetition because the confrontation between him and Willard offers the captain a mirror to look into: a warning that suggests he is now in danger of becoming just like his predecessor through contact with Kurtz. Both the indigenous population of the compound and Colby are bodily/physical manifestations of Kurtz's own interior fragmentation: they each represent the colonel's inability to disassociate himself fully from the interiority of the U.S. state.

Thus, the total structure of Kurtz's compound (the philosophical discourses on which it is founded and the subjects that populate it) illustrates the degree to which the landscape is laden in over-signification simply through the colonel's presence. In spatial terms, Kurtz

disrupts the representational syntax of the landscape by building a matrix of symbols that cannot run congruently. Again, these symbols are a collection of signs that are both exterior and interior to the identity of the State, which cannot be reconciled. The composite disorganization of these signs coalesces into a clear picture of Kurtz's own relationship to the State. To reiterate, Deleuze and Guattari tell us that the interiority of the State is a "model" that is built "according to which we are in the habit of thinking" (354). Thus, the interiority of the State is ideological in nature: a subset of morals, beliefs, and codes that govern the way in which subjects think. The interiority of the State can be theorized, then, as an influence that shapes how the identities of subjects are formed in the image of what Deleuze and Guattari call the State-form: "a form of interiority […] that has the tendency to reproduce itself, remaining identical to itself across all its variations […]" (360). The concept of identity is completely opposite to the war machine: "the logic of identity and unity is itself foreign to the war-machine, which is the principle of irreducible plurality and instability" (Mansfield 83). Kurtz's actions in the jungle produce another set of repetitions: he cannot help but repeat the imperialistic State-form of the U.S. military, which is evident in the brutal territorialization of the Cambodian landscape. Ultimately, the various contradictory symbolic inscriptions that shape the compound make it almost impossible to read the representational space of the outpost. Lefebvre speaks towards what an unreadable space could look like, stating:

> Nothing can be taken for granted in space, because what are involved are real and possible acts, and not mental states or more or less well-told stories. In produced space, acts reproduce 'meanings' even if no 'one' gives an account of them. Repressive space wreaks repression and terror even though it may be strewn with ostensible signs of the contrary (of contentment, amusement or delight). (144)

Despite Lefebvre's statement, suggesting that repressive space can be hidden behind significations of freedom, or that even a repressive space is possible at all, contradicts the notion that spatiality is devoid of mental states. Repression and freedom are both states of mind, and both states can be produced and sustained by spatial arrangements: for instance, prisons are nothing if not the spatial embodiment of mental states such as

confinement and punishment. However, Lefebvre's explanation as to why space cannot be read is the most important element of his argument: meaning can be hidden behind false symbols that actually signify the opposite of what they represent. Ultimately, the essential problem is that Kurtz's exterior position only manifests the interiority of the state: he reproduces the identity of U.S. imperialism. In other words, his exteriority and connection to the war machine hide the relationship that Kurtz maintains with the interior State-form. Though, the fact that Kurtz reproduces the image of U.S. imperialism does not mean that he is not associated with the war machine. Rather, his connection to the interiority of the State illustrates how the "war machine's exteriority [...] exists only in its own metamorphoses; it exists in an industrial innovation as well as in a technological invention, in a commercial circuit as well as in a religious creation, in all flows and currents that only secondarily allow themselves to be appropriated by the State" (360). *Apocalypse Now* treats the war machine as a specific form: it comes in the image of the war-ego, and only the war-ego remains exterior to the State. Kurtz illustrates the war-ego's exteriority when he comes to the realization that morality and horror are synonymous when at war. Thus, Kurtz appropriates horror when the State fails to do so. Though the way that he uses it merely repeats, albeit in an ultraviolent way, the original State-form he turns his back on.

What I have sought to prove in this chapter is two-fold. First, spatial practice is a direct correlative of representational space. Second, spatial practice is directly tied to acts of compulsive repetition. Both Willard and Kurtz illustrate that a relationship exists between spatial practice and compulsive repetition. Willard's separation anxiety and his desire to re-engage the war leads way to a compulsive repetition of the death drive because it is the drive towards death that replenishes and sustains his self as a subject. Kurtz's own repetitions illustrate the way in which spatial practice fragments and atomizes subjectivity as the colonel is compelled to repeat conflicting sets of behavior and meaning: the interiority of the State, on one hand, and the exteriority of the war machine/war-ego on the other. Furthermore, *Apocalypse Now* provides the narrative space in which to identify how spatial practice obscures and is obscured by our environments. Willard's inability to situate himself as a concrete or stable subject within the representational landscape of the war is perpetuated by a landscape that cannot define

him as he wishes to exist. Ultimately, Willard's position, for the majority of the film, is obscured by the representational space of the jungle that refuses to signify his presence in a straightforward manner. Kurtz's presence, on the other hand, obscures the comprehensibility of readable space through contradictory modes of spatial practice.

Apocalypse Now, a war film where the history of the war itself is mostly absent, provides the space to consider, in regards to spatiality, what Lefebvre refers to as the "destructive (because reductive) effects of the predominance of the readable and visible, of the absolute priority accorded to the visual realm, which in turn implies the priority of reading and writing" (146). In an immediate sense, the film subverts our expectation that we would find the actual events of the Vietnam War at the center of its story. However, Lefebvre tempers our expectation that space is unquestionably comprehensible. He bases his warning on the fact that the true meaning of space is always hidden behind some sort of false front (143). However, *Apocalypse Now* extends the problems of spatial literacy by illustrating the dependence subjects have on comprehensible symbolic space. Lefebvre warns us that space hides its true nature and is therefore intrinsically deceptive: "one merely has to think of institutions of 'justice', of the military […] This is a society in which, to take an extreme example, the bureaucracy is supposed to be, aspires to be […] readable and transparent, whereas in fact it is the very epitome of opacity, indecipherability, and unreadability" (149). Coppola's film suggests that the problem of comprehensible space goes beyond an essentially disingenuous sense of everything spatial: what makes spatiality truly incomprehensible are the ways in which we struggle to reinforce the representational/symbolic order through our actions.

4.

## 4.	Infinite City: Signification, Nothingness, and Alterity in Paul Auster's *City of Glass*

Critics of American fiction have identified paranoia as a central literary theme as early as the 1800s. For example, in *Figuring Madness in Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, Chris Wiesenthal analyzes Melville's *Moby Dick*, and he argues that Captain Ahab is driven by paranoia in a specifically Lacanian context:

> On virtually every count, including, most notably, his captation by and misrecognition of the self in the Other, and his self-destructively ambivalent erotic-aggressive relationship to the white whale, Ahab, I will argue, emerges as the quintessential Lacanian split subject writ large. Indeed, what becomes apparent upon reconsideration of both Ahab's obsessive quest for revenge against the white whale, and Ishmael's equally obsessive quest for the meaning and truth of the whale, is that they both, in different ways reflect "paranoiac knowledge" that Lacan posits as a primary effect of Imaginary identification during the mirror stage. (143)

More expansively, Mike Davis's *Reading the Text that Isn't There: Paranoia in the Nineteenth-Century American Novel* contends that paranoiac tendencies can be found in the work of Charles Brockden Brown, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, and Mark Twain. For instance, Davis reads Brockden Brown's *Wieland* (1798) as an exercise in paranoia as "Clara Wieland is the mouthpiece for the articulation of the plot that has been formed against her" (20). In other words, the first-person narration offered by Clara Wieland conflates hysteria with paranoia: "Clara Wieland's hysterical narration of Wieland does eventually reduce itself to a paranoid rant—even though her brother really is out to get her" (20).

However, it is hard to deny that the logic of paranoia is most often found in postmodern narratives. Some theorists argue that paranoia is akin to "postmodernism's relentless

refusal to accept any description, theory, or state of consciousness at face value, its unswerving insistence that what seems most clear and certain is least likely to be so, and its maneuvers which demonstrate that stability in meaning or in sense of self must give way to eternal slippage […]" (Bywater 79). In *Latent Destinies: Cultural Paranoia and Contemporary U.S. Narrative*, Patrick O'Donnell argues that "cultural paranoia" can be defined as "a symptom of postmodernity and, specifically, as symptomatic of postmodernist materializations of history and temporality […]" (13). While in "Hermeneutics of Suspicion and Postmodern Paranoia: Psychologies of Interpretation," Linda Fisher develops a "hermeneutics of suspicion," which is concerned with "probing the subtext, unfolding the latent, at a high level of questioning and critique […]" (110). Fisher's analysis concerns itself with "more than the superficial and simple-minded labeling as paranoid of any discourse that would adopt a systemic skeptical approach" (109). Arguing that there is philosophical potential in a"hermeneutics of suspicion," Fisher states, "it [is] a kind of driving force throughout the history of ideas, motivating discussions in a progressive if not teleological fashion, in the form of repeated skeptical salvos and rationalist responses" (110). Ultimately, Fisher's "hermeneutics of suspicion" treats paranoia as postmodernity's skepticism toward organized structures of knowledge. In addition to overreaching systems of knowledge, postmodernist paranoia also questions the place and the role of the subject within society and culture at large. For instance, Timothy Melley's *Empire of Conspiracy* offers a comprehensive account of paranoia packaged in the form of conspiracy narratives, which carry a "sense of diminished human agency, a feeling that individuals cannot effect meaningful social action and, in extreme cases, may not be able to control their own behavior" (11).

In the American literary canon, Thomas Pynchon and Don DeLillo are celebrated as writers of the paranoid within the discourse of American fiction. In *Conspiracy and Paranoia in Contemporary American Fiction*, Steffen Hantke privileges *The Crying of Lot 49* (1965) and *White Noise* (1985) as the ideal paranoid texts: "Time and again, [Pynchon's] work has been cited as evidence for the alleged paranoid nature of contemporary American culture; as a concrete manifestation of a broad-based cultural condition, a *zeitgeist* or *weltanschauung* for postwar America" (27). Hantke then goes on to assert that DeLillo and Joseph McElroy operate in the tradition of Pynchon: "both are

concerned with cultural fragmentation and the paranoid response it elicits" (30). In *The Crying of Lot 49*, Oedipa Maas finds herself in a convoluted narrative in which everything seems to have some epistemological significance and where complete knowledge is impossible to construct. When trying to gain insight into Trystero, Oedipa discovers that meaning is deferred by the sheer volume of information that could contribute to the production of knowledge: "Then where, Oedipa wondered, does the paperback I bought at Zapf's get off with its 'Trystero' line? Was there yet another edition, besides Quarto, Folio, and 'Whitechapel' […] She spent nearly an hour more, searching through all the footnotes, finding nothing" (97). O'Donnell addresses the fragmentary nature of the text, suggesting, "*The Crying of Lot 49* is built around a set of codes that gives the appearance of unity but in fact could simply be a random collection of signs, the posthumous pulsing of Inverarity's game" ("The 'Scanty Plot': Orwell, Pynchon and the Poetics of Paranoia" 355). In addition to problems regarding the production of knowledge, Pynchon's text also addresses generalized paranoia as it is expressed through different characters. One example has Manny Di Presso declare, "They've all been listening […] those kids. All the time, somebody always listens in, snoops; they bug your apartment, they tap your phone—" (56). In *The Psychological Politics of the American Dream: The Commodification of Subjectivity in Twentieth-Century American Literature*, Lois Tyson argues that one consequence of the book is that self-knowledge effaces both subjectivity and cultural awareness: "Thus, *The Crying of Lot 49* suggests that the fear of solipsism is the way that consciousness undoes both itself and the awareness of cultural reality (89).

Don DeLillo's *White Noise* similarly explores mass cultural fear and paranoia alongside individual fragmentation among the characters in the novel. Jack Gladney's constant self-doubt and insecurity coupled with the looming danger of the "Airborne Toxic Event" illustrate an oscillation between individual and large-scale paranoia that dominate DeLillo's book. For instance, Gladney's constant concerns, which range from his son's receding hairline to being found out by his colleagues that he cannot speak German, illustrate how anxiety infiltrates the banalities of everyday life. On the other hand, the large chemical spill that causes the airborne toxic event causes communal panic, which is disseminated through misinformation, conspiracy theories, and speculation:

It was said that we would be allowed to go home first thing in the morning; that the government was engaged in a cover-up; that a helicopter had entered the toxic cloud and never reappeared; that dogs had arrived from New Mexico, parachuting into a meadow in a daring night drop; that the town of Farmington would be uninhabitable for forty years. Remarks existed in a state of permanent floatation. No one thing was either more or less plausible than any other thing. (125)

The effects of the toxic event mirror the state of meaning that exists in *The Crying of Lot 49*: both texts make it impossible to know anything because of the surfeit possibilities that ultimately preclude any organized, coherent, or singular understanding. Moreover, the after effects of the toxic event propel Gladney further into paranoia when he is told that he has been contaminated by "Nyodene D," that he could die from the exposure, and that his doctors are not sure as to when he will actually die. Thus, Gladney is forced to live in a liminal space between certain and probable death, which looms over him for the majority of the text (137).

I situate my reading of Paul Auster's *City of Glass* within paranoid constructions of meaning. While *City of Glass* is a product of postmodernity, I do not necessarily focus on the novel as a postmodern text. Rather, I am more concerned with the way that paranoia intersects with spatiality. However, I do acknowledge that the novel treats knowledge as something that is virtually impossible to construct. Quinn's detective work suffers greatly from a profusion of epistemological possibilities that cannot be organized, which is similar to both *The Crying of Lot 49* and *White Noise*. More specifically, the entire story is predicated on Quinn's ability to establish a resolution that can bring about a close to the Stillman case. *City of Glass* is modeled as a detective story, and it is the discursive element of detective fiction that sets paranoia in motion. Specifically, *City of Glass* disrupts the detective's ability to serve as "the perfect figure for the totalizing nature of knowledge and power within a disciplinary society […]" (Howe 21). The central dilemma for Quinn, who masquerades as Paul Auster-the-detective, is his belief that his case and the city of New York adhere to the rules that govern the mystery novel.

However, both the Stillman case and the city resist Quinn's attempts to construct meaning, and he is left with only pieces of his own fragmented interpretation.

In this chapter, I focus specifically on the way that the urban landscape contributes to the production of paranoia and the elision of subjectivity. Paul Auster's *City of Glass* is a text that lends itself to the theorization of space, signification, and disappearance. Broadly speaking, the city is often depicted as a site of displacement, loss, and disorientation in American fiction. In "The City in Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller," for example, Niaz Zaman argues that cities are the ultimate representation of failure: "this failure of the city is imaged by both playwrights in terms of towering, suffocating, monstrous force that blights and destroys the lives of those who must depend upon it for their lives and livelihood" (13). David R. Weimer agrees with Zaman's assessment of the city in his own analysis of New York as it is portrayed in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. Wiemer refers to Fitzgerald's version of New York as a "lost city" where "characters are often associated with place but are nearly as often separated from [home]"[25] (89; 91). Furthermore, in "Art as Master Narrative in Paul Auster's *City of Glass*, Maryam

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[25] Illustrations of the city as an alienating environment are popular within American literary criticism. For example, in *The American City: Cultural and Literary Perspectives*, Graham Clarke argues, "Not only was the American city viewed as the direct opposite of a rural ideal: corrupting as it was limiting; it was equally the opposite of an urban ideal: as far from the 'City Upon a hill' envisaged by the founding fathers as one could get" (7). Clarke gestures towards Leo Marx's *The Machine and the Garden* through the distinction he makes between urban structures and rural idealism. In his text, Marx develops the idea of "complex pastoralism" where the "pastoral ideal" is exposed to "the pressure of change – to an encroaching world" of industrialism that threatens to overthrow the idyllic rural environment (24): "an Arcadian vision and an anxious awareness of reality, are closely related: they illuminate each other. All of which is another way of accounting for the symbolic power of the motif: it brings the political and the psychic dissonance associated with the onset of industrialism into a single pattern of meaning" (30).

The transition toward industrialization and urban environments gave birth to many historic, celebrated, and criticized city structures, perhaps none more storied than New York. In *Urban Intersections: Meetings of Life and Literature in United States Cities*, Sidney H. Bremen suggests that New York becomes emblematic of a specific set of patterns after World War II: "Discontinuity and the failure of cohering urban patterns, as well as lost hopes, often mark the distance between pre- and postwar New York novels […]" (119). Clarke's work on the city elaborates on this discontinuity:

> Once again the city is seen as destructive and corrupting in a period in which the United States become increasingly urbanized. And this ambivalence has, in turn, fed the sense of continuing crises, which, especially in the post-war years, has evoked images of an urban world on the point of apocalypse and breakdown: the flight from the city and the rise of suburbia, the decay of inner city areas, and the increase in urban poverty, disruption, pollution and violence. (8)

Moghbeli, Sohila Faghfori, and Esmaeil Zohdi argue that the city manifests the traditional precepts of postmodernity, which produce specific forms of loss:

> In fact, *The City of Glass* is a representation of the overall condition of postmodern era as characterized by Lyotard. His metaphysical ideology of rejection of master narratives that has brought about so many changes in all aspects of contemporary life is evident within the story. Little narratives such as chance and capital that have replaced the classical master narratives have created so much uncertainty, ambiguity, and fragmentation. These features are evident within the internal realm of the characters as well as the external realm of the city. (2610)

From the outset of *City of Glass*, Quinn seeks to lose himself in nothingness by traversing the streets of New York City:

> New York was an inexhaustible space, a labyrinth of endless steps, and no matter how far he walked, no matter how well he came to know its neighborhoods and streets, it always left him with a feeling of being lost. Lost, not only in the city, but within himself as well. Each time he took a walk, he felt as though he were leaving himself behind, and by giving himself up to the movement of the streets, by reducing himself to a seeing eye, he was able to escape the obligation to think, and this, more than anything else, brought him a measure of peace. (4)

Walking provides Quinn with the sensation that he can disappear within the city. In "Paul Auster and the French Connection: *City of Glass* and French Philosophy," Matthew McKean gestures towards the relationship between Sartre, Quinn, and nothingness through a comparison of Quinn and Roquentin, the protagonist of Sartre's *Nausea* (1938), which helps to contextualize how Quinn views nothingness:

> The difference between Roquentin and Quinn, then, is that Roquentin tries to come to terms with his existence, while Quinn does everything he can to reject his own. When Roquentin's nausea leads him to confront

existence devoid of its essence, he embraces the nothingness and creates his own essence […] Quinn, on the other hand, exercises his free will by purging himself of his essence. He has lost interest in himself, puts himself aside, and welcomes the world's indifference and meaninglessness for the sole sake of denying his existence. (115)

However, moving through the city does not allow Quinn to disappear. In "Spaced-out: Signification and Space in Paul Auster's "The New York Trilogy," Steven E. Alford identifies the problematic between walking and disappearing, even though he does so in theoretical terms that need clarification. Alford draws the reader's attention to a distinction between notions of space in Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau: "Lefebvre seeks to understand what is *essential* space […] something he calls social space, produced ultimately by class struggle. De Certeau, on the contrary, while agreeing that 'real' space is social space, chooses to view this space from the standpoint of an observer rather than an actor, or 'producer'" (626). The essential problem with his comparison is that Alford misses the fact that both theorists view space from the vantage point of production.

To confirm his reading of de Certeau, Alford calls our attention to the following passage from *The Practice of Everyday Life*:

> The ordinary practitioners of the city live "down below," below the thresholds at which visibility begins. They walk – an elementary form of this experience of the city; they are walkers, *Wandersmänner,* whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban "text" they write without being able to read it. These practitioners make use of spaces that cannot be seen: their knowledge of them is as blind as that of lovers in each other's arms. The paths that correspond in this intertwining, unrecognized poem, in which each body is an element signed by many others, elude legibility … (Alford's ellipsis) The networks of these moving, intersecting writings compose a manifold story that has neither author nor spectator, shaped out of fragments of trajectories and alterations of spaces: in relation to representations, it remains daily and indefinitely other. (93)

Alford then argues: "The significance of space, then, emerges not from the one who moves through space, the pedestrian, but from the one who observes he who moves through space, the person with the red notebook" (626). It is clear that Alford focuses on the vantage point of the person who witnesses the movements of others below. This much is true: an observer of another's movements can organize those movements into a particular text. However, the ellipsis that Alford uses in his quotation of de Certeau excises an important element from the original passage. To put this missing sentence in context, I will offer the first few lines that introduce it and then italicize what was missing from Alford's quotation: "The paths that correspond in this intertwining, unrecognized poem, in which each body is an element signed by many others, elude legibility. *It is as though the practices organizing a bustling city were characterized by their blindness*" (de Certeau 91). The notion of blindness alters the meaning of the passage by opening up the possibility that walking produces its text at ground level within the consciousness of the person who walks.

Considering the possibility that a spatial text is also created through the consciousness of the walker begins with answering the following question: what does blindness mean? Furthermore, who is blind? And what constitutes this blindness? We can interpret de Certeau in a number of ways. First, blindness can refer to the walker who remains blind to the text that is "written" by his or her footsteps. We can also interpret blindness as walkers being blind to other walkers: one who is on a path stays on that path and remains unconcerned with those that he or she passes on the street. All walkers practice blindness by remaining committed to their own trajectories, ignoring the trajectories of those around them.[26] In *Unreal Cities*, William Chapman Sharpe argues that the city offers fleeting encounters between citizens that can help to understand how blindness might be produced: "This meeting with the passing stranger is possible only in the vast modern

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[26] Of course blindness in this sense can be interrupted: while on his own path, a walker recognizes an acquaintance on the street, and this meeting causes a momentary pause within the travel of the walker. He may decide to alter his trajectory, join the acquaintance, and simply adopt her trajectory in turn. Or he may decide to continue on his own path once the meeting comes to an end. The end result, however, is still the same: whether continuing on the original path or adopting a new one, the walker becomes blind to all others once he begins to walk again.

city, where people unknown to one another, where people cannot be relocated once lost, where the first sight of someone may be the last" (12). Sharpe's notion of the city suggests that encounters between subjects are inherently based on disappearance. However, blindness occurs as an extension of disappearance. Blindness, in the context that I am using the term, does not refer to a physical experience. In other words, I am not referring to one losing his or her sight. Rather, I mean to suggest that one may use a selective process of seeing to miss or remain blind to certain phenomena. Blindness occurs when the encounter between strangers does not happen due to the subject remaining focused on his or her path. As the subject remains focused on its path, the encounter between strangers never happens because the subject ignores those around it. Commitment to one's path produces another possibility of what blindness could mean: if one who walks becomes blind to those that surround her, she would also become blind to the buildings and streets that surround her. In other words, if a person has to travel from point A to point B, and she knows that to get to point B she must take two left turns followed by a right turn then all other possible routes disappear. And so too disappears the environment that surrounds her as she focuses on her destination, excluding other trajectories. But how exactly does this ignored space disappear?

In *Being and Nothingness*, Jean-Paul Sartre theorizes the concept of nihilation, and the function of nihilation can explain how things disappear. When describing the process of nihilation, Sartre uses an example of expecting to find someone ("Pierre") in a café only to meet his absence:

> When I enter this café to search for Pierre, there is formed a synthetic organization of all the objects in the café, the ground of which Pierre is given to appear. This organization of the café as the ground is an original nihilation. Each element of the setting, a person, a table, a chair, attempts to isolate itself, to lift itself upon the ground constituted by the totality of the other objects, only to fall back once more into the undifferentiation of this ground; it melts into the ground. For the ground is that which is seen only in addition, that which is the object of a purely marginal attention. Thus the original nihilation of all the figures which appear and are

swallowed up in the total neutrality of a *ground* is the necessary condition
for the appearance of the principle figure, which is here the person of
Pierre. (41)

The search for Pierre, which is an act of nihilation, is a process of disappearance: as
Sartre focuses on Pierre the rest of the café dissolves into nothingness because his
perspective is only concerned with locating Pierre. All other objects will become
swallowed up in the space in which Sartre exists. However, the disappearance or
nihilation that occurs does not happen in a physical way. Rather, nihilation treats space as
an experience of consciousness: the objects in the room disappear as the subject chooses
not to include them in his or her perspective. Furthermore, one's consciousness must
nihilate everything into a homogenized backdrop so as to isolate the person who is the
object of his or her search. Thus, consciousness organizes space and has the ability to
nihilate anything that remains outside of its concern. In other words, Sartre must remain
blind to everything that is not the person he seeks, and his perception blurs everything in
the room as he searches for Pierre. Nihilation, in this sense, can be attributed to the
blindness created by walking: blindness and nihilation are virtually the same thing
because both cause all those objects that lie outside the focus of the subject to disappear;
each is a process of selective viewing. In the opening passage taken from *City of Glass*,
Quinn attempts to engage in a slightly more nuanced version of nihilation: he does not
produce blindness but attempts to give himself up to the blindness of others; Quinn looks
to become nihilated within the "movements of the streets" (Auster 4). Traversing the
streets provides Quinn with an experience that closely mirrors a sensation akin to
disappearing:

> Each time he went for a walk, he felt as though he were leaving himself
> behind, and by giving himself up to the movement of the streets, by
> reducing himself to a seeing eye, he was able to escape the obligation to
> think, and this more than anything else, brought him a measure of peace, a
> salutary emptiness within. The world was outside of him, before him, and
> the speed with which it kept changing made it impossible for him to dwell
> on any one thing for very long. (4)

What the narrator describes is a sort of nihilation where Quinn becomes lost in the speed and movement of the city, becoming invisible and nihilated by those that surround him: it is only by remaining outside the perspective of others that he could slip into nothingness. For Quinn, movement is the essential component that allows him to avoid the signification carried out by the other: "Motion was of the essence, the act of putting one foot in front of the other and allowing himself to follow the drift of his own body. By wandering aimlessly, all places became equal, and it no longer mattered where he was. On his best walks, he was able to feel that he was nowhere" (4). Quinn, de Certeau, and Sartre all treat space as an experience of consciousness, to some degree. And by treating space as such, Quinn can theoretically vanish from the city as long as he remains nihilated within the blindness of those that surround him. To be clear: the terms disappearance, blindness, and nothingness overlap, and it is necessary to define the meaning that they share. The theory of Emmanuel Levinas helps to clarify these terms. In *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas posits the following condition that shapes the relationship between self and Other: "we shall try to show that the *relation* between the same and the other---upon which we seem to impose such extraordinary conditions---is *language*" (39). Levinas suggests that the self is constituted through an engagement with the Other, or what he refers to as the "face to face," which is to say a confrontation between the self and the Other (79). And language is the basis of this confrontation: "The relation between the same and the other, metaphysics, is primordially enacted as conversation, where the same, gathered up in its ipseity as an 'I,' as a particular existent unique and autochthonous, leaves itself" (39). Language opens up the self to transcendence, which can only be achieved through conversing with the Other. And here is where Levinas's theorization of the self and Other departs from the work of Sartre: Levinas is unconcerned with nothingness because his focus lies on transcending into what he calls "infinity" (41). It is important to note that when Levinas refers to the ipseity of the "I" he is gesturing towards what he refers to as totality. Totality is a concept that designates the self as a closed system: the self becomes completely self-referential and remains constituted by its own referentially, its own existence. Infinity then is an alternative state of being that exists in the transcendence offered by the Other:

To be I is, over and beyond any individuation that can be derived from a system of references, to have identity as one's content. The I is not a being that always remains the same, but is the being whose existing consists in identifying itself, in recovering its identity throughout all that happens to it (36).

The "all that happens to it" refers to the relationship that occurs with the Other, and the alterity that the Other provides the self: "the relation with the Other, or Conversation, is a non-allergic relation, an ethical relation; but inasmuch as it is welcomed this conversation is a teaching [enseignment]. Teaching is not reducible to maieutics; it comes from the exterior and brings me more than I contain" (51). While it is clear that Levinas is concerned with a transcendental concept of infinity, as opposed to nothingness, we can borrow his treatment of language to help define nothingness. Levinas's theory brings us back to the signifying matrix of linguistics inasmuch as the Other provides a conversation that sustains the self. In other words, it is the signifying practice found in the voice of the Other that calls the self into a state of being that exists beyond the borders of its own totality. In the remaining pages of this chapter, I seek to argue that Auster's *City of Glass* thematizes the city of New York as a complex Other built from Quinn's paranoia, which constantly signifies his presence within the symbolic order of the text.

As soon as he agrees to investigate the Stillman case, it is impossible for Quinn to disappear in the city because of the paranoia that takes over him. To understand how paranoia keeps Quinn present within the city, it is necessary to define the conditions of paranoia, as they exist in Auster's text. In *The Seminars of Jacques Lacan: Book III The Psychoses 1955 – 1956*, Lacan states that paranoia exists at the level of understanding, which can help to identify Auster's treatment of paranoid behavior:

What is the subject ultimately saying, especially at a certain period of his delusion? That there is meaning. What meaning he doesn't know, but it comes to the foreground, it asserts itself, and for him it's perfectly understandable. And it's precisely because it's situated at the level of

understanding as an incomprehensible phenomenon, as it were, that

paranoia is so difficult to understand […]. (21)

According to Lacan, paranoia is caused by problems with understanding: there is a vague

sensation that knowledge exists and that knowledge is within close proximity to us, but

we cannot ever truly reach out and grasp it. The feeling that knowledge is both present

and absent is a reflection of Lacan's own statement that "all human knowledge [is]

paranoiac" ("The Mirror Image as Formation of I Function" 72). In "The Mirror Image as

Formation I Function," Lacan does not qualify his statement that all knowledge is

paranoid. However, we can understand Lacan's claim by looking at the formation of the

"ideal-I:"

[the] jubilant assumption of his specular image by the kind of being […]

the little man is at the *infans* stage thus seems to me to manifest in an

exemplary situation the symbolic matrix in which the *I* is precipitated in a

primordial form, prior to being objectified in the dialectic of identification

with the other, and before language restores to it, in the universal, its

function as subject. ("The Mirror Image as Formation of I Function" 76)

The formation of the ideal-I is an imaginary process in which the self misrecognizes

itself, in the "specular image" of the "imago," as a self-sustaining subject ("The Mirror

Image as Formation of I Function" 76). Lacan outlines the effect of this misrecognition:

"But the important point is that his form situates the agency known as the ego, prior to its

social determination that will forever remain irreducible for any single individual or,

rather, that will only approach the subject's becoming […] as *I*, his discordance with his

own reality" (76). Ultimately, the original identification the self makes is delusional and

illusory in nature, and, subsequently, Lacan argues that meaning itself is imaginary:

"There's no doubt that meaning is by nature imaginary. Meaning is, like the imaginary,

always in the end evanescent, for it is tightly bound to what interests you, that is, to that

in which you are ensnared" (54). Thus, knowledge can be said to be paranoiac in nature

for at least two reasons. First, the formation of the ego, the very first self-image that we

construct, is based on seeing something that is not really there. Therefore, reality cannot

be trusted, which is revealed to us once we transition out of the imaginary and into the symbolic. Second, meaning is a by-product of subjectivity – the personal desire and trappings that ensnare our perception. In other words, constructing meaning is an exercise in reinforcing what we want to see as true reflection of the self, as opposed to witnessing any objective truth that exists in the world.

Auster's text, too, treats paranoia as a problem of knowing anything beyond the limits of one's own perception, and it does so through a particular discursive element that sets paranoia in motion. Specifically, subverting the rules and expectations of detective fiction produces paranoia. As a writer of detective fiction, Quinn upholds the indexical structure of the mystery novel as something that can be comprehended through the discovery of clues (8). At the beginning of the novel, Quinn believes that the fictive domain of the detective should be its own self-contained symbolic order, a world where knowledge can be constructed by correctly organizing the language of the text: "What he liked about these books was their sense of plenitude and economy. In the good mystery there is nothing wasted, no sentence, no word that is not significant. And even if it is not significant, it has the potential to be so---which amounts to the same thing" (8). Despite the praise that Quinn offers the mystery novel, this statement also gestures towards one of the primary problems that plague him throughout the text: the plenitude of interpretative possibilities makes it impossible for Quinn to solve the Stillman case.

In the introduction to my thesis, I noted that the word "meaning" is a complex term within Auster's text. Specifically, I stated that a surfeit of interpretative possibilities complicates Quinn's attempts at explaining Stillman's movements. This is exactly what the narrator gestures towards when conveying Quinn's appreciation for the detective novel: it is nearly impossible to solve the Stillman case if everything in the book contains interpretative significance. In "The Pragmatics of Detection: Paul Auster's *City of Glass*," Siobhan Chapman and Christopher Routledge consider the problem that arises out of the dependency that Quinn, as a writer of mystery novels, has upon the rules and structure of traditional detective fiction:

> Having become a detective, Quinn's presuppositions about the world are
> limited to those presuppositions which writers and readers of detective
> fiction bring to the genre. Crucially, despite the fact that structural
> necessities of the genre are absent, Quinn clings to the central
> presupposition that, as a fictional detective, he is working on a case which
> can be solved. (249)

As early as Edgar Allan Poe's tales of C. Auguste Dupin, traditional detective stories were indeed structures of complex, misplaced meaning, and the detective's job was to locate that meaning so as to solve the case. Unlike *The Crying of Lot 49*, the mystery built into these stories was never a question of whether or not meaning existed. Rather, meaning was always present in these stories, and the discovery of meaning was dependent on the intellectual prowess of the detective. Consider an early passage from "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841) that illustrates how detectives must construct meaning by solving complex problems:

> As the strong man exults in his physical ability, delighting in such
> exercises as call his muscles into action, so glories the analyst in that
> moral activity which disentangles. He derives pleasure from even the most
> trivial occupations bringing his talent into play. He is fond of enigmas, of
> conundrums, of hieroglyphics; exhibiting in his solutions of each a degree
> of acumen which appears to the ordinary apprehension preternatural. (55)

Quinn believes that the epistemological rules of the mystery novel, which are established in the works of authors such as Poe, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and Agatha Christie, structure his world. Within these authors' works, knowledge is objective and ever-present, and the detective merely needs to discover that knowledge through various modes of ratiocination, deductive observation, and hermeneutic reasoning. The desires that drive these processes of detection are all the same: to piece a story together that could explain the mystery of a particular case.

However, *City of Glass* does not play by the rules of traditional detective fiction. In order to understand how the novel abandons the rules of detective fiction, I argue that one must

view the text as being composed of at least two fictional worlds: the world of the detective, which Quinn believes in, and the "real world" that cannot sustain his belief because it is void of meaning. In other words, Auster's novel turns the rules against Quinn,[27] which results in the doomed belief that meaning lies within his grasp: "This is where the illusion starts to emerge – since it's a question of understanding, we understand. Well, no, precisely not" (*The Seminars of Jacques Lacan: Book III The Psychoses 1955 – 1956*, 21).

The search for meaning lies at the heart of any detective fiction novel, including Auster's *City of Glass*. And yet the term "meaning" requires clarification because the concept is somewhat vague. As far as the detective is concerned, meaning is connected to a specific form of knowledge: the ability to identify and understand the facts of the case. The facts of a case are the building blocks that the detective uses to piece together his or her explanation. A detective takes clues and arranges them into meaning, and, in doing so, detectives are responsible for creating stories: the detective creates a sequence of events that explain the mystery of the case. Thus, I define meaning, as it exists within detective fiction, as a story that brings resolution to a case. Again, in the opening passage from "The Murders in Rue the Morgue," Poe emphasizes the importance of the "analyst" and his or her ability to "disentangle" the complex web of clues within a case. Later, in "The Mystery of Marie Roget" (1842), Poe would refer to the analyst's ability to solve complex puzzles as a method of ratiocination: a process of detection based on "tracing" a mystery to its "denouement" by logically organizing the clues of a case (22).

Essentially, the process of ratiocination is the process of constructing a story that explains a case, disentangling its mystery. Writing after Poe, Arthur Conan Doyle instituted deduction as the primary method of detection carried out by Sherlock Holmes:

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[27] In "The Detective in Search of the Lost Tongue of Adam: Paul Auster's *City of Glass*," Norma Rowen suggests that the detective genre is subverted in the particular way that the case leads Quinn toward introspection as opposed to knowledge about the world and case: "Most disturbing of all, as Quinn follows [Peter Stillman], the trail shifts its nature and direction to lead not outward to the world around him but inward to his own self. All the figures and situations in the case turn out inexorably to be in various ways his own reflections, and his wide divagations through the labyrinth of New York only bring him back to the inner world that he has been so assiduously avoiding" (227).

From a drop of water […] a logician could infer the possibility of an

Atlantic or Niagara without having seen or heard of one or the other […]

Let him, on meeting a fellow-mortal, learn at a glance to distinguish the

history of the man, and the trade or profession to which he belongs.

Puerile as such an exercise may seem, it sharpens the faculties of

observation, and teaches one where to look and what to look for. ("A

Study in Scarlet" 16)

"The Science of Deduction," as Holmes calls it (16), is a method of detection based on drawing conclusions from what one observes: "By a man's fingernails, by his sleeve-coat, by his boots, by his trouser-knees, by the callosities of his forefinger and thumb […] by each of these things a man's calling is plainly revealed. That all united should fail to enlighten the competent inquirer in any case is almost inconceivable" (16). This passage describes that deduction is also a process of constructing a story out of what one can see because, as Holmes suggests, the composite view of a man's physical state should tell the story of what he does for a living.

Having an understanding of traditional detective fiction is crucial to understanding Quinn's interpretative problems because his methodology as a detective is structured around the formulas offered by such authors as Poe and Doyle. Specifically, Quinn believes that clues can be organized so that they tell or contribute to a story: "Since everything seen or said [in a mystery novel], even the slightest, most trivial thing, can bear a connection to the outcome of the story, nothing must be overlooked" (8). This is the specific manner in which *City of Glass* turns the genre of detective fiction against Quinn: the symbolically stable worlds of Poe and Doyle no longer exist despite Quinn's belief in them. In the stories of Dupin and Holmes, the production of knowledge follows a standard, albeit specialized, formula. Holmes and Dupin use the "sciences" of deduction and ratiocination to illustrate how there is a logical explanation to every problem. However, Auster and other writers, such as Thomas Pynchon and Michael Dibdin,[28] illustrate how the detective's world is not nearly as stable as the ones offered in the

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[28] See: *The Last Sherlock Holmes Story*. London: Faber and Faber, 1990. Print.

traditional mystery novel: *City of Glass* does not believe in processes of detection, such as ratiocination and deduction, but rather Auster's novel turns the process of trying to construct a story into a perpetual act of paranoia. In other words, *City of Glass* treats the construction of meaning as a symptom of the paranoid subject.

Paranoia is enacted through a specific process carried out between Quinn and the city, and it is this process that forbids him from disappearing within the streets of New York. When Quinn becomes involved in the Stillman case, he becomes entangled in what I will argue is, essentially, the signifying practice of the city because it is within the city that he will search for meaning. After assuming the identity of Paul Auster-the-detective,[29] Quinn meets Virginia Stillman to discover the nature of the case:

> What is it you want me to do?
> I want you to watch him carefully. I want you to find out what he's up to. I want you to keep him away from Peter.
> In other words, a kind of glorified tail job.
> I suppose so. (29)

The task of following Stillman has a direct impact on the nature of Quinn's movement in the city: no longer is he able to walk aimlessly through the streets; Quinn must follow Stillman and discern specific information based on his movements. In respect to the case, Quinn's primary objective is to build a story that would explain Stillman's movements throughout the streets. The narrator outlines the effects that are produced when Quinn transitions from passive wanderer into active pursuer within the city streets:

> Quinn was used to wandering […] Using aimless motion as a technique of reversal, on his best days he could bring the outside in and thus usurp the sovereignty of inwardness […] Wandering, therefore, was a kind of

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[29] In "The Novel of Critical Engagement: Paul Auster's *"City of Glass*," William Lavender analyzes the effects that Quinn suffers as a consequence of adopting a split personality between his self, Paul Auster (as detective, and Paul Auster (as author): "Quinn himself is problematic, with his layers of assumed identities, one of which is the author's. The character of Auster and that of the narrator, especially in their circular relation to Quinn […]" (225).

mindlessness. But following Stillman was not wandering. Stillman could
wander, he could stagger like a blindman from one spot to another, but
this was a privilege denied to Quinn. For he was obliged now to
concentrate on what he was doing [...]. (61)

To concentrate on what he is doing, Quinn must follow Stillman through the city, making
sense of his movements, interpreting his intentions. The conversion from wandering to
pursuing, thus, is the process that converts the city into the Other because it is Stillman's
place within the city that will, presumably, yield some form of understanding. However,
City of Glass envisions the relationship between self and Other in slightly different terms
than Levinas: the novel suggests that the Other is a construction of the self as opposed to
the self being a construction of the Other. In a preliminary sense, paranoia is at the heart
of the relationship between Quinn and the city-as-Other because it is this relationship that
perpetuates the illusion that one can construct meaning. More specifically, it is Quinn's
performance within the city and his interaction with the city-as-Other that actually
produces the omnipresent state of paranoia within the text. There is cyclicality at work
here: paranoia is both created by and creates Quinn's relationship with the city-as-Other.
The key to the production of paranoia is the constant movement that Quinn and Stillman
make within the text. Specifically, for the majority of the novel, Quinn and Stillman exist
in a state of being that is emblematic of what Paul Virilio refers to as the traject:

I do not work on the subject and object – that is the work of the
philosopher – but rather on the "traject." I have even proposed to inscribe
the trajectory between the subject and the object to create the neologism
"trajective," in addition to "subjective" and "objective." I am thus a man
of the trajective, and the city is the site of trajectories and trajectivity. It is
the site of proximity between men, the site of organization of contact.
(*Politics of the Very Worst* 39-40)

For Virilio, movement from one place to another constitutes the trajective being, and,
within the pages of *City of Glass*, it is the trajective being that is, in essence, converted
into the paranoiac.

In the terminology of Lefebvre, trajectivity is a mode of being that is predicated entirely on spatial practice: "the relationship of the local to the global; the representation of that relationship; actions and signs; the trivialized space of everyday life; and, in opposition to these last, space made special by symbolic means as desirable or undesirable, benevolent or malevolent, sanctioned or forbidden to particular groups" (288). According to Virilio, trajectories are responsible for producing specific sets of meaning for the trajective being. The constant travel to and from different locations allows the trajective being to comprehend the world. Furthermore, Virilio emphasizes the importance of the trajectory because it is movement that sustains the trajective being. Quinn trades in his own subjectivity for the trajective at the moment that he adopts the persona of Auster-the-detective: the case, as Virginia Stillman explains, is entirely predicated on movement, on following Peter Stillman through the streets of New York City. Thus, the persona of Auster-the-detective exists in the trajectories created by Stillman, and organizing Stillman's movements into a story that would explain his behavior gives Auster-the-detective purpose. Subsequently, the transition into the trajective is the method through which the potential for knowledge exists: Quinn will solve the case through his own interpretations regarding what Stillman's movements could mean.

Trajectivity is also caught up directly in the failed relationship between self and Other, specifically in regards to the trajectory and its ability to elicit knowledge. Virilio argues that without trajectivity and movement "we will never achieve a profound understanding of the various regimes of perception of the world" (*Open Sky* 24). However, the trajectories that Quinn is able to uncover and produce are ultimately void of meaning, and trajectivity completely breaks down. *City of Glass* treats the trajectory as being empty of epistemologically-based signification, and it is in the face of that emptiness that Quinn creates an Other in order to produce alternative forms of meaning. However, as noted earlier, this Other, which comes in the form of the city, is entirely based on Quinn's paranoia. Consequently, I argue that Auster's text treats the concept of the Other as something fundamentally paranoiac in nature. The city as Other is concerned with paranoia in at least two ways. First, the city is caught up in the production of paranoia because it offers Quinn an external presence that fosters his paranoid delusions. Second, the city is also constructed in the image of paranoia: if the city and its trajectories are

fundamentally void of symbolic meaning, it is Quinn's paranoia that ascribes symbols to the action that takes place on the streets of New York. Quinn's use of the city illustrates how the urban landscape functions as an Other, and the sole purpose of this Other is to perpetuate Quinn's desire to bring the Stillman case to resolution.

Trajectivity also participates in the spatialization of paranoia by turning the trajectory against the trajective being. More specifically, emptying the trajectory of signification results in a void that confronts the trajective being because his or her spatial practice does not contain any meaning. In *Rhythmanalysis*, Henri Lefebvre offers a way to understand the subject's position in space as a rhythm between the self and a particular other: "The succession of alternations, of differentiations, of differential repetitions, suggests that there is somewhere in this present an order, which comes from elsewhere" (32). This rhythm, the belief that order can be created through a back and forth, through substitutions and differentiations, is precisely the way that the trajective being operates as he or she attains selfhood through movement in space. However, Auster's text illustrates how the belief in this rhythm produces paranoia in at least two ways. First, Quinn, as a signifying agent, attempts to construct a story that would explain Stillman's behavior within the streets, and he does so by identifying what de Certeau refers to as a "pedestrian speech act"[30] (97). De Certeau argues that walking is a form of movement that "is to the urban system what the speech act is to language […]" (97). He goes on to state:

> At the most elementary level, it has a triple "enunciative" function: it is a
> process of *appropriation* of the topographical system on the part of the
> pedestrian (just as the speaker appropriates and takes on language); it is a
> spatial acting-out of place (just as the speech act is an acoustic acting-out
> of language); and it implies *relations* among differentiated positions, that
> is, among pragmatic "contracts" in the form of movements (just as verbal

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[30] The state of language, in general, is an important element of Auster's text, and the criticism that surrounds the novel reflects as much. For instance, in "Humpty Dumpty in New York: Language and Regime change in Paul Auster's *City of Glass*," Sylvia Soderlind argues, "At the heart of *City of Glass* lies the conundrum of the self and its relationship to, or its constitution by language" (2). Soderlind's assertion gestures toward the complex relationship language has with subjectivity. My investigation into the pedestrian speech act attempts to illustrate this relationship as something that is structured spatially.

enunciation is an "allocution," "posits another opposite" the speaker and puts contracts between interlocutors into action). (98)

In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, walking is never an aimless mode of travel. Using de Certeau's theory, I argue that Quinn could never achieve the nowhere or nothingness he desires because walking keeps him present within the symbolic order. But how do we reconcile Quinn's constant presence within the symbolic order with the fact that he is able to locate himself within the blindness of other pedestrians? The answer lies in the deceptive nature of nothingness as it relates to being and spatiality: blindness seems to circumnavigate the "*relations* among differentiated positions" among those "pragmatic 'contracts'" that exist within the pedestrian speech act. As stated earlier, subjects can avoid visual signification by hiding in the blindness of other pedestrians. However, if we are to accept the theory of de Certeau, space organizes the self through coordination: differentiated positions establish a relationship between the subject and spatiality. By taking up one of those positions, the self remains sustained in the symbolic order because the subject becomes constituted by its position in representational space. Again, we seem to be privileging spatiality over subjectivity, which returns us to Lefebvre's notion that space is founded upon a discourse of power that shapes subjectivity, discussed in the last chapter. However, de Certeau's view of space is less deterministic than Lefebvre's. Specifically, the "triple enunciative function" of the pedestrian speech act provides subjects with a measure of agency, which Lefebvre does not see possible: walking is the "*appropriation* of the topographical system on the part of the pedestrian (just as the speaker appropriates and takes on the language)" (98). The enunciative functions of the pedestrian speech act elaborate on what trajectivity would look like: it is the language of the trajective being. For instance, Virilio argues that trajectivity exists within a trajectory that "springs from the relationship between the object and the subject" ("The Time of the Trajectory" 60). Within *City of Glass,* the object is the city of New York, and the subject is Quinn as Auster-the-detective. In the context of de Certeau and walking (as a mode through which a trajectory can be established), the relationship between the object and the subject is linguistic in nature: movement is converted into acts of signification which speak a particular language. The appropriation of space suggests that a certain form of play occurs: walking allows a subject the freedom to construct paths within a given

spatial matrix based on his or her own decisions. De Certeau describes this play as a poetics of wandering "shaped out of fragments of trajectories and alterations of spaces […]" (93).

De Certeau's notion of wandering might also usefully be supplemented by the concept of play described by Derrida in "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," specifically in regards to the Derridean concepts of centrality and structurality. Derrida argues, "The function of this center was not only to orient, balance, and organize the structure […] but above all to make sure that the organizing principle of the structure would limit what we might call the play of the structure" (278). Play within the structure occurred at a specific moment when we came to recognize that "the center is not the center" (279). Play itself is a process of substitution that perpetually replaces one "center" with another so that the idea/illusion of centrality is maintained. Language or "discourse" is the phenomenon that is able to enact the process of play at the moment when we realize that centrality is no longer a feature of being:

> In the absence of a center or origin, everything became discourse---provided we can agree on this term---that is to say, a system in which the central signified, the original or transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of references. The absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and the play of signification infinitely. (280)

The enunciative function of walking is also a version of the play of signification. The structure of play is the city itself because it provides the pedestrian with the conditions with which to play; the city is the Other because it engages in a dialogue with the subject who seeks meaning. Each step taken by the pedestrian, each trajectory that he or she establishes, and the paths that those trajectories form, suggest a play within the structure of the city directed toward a particular center. The center that concerns the pedestrian is the destination of his or her movement. However, the collective movement of various groups of pedestrians suggests the existence of multiple centers at one time: the multiplicity of centers is found in the various destinations of those who populate the

sidewalks of the city. Thus, there is no "center" of the city. All that exist are multiple destinations that could only serve as individual "centers," which disrupt the notion of "original" centrality.

The absence of centrality forces us to reconsider the stability of trajectories because it is impossible for a trajectory to exist within an environment that has no center. A certain level of order must exist within a spatial system for a trajectory to be established: trajectories encompass beginning and end points, and they imply an origin, a destination, and a purpose. However, *City of Glass* (dis)organizes itself by abandoning centrality in at least two ways: it does not possess a center of meaning that would allow Quinn to organize a story, and it establishes the absence of a center through the breakdown of the trajective being. Furthermore, there is a specific consequence that occurs as a result of the trajective breaking down: trace replaces the trajectory. First, in regards to a center of meaning, Quinn conceptualizes the discovery of meaning as establishing a central story that would explain Stillman's behavior, which again is a reflection of his dependence on the traditional mystery novel: "Everything becomes essence; the center of the book shifts with each event that propels it forward. The center, then, is everywhere, and no circumference can be drawn until the book has come to an end" (Auster 8). In spatial terms (centrality being a place that can be drawn and discovered), the idea of a center, in this sense, is directly related to the place of meaning: Quinn conceives of meaning as being a resolution to a case which sits at the center of the mystery novel's structure. The structure of the text needs to hold meaning at its center to maintain its structurality. As Derrida suggests:

> The concept of a centered structure is in fact the concept of a play based on a fundamental ground, a play constituted on the basis of a fundamental immobility and a reassuring certitude, which is itself beyond the reach of play. And on the basis of this certitude anxiety can be mastered, for anxiety is invariably the result of a certain mode of being implicated in the game, of being caught by the game […] (279)

For Quinn, centrality is a term that is synonymous with meaning: establishing a center that would structure the Stillman case is the same thing as creating a resolution that would explain Stillman's behavior. However, Quinn is unable to establish that resolution. It is precisely this notion of certainty that Auster's text abandons by subverting Quinn's expectations of the mystery novel, and consequently, play is able to dominate the text from the opening of the Stillman case. For instance, the very first decision that Quinn must make, which directly affects every subsequent feature of the case, is having to choose a Stillman to follow: the presence of two men that fit the description of Peter Stillman, Sr immediately complicates the simple tail job described by Virginia Stillman earlier in the novel:

> Quinn froze. There was nothing he could do now that would not be a
> mistake. Whatever choice he made---and he had to make a choice---would
> be arbitrary, a submission to chance. Uncertainty would haunt him to the
> end. At that moment, the two Stillmans started on their way again. The
> first turned right, the second turned left. Quinn craved an amoeba's body,
> wanting to cut himself in half and run off in two directions at once. (36)

Quinn is caught up in the play of the novel by having to decide which Stillman he will follow: the lookalikes force Quinn into the process of substitution because he must arbitrarily ignore one possibility in favor of another. Quinn's reaction at having to make this decision is indicative of Derrida's claim that the certitude of centrality keeps anxiety at bay: Quinn comes to understand that he will be haunted by uncertainty throughout the duration of the case precisely when he realizes that his decision to follow the first Stillman could be a mistake. The novel treats paranoia as an anxiety produced by the game described by Derrida: the uncertainty built into choosing a Stillman to follow is akin to the anxiety produced by the game of play. However, I argue that *City of Glass* and its treatment of paranoia alters the game of play in a slight way. Derrida conceives of the play of substitution in the following way:

> The substitute does not substitute itself for anything that somehow existed
> before it. Henceforth, it was necessary to begin thinking that there was no

> center, that the center could not be thought in the form of a present-being, that the center had no natural site, that it was not a fixed locus but a function, a sort of nonlocus in which an infinite number of sign-substitutions came into play. (280)

In the Derridian formula, substitutions are not predicated on some sort of knowledge that comes prior to each substitution. Therefore, there is no interconnectedness between substitutions that could establish a center of meaning or some historically-based linearity. Paranoia, on the other hand, *believes* in a center of meaning, and the play of substitutions attempts to restore an original meaning that the belief perpetuates. Thus, substitution is an act of the paranoia: it is a symptom of constantly trying to build a pathway to the meaning that one senses is always within arm's length. This is the nature of the uncertainty that haunts Quinn: paranoia fosters the belief that there is a correct/original Stillman, and that Quinn has elected to follow the wrong one. *City of Glass* treats paranoiac substitution as a process of accumulation that looks to build meaning by stacking bits of narrative information on top of one another.

What is the nature of the substitutions made by the paranoiac? Paranoia does not trade one meaning for another meaning. The paranoid subject creates one set of possibilities through a series of elaborations that continuously work toward an original story. The play of substitution comes through the variables that the paranoiac must sift through to establish the "original" meaning that he or she believes exists. Returning to a passage cited earlier in this chapter, we can recast Quinn's belief in the indexical framework of the mystery novel as a paranoia that an "original" meaning *must* exist:

> In the good mystery there is nothing wasted, no sentence, no word that is not significant. And even if it is not significant, it has the potential to be so---which amounts to the same thing […] Since everything seen or said, even the slightest, most trivial thing, can bear a connection to the outcome of the story, nothing must be overlooked. (8)

Having made the arbitrary decision to follow one Stillman over the other, Quinn instantly begins to justify his decision through a paranoid attempt to re-attain a sense of certainty,

only to have it fall apart: "He turned around and saw the first Stillman shuffling off in the other direction. Surely this was his man. This shabby creature, so broken and disconnected from his surroundings---surely this was the mad Stillman […] There was no way to know: not this, not anything" (56). His reaction is indicative of what happens when subjects are faced with the absence of center/meaning: paranoia directs Quinn's behavior. Once again, Quinn must make a decision that he knows may be entirely incorrect. The misidentification of Stillman causes Quinn to lose the locus of the case because his entire objective is predicated on protecting Peter Stillman, Jr. from his father.

Paranoia, then, can be said to have its foundation in the relationship the paranoiac maintains with the Other because it is through an exterior being, a being separate and different from one's self, that meaning is possible. Quinn illustrates this dependency on an exterior presence because, in regards to choosing a Stillman to follow, his own intuition fails him, and only results in the absence of meaning. Quinn, then, has no choice but to follow the first Stillman in hopes to re-construct a center of meaning, which would result from piecing together a story that would explain Stillman's movements. However, the elder Stillman is an incomplete sign because he is too heavily shrouded in uncertainty to function as a viable Other that could produce meaning. It is at this point that the city intervenes as the Other that is necessary for Quinn to build some sort of resolution to his case. The city is an Other that fosters paranoia because it is the structure that keeps the possibility of achieving a resolution to the case alive. As a narrative device, the text allows Quinn to use the city's topography to create signification, as opposed to an explicitly representational space. In other words, Auster's city is turned into a text, and Quinn creates symbolic/linguistic meaning by mapping Stillman's movements in the red notebook. Paranoia, then, is a spatialized phenomenon within *City of Glass*: the constant pursuit of knowledge is a pursuit of the Other through the streets of New York City. As a trajective being, Quinn must construct meaning through movement/spatial practice: "that of letting man exist through his trajectory, his journey" (Virilio, "For a geography of trajectories. An interview with Paul Virilio" 53). To be a trajective being is to define one's existence through perpetual acts of spatial practice. Thus, Quinn attempts to build a story that could lead to a resolution by directing his paranoia at Stillman and his movements through the city.

Quinn's paranoia is enacted through a fundamental principle of Levinas's theory in regards to the Other, which is facilitated through the structure of the city: distance. The city gives Quinn the necessary space to convert Stillman into a readable sign. As a sign, Stillman is inscribed into the narrative based on the action he takes within the city and the mapping of those actions. The clearest indication of cartography within the novel is the map that Quinn creates, which traces Stillman's wandering. After trailing Stillman through the city for a few days, Quinn makes the following decision: "For no particular reason that he was aware of, Quinn turned to a clean page of the red notebook and sketched a little map of the area Stillman had wandered in. Then, looking carefully through his notes, he began to trace with his pen the movements Stillman had made on a single day […]" (66). Each day, Quinn continues to trace the paths taken by Stillman and, at first, those movements seem arbitrary. However, Quinn discovers that Stillman's wandering eventually creates a pattern, which spells the following sequence of letters: "OWEROFBAB" (70). Instantly Quinn makes the connection to the title of Stillman's dissertation, *The Garden and the Tower: Early Visions of the New World*, which "was divided into two parts of approximately equal length: 'The Myth of Paradise' and 'The Myth of Babel'" (41). Based on this connection, Quinn concludes that the letters form a portion of "TOWER OF BABEL" (70). Quinn comes to this conclusion by inhabiting the space of topography and the mapmaker, which puts graphic distance between him and Stillman: a map of Stillman's wandering could not be produced without the topographical grid of the city. In other words, the avenues and streets given to the pedestrian become the space of signification. Furthermore, the structure of the city offers a spatial translation of the distance that Levinas formulates as an essential component of the Other and infinity. When discussing how transcendence is established through a relationship with the Other, Levinas writes:

> To have the idea of Infinity it is necessary to exist as separated. This separation cannot be produced as only echoing the transcendence of Infinity, for then the separation would be maintained within a correlation that would restore totality and render transcendence illusory […] It is not the insufficiency of the I that prevents totalization, but the Infinity of the Other." (79-80)

For the self to transcend into infinity, to achieve knowledge that exists beyond the subject's own interiority (or totality), one must maintain a separation between it and the Other. The gap between the self and the Other cannot close. If the distance closes, the two entities become too closely related, which inhibits transcendence. Any possible meaning that could be created by the Other is lost in the reflection of the self and the totality that it casts. Auster's city translates the requisite distance of the Other in two specific ways. The first is graphic in nature and is tied to the cartographer who plots the movements of the pedestrian on the map.

The graphic markings of the cartographer return us to de Certeau and the bird's eye perspective. When describing how texts are created within the city, de Certeau emphasizes the perspective of the voyeur "God" who looks down upon the pedestrians who litter the streets:

> To be lifted to the summit of the World Trade Center is to be lifted out of the city's grasp. One's body is no longer clasped by the streets […] When one goes up there, he leaves behind the mass that carries off and mixes up in itself any identity of authors or spectators. His elevation transfigures him into a voyeur. It puts him at a distance. It transforms the bewitching world by which one was "possessed" into a text that lies before one's eyes. It allows one to read it, to be a solar Eye, looking down like a God. (92)

The distance that de Certeau speaks of is literal: the pedestrian text is created by one who sits in a crow's nest and witnesses the movement that occurs below. Similarly, the perspective of the cartographer is based on an overhead vantage point, which Quinn illustrates when he maps out Stillman's movement in his red notebook. The map is a representation of space, and the cartographer possesses a perspective when creating a map. When sketching out his concept of a representation of space, Lefebvre writes: "*Representations of Space* […] are tied to the relations of production and to the 'order' which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to 'frontal' relations" (*The Production of Space* 33). Mapmaking is a process based on rendering physical space through a system of mathematical measurement. For instance, in

projections of the globe, the grid of the map and its scale determine how the space of the map will be represented. This is the nature of a representation of space: it is not a projection of physical space; cartography is a practice that translates physical space into graphic form. In other words, a completed map takes the representational liberty to reproduce a particular space onto the page. In addition, reading a map is contingent upon the codes that created it. For instance, the legend on every map directs the reader how to understand the coordinates that structure its grid. Secondly, just as the speech act of the pedestrian is based on the appropriation of space, cartography appropriates the perspective of the pedestrian. To be clear, I am not referring to simply rendering a city into topographical form. When Quinn creates his map, he uses the grid/topography to graph Stillman's presence in the streets. Thus, perspective is given to the mapmaker who is creating a map of another's movement. When plotting the routes and directions taken by a particular pedestrian, the person creating the map appropriates the perspective of that subject by tracing its path. The map translates the pedestrian's perspective onto the map, preserving the trace of his or her movement. Thus, Quinn-as-cartographer possesses a perspective even though that perspective might not be his own.

In my reading, it is the city that takes the place of the Other and not Stillman. When Quinn takes up the vantage point of the mapper, he looks down upon the streets of the city to trace the path that Stillman leaves in his wake:

> Except for the eleven blocks up Broadway in the start, and the series of curlicues that represented Stillman's meanderings in Riverside Park, the picture also resembled a rectangle. On the other hand, given the quadrant structure of New York streets, it might also have been a zero or the letter 'O.' (66)

To be sure, on the ground level, Stillman's wandering is merely a trace left behind him, which disappears as he continues on his journey:

> Quinn's thoughts momentarily flew off to the concluding pages of *A. Gordon Pym* and to the discovery of the strange hieroglyphs on the inner wall of the chasm---letters inscribed into the earth itself, as though they

> were trying to say something that could no longer be understood. But on second thought this did not seem apt. For Stillman had not left his message anywhere. True, he had created the letters by the movement of his steps, but they had not been written down. It was like drawing a picture in the air with your finger. The image vanishes as you are making it. There is no result, no trace to mark what you have done. (70)

The symbolic quality of the pedestrian's steps is fleeting because those steps begin to fade as soon as they are taken. Marking those footsteps down on paper is the act of signification, as opposed to the actual act of walking. Map-making would seem to challenge the idea that Stillman's footsteps instantly vanish after he takes them because the traces of his steps become a path once they are marked down in the red notebook. In other words, as long as the route that Stillman took is remembered or recorded, his path can be reproduced on any map of New York City. The city, then, would seem to take up a position of an Other because it is the phenomenon that can be read and deciphered when distance is created via cartography. In the very least, the relationship between Stillman and the map suggests that Otherness is an amalgamation of subject and city: it is Stillman-in-the-city (i.e. his position in the streets) that extends Quinn's knowledge beyond the limits of his self – his own totality.

However, Stillman's paths, which Quinn maps out in the red notebook, are called into question by the absence of centrality within the city. Again, Auster's version of New York has no center, and this absence directly impacts Stillman's movement. Essentially, Quinn attempts to define Stillman's wandering as a specific trajectory that contains a particular purpose, which would ascribe a certain level of order to his behavior. And yet, there are limitations to any information established by Quinn and his map because that information is a product of paranoia. The city-as-Other is also the structure that ensures the presence of paranoia because it is the phenomenon that maintains the *possibility* of creating a resolution to the case. The cartographic enterprise taken on by Quinn can be said to elicit meaning, which I have previously stated, but the story that it creates must be qualified as a creation of Quinn's paranoia. In other words, the trajectories that Quinn maps into his notebook and the story that those trajectories tell are products of his

paranoid interpretations. For example, when Quinn discovers the letters within the pattern of Stillman's wandering, the narrator admits to the possibility of several interpretations that could make sense of these "symbols." Reconsider how the narrator describes the interpretation of the letter "O:" "Except for the eleven blocks up Broadway in the start, and the series of curlicues that represented Stillman's meanderings in Riverside Park, the picture also resembled a rectangle. On the other hand, given the quadrant structure of New York streets, it might also have been a zero or the letter 'O'" (66). There are at least three ways to interpret the evidence discovered by Quinn, and it is these various possibilities that foster a preliminary sense of paranoia: the narrative meaning that Quinn is trying to construct is disrupted because the symbol can be interpreted in at least three different ways. Quinn is then forced to synthesize the information through a substitution that privileges one possible interpretation over the other possibilities.

In his definition of paranoia, Lacan suggests that the paranoid condition is, in part, a result of the problematic relation between the subject and the other based on language. For instance, Lacan argues:

> The sign by which the subject-to-subject relation is recognized, is the feint, the reverse of *fides*. You are in the presence of a subject insofar as what he says and does – they're the same thing – can be supposed to have been said and done to deceive you […] up to and including that he should tell the truth so that you believe the contrary […] What the subject tells me is always fundamentally related to a possible feint, in which he sends me, and I receive, the message in an inverted form. (*The Seminars of Jacques Lacan: Book III The Psychoses 1955 – 1956*, 37)

Lacan gestures towards the general untrustworthiness of the other and what he or she has to say. The speech of the subject is filtered through paranoia because one cannot be sure that the other is telling the truth or is merely posturing a deception as truth. The impossibility of trusting an other, Lacan argues, is compounded greatly if that other is absolute in nature:

Precisely what constitutes the foundational value of the speech is that what is aimed at in the message, as well as what is apparent in the feint, is that the other is there as an absolute Other. Absolute, that is to say that he is recognized but that he isn't known. Similarly, what constitutes the feint is that ultimately you do not know whether it's a feint or not. It's essentially this unknown in the otherness of the Other that characterizes the speech relation at the level at which speech is spoken to the other. (38)

While I will address the essential problems with comprehending an absolute Other in the conclusion of this chapter, it is important to note, at this present moment, the problems that are present when attempting to establish a rational conversation from the dialogue carried out between the self and the Other. The multiple possibilities held within Stillman's movement forbid a conclusive reading of his wandering, and all these possibilities are mere feints – false gestures towards conclusive knowledge. For instance, within the center-less city, Stillman's trajectories have no discernible beginning and end points, no sustainable order, and no identifiable purpose. Thus, there is no real trajectory at all. Rather, trajectory is replaced by trace – by a feint. In "Barn Burning and the Language of Madness in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*," I introduced Derrida's concept of trace while attempting to differentiate his deconstructive philosophical position against the conservative approach to language he takes in "Cogito and the History of Madness." In the context of *City of Glass*, trace places trajectory under erasure and overlays successive differentiated meanings that undo the order and structure of the trajectory. In *Of Grammatology*, Derrida describes the function of trace:

The trace is not only the disappearance of origin---within the discourse that we sustain and according to the path that we follow it means that the origin did not even disappear, that it was never constituted except reciprocally by nonorigin, the trace which thus becomes the origin of the origin […] Yet we know that [the arche-trace or trace] destroys its name and that, if all begins with a trace, there is above all no originary trace. (61)

I argue that trace supplants the notion of trajectory specifically because it removes any stable narrative meaning offered in the steps of Stillman through a series of differentiated possibilities that could be used to construct a reading of Stillman's behavior. Thus, Quinn's decision to read his footsteps as letters is arbitrary. Furthermore, his choice is based on the necessity of creating a story to make sense of the case; in other words, the letters are a product of his paranoia. Furthermore, the arbitrary nature of Quinn's decision-making is widespread over the course of the novel, encompassing each choice that he must make. For instance, organizing the letters into TOWER OF BABEL is a conclusion drawn from admittedly incomplete information:[31] "the solution seemed so grotesque that his nerve almost failed him. Making all due allowances for the fact that he had missed the first four days and that Stillman had not yet finished, the answer seemed inescapable: THE TOWER OF BABEL" (70). Quinn draws the conclusion that he has discovered a hidden code in Stillman's steps, and this conclusion is drawn from an incomplete "clue."

The very fact that Quinn converts Stillman's wandering into a letter (as opposed to viewing it as a shape or a number) illustrates Quinn's desire to create a symbol that he can understand. As mentioned earlier, Quinn makes an immediate connection to Stillman's dissertation, which focuses, in part, on the Tower of Babel. The order of the story is key here: Quinn discovers Stillman's work on the biblical tower *before* he converts Stillman's wandering into signs. It is important to note this sequence because it suggests that Quinn could only see those symbols as letters. Outlining the function of paranoia, Lacan states, "The question that has been advocated frequently enough here to

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[31] In "Translating the Impossible Debt: Paul Auster's *City of Glass*," Pascale-Anne Brault suggests that there is a fundamental problem of translation when attempting to understand Stillman's movements through the streets, which makes it impossible derive meaning from his footsteps:

> It is not that "the Tower of Babel" is untranslatable by essence; but because the graphic traces of the words are so important in Auster's novel, because they are indissociable from the things themselves, that is, from the city in which they are imbedded, translation is rendered impossible. The graphics come before the content or, rather, they *become* the content. (234-235)

Whereas Brault argues that the incomprehensibility of the translation is not an essential feature of Stillman's movements, I suggest that "the Tower of Babel" can only be read as the product of paranoia, which ultimately questions the objective meaning that Quinn believes exists in Stillman's wandering.

be full of value, that of *Who speaks?* must dominate the whole subject of paranoia. I already pointed this out to you last time when I reminded you that verbal hallucination plays a central role in paranoia" (*The Seminars of Jacques Lacan Book III: The Psychoses 1955-1956* 23). Spatialized paranoia, too, has a relationship with verbal hallucination inasmuch as the language held within the pedestrian speech act remains inconclusive. Thus, any narrative that could be created based on the footsteps of the walker is hallucinatory at best.

The way that paranoia functions in *City of Glass* is slightly different than Lacan's formulation. Auster's novel is not concerned with the question of who speaks: it is clear that the voice or the speech act is found in Stillman's footsteps. Rather, the inability to apprehend what is said in Stillman's footsteps generates paranoia. In other words, paranoia is produced by Quinn's attempts to decipher meaning from Stillman's movement. Choosing to believe that he discovers letters allows Quinn a momentary glimpse of meaning: "It seemed to him he was looking for a sign. He was ransacking the chaos of Stillman's movements for some glimmer of cogency. This implied only one thing: that he continued to disbelieve the arbitrariness of Stillman's actions" (68). However, Auster's New York City is not a world composed of clues or facts, hidden or otherwise, that are waiting to be discovered, which Quinn refuses to accept. Thus, Quinn's perception of the letters is an example of a verbal hallucination: he sees meaning within Stillman's steps, but this meaning reflects no objective truth. Quinn eventually comes to realize that his world contains hallucinations, which occurs as the Stillman case begins to breakdown:

> Quinn was deeply disillusioned. He had always imagined that the key to good detective work was a close observation of details. The more accurate the scrutiny, the more successful results […] But after struggling to take in all these surface effects, Quinn felt no closer to Stillman than when he first started following him. (65-66)

Quinn comes to understand that the "facts of the past seemed to have no bearing on the facts of the present," which undermines the process of the detective (69). Consequently,

Quinn "had to admit that nothing was sure" (69). At this moment, Quinn comes to a brutal recognition that each paranoiac inevitably reaches:

> The very basis of the paranoid structure is the fact that the subject has understood something that he formulates, that something has taken the form of speech and speaks to him. No one, of course, is in any doubt that this is a fantasized being, not even he, for he is always in a position to admit the totally ambiguous character of the source of utterances that have been made to him. (*The Seminars of Jacques Lacan Book III: The Psychoses 1955-1956* 41)

At the end of the novel, Quinn is left with the reality that the Other (thematized as the city) is unable to produce any real meaning. Moreover, Quinn's disillusionment causes him to abandon his relationship with the Other, which he maintained throughout the entire novel: as the case breaks down around him, Quinn abandons movement altogether and takes up surveillance in front of Peter Stillman, Jr.'s apartment. It is at this moment, trading in spatial practice for inertia, that Quinn abandons the trajective, which is a result of the city no longer being able to yield any meaning, partial or otherwise, that could contribute to understanding the case. However, the breakdown of trajectivity occurs as soon as trajectory is converted into trace because the trajective is no longer a viable mode that contributes to the production of knowledge. Therefore, the abandonment of trajectivity could be explained as the inevitability of the "*nothing* that works out through the loose ends of the text's forever unfinished fabrics" (Little 137): movement through the city yields no conclusive evidence or results; all Quinn can do is give in to the stillness of the book. And if Quinn is no longer able to navigate the city, if moving through the space of New York no longer yields clues to chase, the influence or efficacy of the Other has broken down as well. What, then, does Quinn's failure say about the relationship between the Other and the self?

Derrida's critique of Levinas may help to shed light on this problem. In "Violence and Metaphysics," Derrida questions whether or not the ego can apprehend the Other and its alterity:

> For it is impossible to encounter the alter ego (in the very form of the
> encounter described by Levinas), impossible to respect it in experience
> and in language, if this other, in its alterity, does not *appear* for an ego (in
> general) […] Even if one neither seeks nor is able to thematize the other *of*
> *which* one does not speak, but *to whom* one speaks, this impossibility and
> this imperative themselves can be thematized (as Levinas does) only on
> the basis of a certain appearance of the other as other for the ego. (123)

Levinas constructs his version of the Other using an extreme alterity, which Derrida
explains would be impossible for the self to apprehend. According to Derrida, the self
(ego) can only experience and describe an other that is related to itself. In other words,
the ego can only comprehend another, albeit different, ego. Ultimately, Derrida argues
that the Cartesian model, which Levinas resists, is the more accurate depiction of
otherness: quoting the *Cartesian Meditations*, Derrida writes, "'They, (the other *egos*)
however, are not simple representations or objects represented 'within me,' but precisely
'others' …'subjects for this same world … subjects who perceive the world … and who
thereby experience me, just as I experience them […]'" (122).

Furthermore, Derrida criticizes the language that Levinas uses to conceptualize his
version of the Other. The primary concern posed by Derrida is the claim that language,
the symbolic/linguistic system that pertains to the self (the ego), cannot possibly
understand the Other as Levinas formulates it: "To say that the infinite exteriority of the
other is *not* spatial, is *non*-exteriority and *non*-interiority, to be unable to designate it
otherwise than negatively---is this not to acknowledge that the infinite (also designated
negatively in its current positivity: in-finite) cannot be stated?" (113). The implication of
Derrida's claim is that the Other can have no linguistic relationship with the self because
it cannot be comprehended in the symbolic order. This would call the idea of infinity into
question because the ego cannot understand the transcendent meaning/state of being
found in the infinite. Ultimately, Derrida's claims result in two problems that concern the
concept of alterity: the self can only comprehend an other that is somehow still related to
itself, and the Other cannot be comprehended through the language of the subject.

Auster's text illustrates the problematic relationship between the Other and language in the total breakdown of the case. First, Quinn cannot synthesize the language established in the graphic space of the Other within the symbolic order of the text. Quinn is forced to confront the linguistic gap that exists between himself and the language of the city, which Stillman's steps speak. When trying to organize Stillman's steps into letters, the narrator describes Quinn's process: "As with the [other letters], it was complicated by numerous irregularities, approximations, and ornate embellishments in the park. Still clinging to a semblance of objectivity, Quinn tried to look at it as if he had not been anticipating a letter of the alphabet" (69). Essentially, Quinn cannot transcend his own interiority because he is bound to seeing the evidence through his own bias. The narrator admits that Quinn knows he cannot be objective enough to see the pattern of Stillman's footsteps as anything else but the letters he wishes to see. Consequently, the meaning offered by the Other (the language created in the graphic space of the map) is transformed into information that reflects the ego and, in this case, paranoia more than it reflects alterity. The logic of the conscious ego overtakes alterity because Quinn cannot see past the possibility that Stillman's wandering is connected to the title of his dissertation. This is not to say that the self rejects the signification of the Other, but rather the self is not even aware of its meaning so it must convert the signs of the Other into something that it can comprehend. The conversion results in the misinterpretation of the Other and what it has to say in the face to face: the meaning that Quinn creates in his map is misinformation – information that cannot be synthesized into the story.

The Other, then, must be held accountable for the production of paranoia because it creates meaning that the self cannot understand and the subsequent desire to understand that meaning. To say that the self is not aware of the meaning offered by the Other, again, does not mean that the self is not aware that meaning is present in some exterior way. Rather, Quinn is cognizant that the Other contains information, but he cannot use it to create a story to explain his case. When trying to construct his map, Quinn is fully aware that there is information to be uncovered in Stillman's wandering: "It seemed to him that he was looking for a sign" (68). Paranoia comes as a consequence of the subject not being able to understand the meaning he or she believes is present. Furthermore, it is Quinn's inability to comprehend the Other that creates the need to substitute meaning:

"[Quinn] wanted there to be a sense to [the letters], no matter how obscure. This, in itself, was unacceptable. For it meant that Quinn was allowing himself to deny the facts […]" (68). Forcing a story from the pattern in the city, converting footsteps into letters (or shapes and numbers, for that matter) is a form of denial: Quinn refuses to accept the fact that he cannot understand whatever information Stillman has left in his wake. Denial, in this sense, is an act of paranoia. The essential nature of alterity is that it cannot be understood despite making its presence clear, and paranoia is the product of the Other's semi-transparency.

To conclude this chapter we should return to one of the questions that precipitated this analysis: can one escape the experience of the symbolic order so as to disappear into nothingness? The answer to this question is tied to the state of paranoia: the paranoiac cannot slip into nothingness specifically because paranoia triggers a state of constant signification via repetition and substitution. If the Other is caught up in the production of paranoia, it is associated with signification as well. For the majority of the novel, Quinn's relationship with the city is based on acts of signification: walking and cartography. The fact that walking and cartography, as signifiers, fail to align with any sort of knowledge does not undercut the fact that Quinn uses them in an attempt to build a story. Quinn's failure to establish a coherent story is a product of there being no center in the novel. Furthermore, the substitutions that he makes are attempts at building various centers of knowledge. The Other is a crucial element in the construction of those centers because the ambiguity present in alterity necessitates different interpretations of the information provided by the Other. However, the Other still preserves the idea of the center, which prevents Quinn from disappearing into nothingness because he is always working toward the signification of meaning – for the majority of the novel.

Any claim that Quinn is never able to disappear from the symbolic order must be qualified with the fact that the novel's would-be-detective actually vanishes from the book. The argument can be made that inertia allows Quinn to disappear into nothingness because he fully disengages with the city-as-Other and becomes subsumed by his own interiority. Again, at the end of the novel, Quinn takes up a stationary position in an alleyway across the street from Virginia and Peter Stillman, Jr.'s apartment. It is here that

Quinn begins to lose himself in the red notebook, or as the narrator describes, "We cannot say for certain what happened to Quinn during his period, for it is at this point in the story that he began to lose his grip" (111). Quinn's obsession with the red notebook coincides with his decision to remove himself from the city and abandon his attempts at locating Stillman. At this moment, in the stillness of the alley, a transition occurs where the red notebook replaces the city-as-Other. In other words, Quinn trades in the possibility of alterity/infinity for the complete interiority/totality found in the notebook. Having fully given up on the Other, Quinn retreats indoors and into the Stillman's apartment, which is now empty, and the red notebook tracks the inward movement that Quinn makes:

> For the case was far behind him now, and he no longer bothered to think about it. It had been a bridge to another place in his life, and now that he had crossed it, its meaning had been lost. Quinn no longer had any interest in himself. He wrote about the stars, the earth, his hopes for mankind […] He remembered the moment of his birth and how he had been pulled gently from his mother's womb. He remembered the infinite kindnesses of the world and all the people he had ever loved. Nothing mattered now but the beauty of all this. (128)

The narrator describes a shift that Quinn makes from the exterior world of the case, which was constituted through his relationship with the Other, to the interior world of his self, which is represented by his erratic, contradictory inner thoughts. The red notebook becomes the site that sustains his being because the pages allow him to signify his own interiority. Before Quinn disappears from the text he writes the following question: "'What will happen when there are no more pages in the red notebook?'" (129). One possible answer is that Quinn will cease to exist because the space of interior signification disappears along with the space of exterior signification: he is no longer sustained by the space of the city or the space of the notebook.

Ultimately, Auster's text allows us to formulate being and existence as being constituted, at least in part, through a relationship between paranoia and the Other. Paranoia suggests

that the Other is always an unfulfilled belief in alterity, and the self is forced to retreat into the totality of its own individuality when exterior meaning no longer seems possible. The red notebook thematizes the moment where the self can no longer be a self-sustaining system: the moment where the self meets the limitations of its totality. Like a self-defense mechanism, paranoia ensures that one never hits this limit by creating various centers of meaning. However, paranoia requires a discursive element to set it in motion, which *City of Glass* thematizes in the space of the city and the breakdown of the detective fiction genre. Thus, the paranoid belief in the Other is a search for meaning that extends beyond the limits of the self, and the idea of infinity is something that protects and preserves such a belief.

5.

5.   The House on Ash Tree Lane and the Spatial Uncanny

Critics locate the uncanny in various moments and movements within American literature. For instance, in *Uncanny American Fiction*, Allan Gardner Lloyd-Smith acknowledges early illustrations of the uncanny in the works of Charles Brockden Brown. Specifically, Lloyd-Smith suggests that any sense of the supernatural within Brockden Brown's *Wieland* is actually a sense of the uncanny: "there is no supernatural[32] in *Wieland*, but the uncanny is produced in exactly this way, as rhetoric overpowers events, and the double-tongued deceiver becomes not Carwin but, through Clara, the real 'author' of all the ills, Brockden Brown himself" (29). Analyzing Henry James's work in the early 1900s, Anna Despotopoulou asserts in "Mysterious Tenants: Uncanny Women and the Private of Public Dilemma in the Supernatural Tales" that supernatural occurrences signal conflicts between public and domestic spaces in the work of Henry James: "Several of Henry James's stories and novels that employ the supernatural as an unexplained haunting device or metaphorical center on the conflict between privacy and publicity, making use of gothic conventions like possession, the threat of invasion, and inexplicable presences in the home[…]"[33] (79). Despotopoulou outlines the effects that the presence of the supernatural has in the domestic sphere: the sense of home and familiarity is converted into the unfamiliar, the uncanny (81). In addition to1800s and 1900s, critics have traced the uncanny all the way to more contemporary moments in

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[32] The supernatural maintains such a close relationship with uncanniness due to the uncanny's association with ghosts. Specifically, Freud's philosophical account of the uncanny and its relationship to ghosts is taken up in the theoretical introduction to this dissertation.

[33] While there is no direct mention of the uncanny within this passage, the sense of the private space of the home becoming invaded by inexplicable presences parallels Freud's description of uncanniness, which I will turn to momentarily. *The Turn of the Screw* (1916) is both a gothic novel that deals with the supernatural within the domestic setting as well as a text that is enmeshed with the uncanny. The ghosts of Miss Jessel and Peter Quint illustrate an uncanny return caused by the reappearance of the supernatural. Furthermore, In *Literary Architecture*, Ellen Eve Frank identifies how Henry James's work utilizes the symbol of the uncanny through "real or imaginary structures which locate and set action or those house-similes which represent the minds and psychological conditions of characters" (172).

history. For example, Petra Eckhard's *Chronotypes of the Uncanny* illustrates how postmodernism is theorized through an association with the uncanny: "Ultimately, it is via the Gothic, or its subcategory of the uncanny, that the unrepresentable finds its most accurate representations. And it is postmodern techniques which help us to understand and (mentally) visualize the horrors of postmodernity" (13).

Anxiety and repression are two other important features that define the uncanny and which shape fictional representations of uncanniness. In *Repression and Realism in Post-War American Literature*, Erin Mercer begins her examination of the uncanny with the claim that, after World War II, American culture deeply repressed the knowledge of the war and the violence it caused:

> Even the most cursory glance over literature produced in America during the first decade following the end of World War II raises an unexpected and perplexing problem: none of the pages engage with the trauma of the most defining events of the Twentieth century—the mass death due to the war, the Holocaust, and the atomic bombing of Japan (1).

Ultimately, Mercer claims, "the repression of disturbing reality resulted in the sense that something dark lies at the heart of American life, an apprehension so vague and shadowy that the diffuse anxiety it caused resulted in one out of every three prescriptions during the 1950s being for tranquilizers" (15). Postmodern American fiction establishes this sense of the uncanny and anxiety on both cultural and individual scales. Considering DeLillo's *White Noise*, David Punter asserts that the chemical cloud, which causes the airborne toxic event, "afflicts people with various ailments. The problem is that people only appear to suffer from these ailments since they have heard about them in the media. Some, who have not been watching the news assiduously enough, continue to suffer from them even after they have been discounted by authorities" (234). Punter goes on to argue, "By way of a grand finale, the cloud afflicts the local populace with a nasty case of *déjà vu*, which means, among other things, that they come to feel that they have all experienced their own symptoms before" (324). In essence, the chemical cloud ushers in the sense of the uncanny in the form of widespread anxiety and déjà vu.

In this chapter, I seek to analyze the uncanny in the context of specific spatial structures. Spatiality is a dominant feature of postmodern culture and discourse. Consider, for example, the description of the Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles from Edward Soja's *Postmodern Geographies*:

> an amazingly storeyed architectural symbol of the splintered labyrinth that stretches sixty miles around it. Like many other Portman-teaus which dot the eyes of the urban citadels in New York and San Francisco, Atlanta and Detroit, the Bonaventure has become a concentrated representation of the restructured spatiality of the late capitalist city: fragmented and fragmenting, homogenous and homogenizing, divertingly packaged yet curiously incomprehensible, seemingly open and presenting itself to view but constantly pressing to enclose, to compartmentalize, to circumscribe, to incarcerate. (243)

Soja's reading of the Bonaventure Hotel would appear to confirm Andreas Huyssen's claim that it "became commonplace in postmodern circles to favor a reintroduction of multivalent symbolic dimensions into architecture, a mixing of codes, an appropriation of local vernaculars, and regional traditions" (15). Nan Ellin describes one of these potential "symbolic dimensions" to be a sort of tension between fear and anxiety:

> As the public realm has been growing increasingly impoverished, there has been a corresponding decline in meaningful public space and desire to control one's space, or to privatize […] The privatization impulse is epitomized by the exponential growth in the West in the number of households living in individualized houses, as well as in gated communities. […] The French philosopher Jerome Binde interprets the widespread desire to live in an individual house as "the postmodern moment where everyone is returned to himself. To his little games, to the scenery of his daily life, to his narcissistic anxiety of 'being liberated,'" […] (167)

I situate the final chapter of this thesis within the symbolic/representational space of anxiety and the uncanny. However, while anxiety and the uncanny are represented in postmodern American fiction and culture, my analysis does not explicitly focus on the conditions produced by postmodernity. Rather, I focus on the way that *House of Leaves* represents the uncanny, anxiety, and fear through individual experiences with repression and spatial disorientation. As I view it, Danielewski's text allows us to conceive of a multi-representationalism of the uncanny that is united by the interior and exterior levels of the house. In this sense, *House of Leaves* does substantiate the claim that postmodern architecture encompasses a "plurality of meaning" that "is always tied to the desire to call attention to the resulting contradictions and paradoxes between competing ways of interpreting the world" (23). Thus, while *House of Leaves* can be qualified as a postmodern text in more ways than simply its play with architecture, I focus on how Danielweski's novel organizes spatial representations of the uncanny and how the spatial uncanny afflicts subjectivity on multiple levels.

In *The Architectural Uncanny*, Anthony Vidler argues that houses offer the ideal grounds on which to investigate the uncanny:

> By far the most popular topos of the nineteenth-century uncanny was the haunted house […] The house provided an especially favored site for uncanny disturbances: its apparent domesticity, its residue of family history and nostalgia, its role as the last and most intimate shelter of private comfort sharpened by contrast the terror of invasion by alien spirits. (17)

In Vidler's assessment, haunting is the process that thematizes the uncanny. However, it might be more accurate to say that haunting and the uncanny are synonymous: to be haunted, in one sense, is to suffer the return of "that class of the terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar" ("The Uncanny" 1). In this sense, we could say that the feeling of being haunted is a symptom of the uncanny. In his seminal essay, "The Uncanny," Freud conceptualizes uncanniness as a mechanism that facilitates the return of repressed material: "for this uncanny is in reality nothing new or

foreign, but something familiar and old---established in the mind that has been estranged only by the process of repression" (13). The return of repressed material is the return of psychological phenomena that once existed in the consciousness of the subject: "In general, repression of the ideational presentation of an instinct can surely only have the effect of causing it to vanish from consciousness if it had already been in consciousness, or of holding it back if it is about to enter it" ("Repression" 91). If repression spares someone from re-experiencing something undesirable, the uncanny enacts the unwanted return of what is undesired. In many cases, the uncanny is felt in "relation to death and dead bodies, to the return of the dead, and to spirits and ghosts" ("The Uncanny" 13). In the literary tradition, the gothic and romantic genres canonized the relationship between the uncanny and the undead: "A pervasive leitmotiv of literary fantasy and architectural revival alike, depiction [of the unanny] in fairy tales, horror stories, and gothic novels gave rise to a unique genre of writing that, by the end of the [nineteenth] century, stood for romanticism itself" (Vidler 17). Freud, too, notes how the uncanny lends itself to literature: "the story-teller has this license among many others, that he can select his world of representation so that it either coincides with the realities we are familiar with or departs from them in what particulars he please" ("The Uncanny" 18). Both Freud and Vidler link depictions of spirits/haunting to literary depictions of the unfamiliar: "the story-teller can also choose a setting which, though less imaginary than the world of fairy tales, does yet differ from the real world by admitting superior spiritual entities such as daemonic influences or departed spirits" ("The Uncanny" 18).

In this chapter, I pursue an investigation into the space of the uncanny as it is thematized within Mark Z. Danielewski's *House of Leaves*. However, my examination positions the house as the phenomenon that produces uncanny experiences as opposed to being a structure that is invaded by alien spirits. I examine the house in regards to two specific levels: the architectural structure and the interior composition. Furthermore, I argue that each of these levels has its own specific relationship with uncanniness. In addition, I argue that *House of Leaves* unites both literature as architecture and literary depictions of architecture: the text is treated as the space of the house, and the space of the house is at the core of the narrative. In *Multimodality, Cognition, and Experimental Literature*, Alison Gibbons, for example, identifies the way that *House of Leaves* is both a treatment

of architecture as text and narrative as architecture: "Thus, 'House of Leaves' references not just the Ash *Tree* Lane house at the centre of the novel. It is also a self-referential detail, blending the concept of the house with the book of paper pages" (65). To explain the spatiality of Danielewski's text, I will tie the architectural and symbolic elements of the house to the Freudian conceptions of anxiety and fear, which occur as repressed material resurfaces into consciousness. However, Freud structures anxiety differently across two different versions of "The Uncanny." In the version that exists within *Sigmund Freud Collected Papers*, Freud writes, "if psychoanalytic theory is correct in maintaining that every emotional affect, whatever its quality, is transformed by repression into morbid anxiety, then among such cases of anxiety there must be a class in which the anxiety can be shown to come from something repressed which *recurs*" (13). However, in the *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*," Freud revises this statement, writing:

> In the first place, if psychoanalysis is correct in maintaining that every affect belonging to an emotional impulse, whatever its kind, is transformed, if it is repressed, into anxiety, then among instances of frightening things there must be one class in which the frightening element can be shown to be something repressed which *recurs*. This class of frightening things would then constitute the uncanny. (241)

The important change that Freud makes between these two versions of "The Uncanny" is his shift from emphasizing morbid anxiety, as a central symptom of the uncanny, to insisting upon fear, or "frightening things," as being the key element in uncanniness. This particular shift will be taken up in detail toward the end of this chapter. However, what is immediately important is that the architecture of Danielewski's house has an explicit connection with the production of extreme states of anxiety. However, the nature of this anxiety is not an effect of repression that recurrently escapes the unconscious. Anxiety can be found in an alternative experience of the uncanny, which occurs as a result of defamiliarization: "The German word *unheimlich* is obviously the opposite of *heimlich*, *heimisch*, meaning 'familiar,' 'native,' 'belonging to the home'; and we are tempted to conclude that what is 'uncanny' is frightening precisely because it is *not* known and

familiar" ("The Uncanny" 2). Furthermore, in *The Problem of Anxiety*, Freud explains that anxiety is produced as the ego loses its ability to repress certain phenomena: "The ego withdraws (preconscious) cathexis from the instinct representative which is to be repressed […] the ego is the real locus of anxiety" (19). On an architectural level, these two strands of uncanny experience (anxiety and defamiliarization) are primary symptoms of the house on Ash Tree Lane: the home disorients its occupants through its very structure, which produces extreme anxiety.

On the other hand, the interior composition of the house is directly tied to repression and its symptoms. To be specific: when I refer to the interior composition I am referring to the ways that subjects construct representational space within a house. As Vidler states, the home is the ideal place for the uncanny to appear because it can disrupt that sense of domesticity, but *House of Leaves* allows us to reconsider how the uncanny is associated with this intimate space: the Navidson house is not a space that is infiltrated by spirits or ghosts. However, the interiority of the Navidson house is still organized by "something that ought to have been kept concealed but which has nevertheless come to light" ("The Uncanny" 13). Johnny Truant, as the primary editor of the "The Navidson Record," is responsible for piecing together Zampano's fragmented manuscript of which he takes possession. As Truant reconstructs Zampano's narrative, an uncontrolled collection of repressed memories rise to the consciousness of *House of Leaves*, and, consequently, Truant begins to shape the narrative through representations of his own anxiety. In this sense, the house at the center of the novel reflects Truant's anxiousness as much as it reflects the story of Karen and Will Navidson. Pursuing an investigation into both the architecture and the interiority of the house on Ash Tree Lane, I will illustrate how spatiality is a condition of uncanny experience. Ultimately, the object of this chapter is to theorize the architectural production of the uncanny and the space of anxiety.

In spatial terms, the architectural structure of the Navidson home produces the uncanny through perpetual states of disorientation. But, before analyzing Danielewski's text, it is necessary to establish the spatial theory that is subverted within the pages of *House of Leaves*. One aspect of spatiality that I am most concerned with is the ability that space has to provide subjects with coordination in the world. According to Maurice Merleau-

Ponty, orientation is obtained via the body's movement within a particular space: "A space is 'enclosed' between the sides of a cube as we are enclosed between the walls of our room. In order to be able to conceive the cube, we take up a position in space, now on its surface, now in it, now outside it, and from that moment we see it in perspective" (236-237). In other words, the body constitutes space, which in turn would necessarily provide it with a spatial position. In *Queer Phenomenology*, Sara Ahmed elaborates on Merleau-Ponty's theory by considering how bodies extend into the world and become oriented: "The work of inhabitance involves orientation devices; ways of extending bodies into space that create new folds, or new contours of what we would call livable or inhabitable space" (11). Both Merleau-Ponty and Ahmed agree that there is a co-dependency between subjects and spatiality in which both space and subject become constituted by the presence of each other. Heidegger, too, theorizes the co-dependency between space and subjectivity within *Being and Time*: "Spatiality can be discovered only on the basis of the world; indeed, space *co*-constitutes the world in accordance with the essential spatiality of Dasein itself with regard to its fundamental constitution of being-in-the-world" (110). For Heidegger, spatiality is an essential component of being: "If we define being-in in this way, we are not denying to Dasein every kind of 'spatiality.' On the contrary, Dasein itself has its own 'being-in-space,' which in its turn is possible only *on the basis of being-in-the-world in general*" (56-7). Thus, spatiality is a fundamental condition of existence, and existence is a fundamental condition of spatiality.

Disorientation occurs when there is a breach in the relationship between space and the subject. Sara Ahmed offers an analysis of disorientation by questioning the degree to which bodies can orient subjects in space, which ultimately gestures towards how the spatial uncanny is constructed. Ahmed begins her critique by reconsidering a footnote offered by Merleau-Ponty in *The Phenomenology of Perception* before adding her own theorization of disorientation:

> We remain physically upright not through the mechanism of the skeleton or even through the nervous regulation of muscular tone, but because we are caught up in a world. *If this involvement is seriously weakened, the*

> *body collapses and becomes once more an object* (2002: 296, emphasis
> added). The "upright" body is involved in the world and acts on the world,
> or even "can act" insofar as it is already involved. The weakening of this
> involvement is what causes the body to collapse, and to become an object
> alongside other objects. In simple terms, disorientation involves becoming
> an object. (159)

To say that involvement sustains the body, keeping it upright, is to say that participating, acting, and performing in the world is what keeps the body moving. However, we are not simply talking about a body in regards to involvement: the term refers to the synthesis of the entire subject within the world. To act or perform in the world is to exercise the self through its subjective makeup: we act out our talents and abilities, shortcomings and flaws, and our moods and perceptions as we pass through the world. The involved body is not just raw biological and physiological material. If it were, the body would simply be an object. To be involved is to be a subject that is animated by consciousness, as opposed to a purely physical being. Ahmed's assertion that disorientation occurs when involvement breaks down, turning the body into an object, gestures towards the debilitating effects of inertia: the body becomes still, loses its ability to act in space, and thus becomes objectified.

House of Leaves is a novel that represents disorientation within its pages, and, more importantly, it is a text that structures disorientation as a symptom of the spatial uncanny. Shortly after moving into the house on Ash Tree Lane, Will Navidson and his wife, Karen, discover spatial anomalies: the house grows a quarter of an inch and a strange closet appears out of nowhere. The metacritical discourse provided by Zampano outlines the effects of these discoveries. Translating the original German, Zampano quotes from Heidegger's *Being and Time*:

> In anxiety one feels <u>uncanny.</u> Here the peculiar indefiniteness of that
> which Dasein finds itself alongside in anxiety, comes proximally to
> expression: the "nothing and nowhere." But here "uncanniness" also
> means "not-being-at-home." (das Nicht-zuhause-sein). In our first

indication of the phenomenal character of Dasein's basic state and in our
clarification of the existential meaning of "Being-in" as distinguished
from the categorical of "insideness," Being-in was defined by "residing
alongside …", "Being-familiar with […] On the other hand, as Dasein
falls, anxiety brings it back from its absorption in the 'world.' Everyday
familiarity collapses. Dasein has been individualized, but individualized as
Being-in-the-world. Being-in enters into the existential mode of the "not-
at-home." Nothing else is meant by our talk about 'uncanniness.' (25)

Within Danielewski's text, uncanniness is the sensation that occurs when one fails to feel
at home. Specifically, the Navidson home creates the *unheimlich* by collapsing spatial
codes and norms: the quarter inch growth of the house and the appearance of the closet
displace the Navidsons by pushing Will and Karen toward an immediate sense of
alienation in the place that they are supposed to call home. For Freud, the "*unheimlich is
what was once heimisch*, homelike, familiar […]" (15). The Navidson home renders the
experience of unfamiliarity as an experience of disorientation, which begins at the precise
moment when Will and Karen discover the strange closet:

Navidson immediately asks whether or not they overlooked the room. This
seems ridiculous at first until one considers how the impact of such an
implausible piece of reality could force anyone to question his or her own
perceptions. Karen, however, manages to dig up some photos which
clearly show a bedroom without a door. (28)

In Merleau-Ponty's terms, the closet disorients the couple because their memory and
movement cannot track and synthesize its presence: Will believes that maybe they
overlooked the closet or simply forgot it. However, the photograph supplies
incontrovertible evidence that it did not exist when the Navidsons moved into the house.
The confirmation provided by the photos forces Will and Karen to confront an impossible
reality. The disorientation produced by these spatial paradoxes are symptoms of what
Ahmed calls the failure to extend into space: "If orientation is about making the strange
familiar through the extension of bodies into space, then disorientation occurs when that

extension fails" (11). The presence of the closet inhibits the extension into space because it immediately displaces Will and Karen within their home.

Ahmed discusses the way that subjects are given a position in space through a relationship with different objects, which can begin to make sense of how the Navidson house produces the uncanny:

> In perceiving the object as an object, I perceive the object *in a certain way*, as being some kind of thing. Perceiving an object involves a way of apprehending that object. So it is not just that consciousness is directed towards objects, but also that I take different directions toward objects: I might like them, admire them, hate them, and so on. In perceiving them this way or that, I also take a position upon them, *which in turn gives me a position*. (26)

Space and the organization of objects within space offer orientation via perceptional relationships that sustain the subject by providing him or her a position within the world. Disorientation comes about when space fails to offer a subject that relational position. The house as an object functions in a similar way by providing a site that, traditionally, coordinates the center of our existence (providing us a "home"), and the house also contains objects that establish further relational positions for us (rooms, furniture, possessions). Will and Karen's confrontation with the countless spatial anomalies that occur in their home (the quarter inch growth of the house, the appearance of a strange hallway, and the discovery of the labyrinth at the center of their home) are all examples of how the house on Ash Tree Lane disrupts coordination within space, which ultimately produces the overwhelming feeling of the *unheimlich*. The structural anomalies that Will and Karen confront produce the *unheimlich* by creating a specific psychological disruption. In *Archetype, Architecture and the Writer*, Bettina L. Knapp gestures towards the common relationship subjects take up within their houses: "A house, psychologically speaking, may be considered the center of one's personal world. Its bedrooms and public rooms, corridors, the kitchen with its stove, symbolize various aspects of the personality" (4). Knapp directs us towards the idea that houses become representational spaces that

illustrate a subject's "place" or "home" in the world. A house is different from a home. Homes imply possession, control, and ownership. They are reflections of those who inhabit them. However, the Navidsons are never able to make this psychological connection with the house on Ash Tree Lane because it alienates them through the uncanny.

However, on an architectural level, the most dramatic contact that anyone makes with the spatial uncanny is Holloway Roberts and the other members of "Exploration #4." Commissioned by Will Navidson to explore the vast expanse of the labyrinth, Holloway and his team come face to face with the devastating symptoms of the spatial uncanny. First, it is necessary to note that "Exploration #4" is an exploration into a state of "thrownness." As Heidegger explains, to be thrown is to enter into the world: "We shall call this character of being of Dasein which is veiled in its whence and whither, but in itself all more openly disclosed, this 'that it is,' the *thrownness* [*Geworfenheit*] of this being into its there; it is thrown in such a way that it is the there as being-in-the-world" (116). However, thrownness is not merely an entrance into being: it is an entrance into a world that alienates due to the undisclosed nature of the world. Thus, thrownness is associated with a certain level of anxiety: "In what anxiety is about, the 'it is nothing and nowhere' becomes manifest. The recalcitrance of the innerworldly nothing and nowhere means phenomenally that *what anxiety is about is the world as such*" (181). Thus, we can say that to be thrown is to enter a world of anxiety: "what anxiety is anxious for is being-in-the-world itself" (181). To get beyond the anxiety of being thrown, one must engage with "useful things" as well as the process of "taking care" of those things: "Taking care of things always already occurs on the basis of a familiarity with the world. In this familiarity Dasein can lose itself in what it encounters within the world and be numbed by it" (75). Thus, the uncanny could disrupt the ability to take care. For instance, Holloway Roberts and his team personify the process of taking-care: they make the world familiar by mastering it through their explorations. The participants of "Exploration #4" are described as the ideal candidates to confront the unknown that lies in the depths of the Navidson home. Holloway Roberts, the team leader, has made a "career as a professional hunter and explorer:"

> He is confident, leads well, and possesses a remarkable amount of
> brassball courage. Over the past some have resented his strength and drive
> but most agree the sense of security one feels in his presence---especially
> in life threatening situations---makes tolerating the irritating sides of his
> character well worth it. (80)

Roberts's dominance is supplemented by two other members: Jed Leeder who "possesses
an uncanny sense of direction and remarkable endurance," and Kirby "Wax" Hook who
"before he could walk […] knew where to drive a piton and before he could talk he had a
whole vocabulary of knots under his fingers. If there is such a thing as a climbing
prodigy, Wax is it" (81). At this point in the novel the interior of the house has expanded
into a massive labyrinth that sits behind the closet door. Holloway, Jed, and Wax
represent a specialized group with specific performative functions: strength, courage,
navigation, and climbing. These characteristics suggest that the team is comprised of the
ideal adversaries to face the labyrinth, seek out what lies at its core, and make it familiar.

Holloway, Jed, and Wax are spatially-derived beings: they require space so that they can
perform their abilities as subjects. They need the challenge of space so as to outperform
and conquer it through their various expeditions. However, the house strips them of their
ability to take care of the world, and their failure leaves them in the terrain of the
unheimlich. The team comes to learn that the house on Ash Tree Lane is a structure that
cannot be conquered because it does not subscribe to the codes of spatial coordination.
For example, when describing the location of the hallway that leads to the labyrinth,
Zampano gives at least two different coordinates: concerning the voices of Navidson's
children, he writes, "In the living room, Navidson discovers echoes emanating from a
dark doorless hallway which has appeared out of nowhere in the west wall" (57). This
remark leads to a footnote by Johnny Truant who identifies a contradiction in Zampano's
narrative:

> There's a problem here concerning the location of 'The Five and a Half
> Minute Hallway.' Initially the doorway was supposed to be on the north
> wall of the living room (page 4), but now, as you can see for yourself, that

> position has changed. Maybe it's a mistake. Maybe there's some
> underlying logic to the shift […] (57)

Turning back to page four confirms the spatial/narrative contradiction: describing the location of the hallway, Zampano writes, "In one continuous shot, Navidson, whom we never actually see, momentarily focuses on a doorway on the north wall of his living room…" (4). It is important that Truant draws the reader's attention to this discrepancy because it entices him or her to ascribe meaning to the implacable doorway. It is possible that this is but one moment in a series of red herrings within the novel. However, the implacability of the hallway is emblematic of the uncanny because it suggests that there is no logic that can make the house familiar or comprehensible. With no spatial coordination, Holloway and his team are doomed to fall victim to the house because it is a space that they cannot hope to conquer through traditional modes of spatial exploration.

The differing locations of the door produce disorientation in its most fundamental form: the hallway cannot be plotted spatially by the bearings offered through cardinal directions. In other words, there is no fixity within the house to adequately "place" a subject, allowing him to perform. Freud's formulation of the uncanny can help explain the loss of coordination experienced by Holloway and his team. There are two core characteristics of the uncanny, as outlined by Freud: the return of "repressed infantile complexes [that] have been revived by some impression" and the return to "primitive beliefs" we thought we have mastered (17). Both these characteristics speak to the way that uncanniness is founded on processes of return. Specifically, uncanniness returns us to certain states that we left behind: repressed material returns to consciousness, or we are returned to a primitive state where we once again lack something we thought we possessed. Heidegger's treatment of the *unheimlich* confirms and further develops the Freudian conditions of what the uncanny means, specifically in relation to the return and confirmation of primitive beliefs. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger conceives of the uncanny as a central condition of "thrownness:"

> Everyday familiarity collapses. Dasein is individualized [vereinzelt], but
> *as* being-in-the-world. Being-in enters the existential "mode" of *not-*

being-at-home [*Un-zuhause*]. The talk about "uncanniness"
["Unheimlichkeit"] means nothing other than this […] Now, however,
what falling prey, as flight, is fleeing from becomes phenomenally visible.
It is not a flight *from* innerworldly beings, but precisely a turn *toward*
them as the beings among which taking care of things, lost in the they, can
linger in tranquilized familiarity. Entangled flight *into* the being-at-home
of publicness is flight *from* not-being-at-home, that is, from the
uncanniness which lies in Dasein as thrown, as being-in-the-world
entrusted to itself in its being. This uncanniness constantly pursues Dasein
and threatens its everyday lostness in the they, although not explicitly.
(183)

The uncanniness produced in thrownness is an elaboration of Freud's theorization that the
uncanny returns us to a primitive state where our beliefs no longer hold true. The constant
attempts of losing oneself in the familiarity of the world is merely a perpetual process of
protecting oneself from the reality that we as subjects are always lost – that being lost or
thrown is a fundamental condition of our existence. If we take care of things so as to
become absorbed by the world, so as to distract ourselves from our own thrownness, the
uncanny returns us to the state of being lost by revealing the fragility of the familiarity we
construct.

The Navidson home is an archetype of the uncanny return: it delivers Holloway and his
team to a state of thrownness by stripping them of their abilities to take care and their
belief that they can master space. In *Housing Problems*, Susan Bernstein relates
Heidegger's work on thrownness to the structure of the house, and she illustrates the way
that houses articulate thrownness: "In its thrownness, *Dasein* takes on the guise of an
isolated individual […] contained in a space. While the space at first seems to be the
comforting totality of the house or room, anxiety breaks in and shakes the foundation of
the figure to awaken *Dasein* to its interconnectedness, thus revealing its home to be
unhomeliness" (125). Jed Leeder is the only member of Holloway's team to be aware of
the type of displacement that Bernstein theorizes, and he attempts to draw attention to the
problem between the house and their place within it. As Zampano describes, "Though

Wax puts his faith in Jed's unerring sense of direction, Jed admits to some pre-exploration apprehensions: 'How can I know where to go when I don't know where we are? I mean, really, where is that place in relation to here, to us, to everything?" (94). Jed's apprehension already indicates a sense of dislocation that grows worse as the team actually enters the labyrinth. Disorientation is at the heart of the spatial uncanny because it isolates the subject within unfamiliarity, and Jed admits to becoming lost as he loses his "unerring sense of direction" (94). Ahmed emphasizes how "the body emerges from [a] history of doing, which is also a history of not doing, of paths not taken, which also involves the loss, impossible to know or to even register, of what might have followed from such paths. As such, the body is directed as a condition of its arrival, as a direction that gives the body its line" (159). The house robs Jed (and the rest of the team) of the ability to "emerge" through mobility, action, and arrival: since the house does not abide by the rules of direction or coordination, Jed has no ability to navigate it whether in a basic or naturally gifted way. Jed's alienation is a form of intuition that anticipates the threat of becoming lost, of becoming thrown in the void of the house: he feels no relation to the house on Ash Tree Lane.

In some ways, Jed's trepidation confirms how Zampano celebrates his sense of direction because he intuits the spatial disorder that exists within the house. Without the ability to perform, to be involved, Jed foresees how a subject becomes merely another object within space or an object among other objects. In simpler terms, the body of the subject becomes absorbed into space through the process of objectification. However, it is necessary to qualify the nature of Leeder's apprehension as the anxiety that Freud perceives in the uncanny. First, the apprehension Leeder feels results from the threat of inertia because it is an imposed stillness within space that causes objectification. The absence of spatial coordinates and directional poles prohibits any involvement Jed could hope to act on within the labyrinth. Consequently, the "Exploration #4" team is thrown into a state of anxiety because they become inert. *House of Leaves* treats inertia as an experience of what Heidegger refers to as anxiety. As previously mentioned, the text directly calls the reader's attention to Heidegger's formulation that links the uncanny to anxiety. While each member of the team experiences a breakdown in the house caused by disorientation and inertia, none is more devastating than the experience of Holloway

Roberts. Holloway experiences the profound anxiety of being lost in the world and the stillness it creates.

However, before succumbing to the inertia of the labyrinth, Roberts attempts to stave off the uncanny by reorienting his position in the maze. Elaborating on the effects of disorientation, Ahmed writes, "Bodies that experience disorientation can be defensive, as they reach out for support or as they search for a place to reorient their relation to the world" (158). Roberts's reaction to the displacement that occurs in the house is emblematic of a self-defense mechanism based on re-orientation. As stated earlier, Holloway views the house as something that can be conquered through the exploration and eventual mastery of its space. However, the labyrinth refuses to be mastered. Holloway rejects this failure and attempts to reaffirm his performative value by converting the house back into something that can control:

> [Holloway] responds as a hunter and the image that fills the frame is a weapon. Kneeling beside his pack, we watch as he pulls out his Weatherby .300 magnum and carefully inspects both the bolt and the scope mounts before loading five 180 grain Nosler Partition rounds in the magazine. As he chambers a sixth round, a glimmer of joy flickers across Holloway's features, as if something about that place has begun to make sense. (126)

Roberts reorients himself by assuming the position of a hunter, which gives him a role to play within the house: his purpose is to hunt his prey. Thus, Roberts constructs a power dynamic between his self and his prey, which serves to re-establish his dominance. Pushed to the brink of annihilation, Holloway Roberts enacts defensive measures that attempt to reclaim his place in the world. Reconstituting his self as a hunter gives Roberts a sense of direction within the labyrinth, which seems to make the labyrinth comprehensible. In other words, Holloway finds a way to take care of the world once again by identifying as a hunter. However, this re-inscription into space only perpetuates his disorientation and results in a near-fatal wound in one of his team members: believing Hook to be the creature responsible for the growl, Roberts shoots Hook, almost killing him (Danielewski 126).

This is where the uncanny returns us: to a state of existence that cannot be controlled in the ways we formerly assumed. Holloway illustrates the drastic effects of this return through a representation of anxiety which is found in inertia. Completely lost within the labyrinth, unable to move, the dark isolates Holloway. In this moment, he begins to recite his identity over and over to himself and the camera that he possesses:

> By the time he begins to video tape his final hours, he has already recognized the complete hopelessness of the situation. Repeating his identity seems the only mantra that offers any consolation: "Holloway Roberts. Born in Menomonie, Wisconsin. Bachelor's from U. Mass." It is almost as if he believes preserving his identity on video tape can somehow hold onto what he is powerless to prevent: those endless contours of darkness stealing the Holloway from himself. "I'm Holloway Roberts," he insists. (334)

Trapped in the stasis brought on by the house, Roberts is completely estranged from the world to the point that his identity is threatened. It is important to note that Zampano describes Holloway's statement as an insistence because it accentuates his struggle to maintain his identity. However, when Holloway disappears from the text, it can be said that the text thematizes Heidegger's argument that "uncanniness is the fundamental kind of being-in-the-world, although it is covered in everydayness" (266). The house strips the familiarity/everydayness from Holloway's existence by forbidding his extension into space. Failing to extend into space necessarily makes it impossible to take care of the world, which leaves Holloway face to face with the essential uncanniness or "lostness" of existence: "the call of conscience, existentially understood, first makes known what was simply asserted before: uncanniness pursues Dasein and threatens its self-forgetful lostness" (267). *House of Leaves* treats the pursuit of uncanniness as a game of cat and mouse held in the labyrinth: the uncanny can be said to be the growl that Holloway believes is chasing him throughout the shifting walls of the house. Furthermore, the text allows the uncanny to catch up with the subject by rendering Roberts inert, and this confrontation culminates with him literally becoming lost in the novel.

Anxiety is at the heart of Holloway's experience within the house: he discovers the anxiety of existence deep within the labyrinth because uncanniness robs him of the ability to take care of the world. In other words, if Holloway and his team find themselves "at home" in their explorations, "anxiety […] fetches [them] back out of [their] entangled absorption in the 'world'" (Heidegger 182). However, anxiety is not only a symptom of becoming spatially disoriented within the world: "anxiousness is a fundamental mode of being-in-the-world" (182). The essential quality of anxiety must be understood as a specific kind of what Heidegger calls attunement: "*in attunement lies existentially a disclosive submission to the world out of which things that matter can be encountered*" (134). Attunement discloses things that matter to us simply through our emotional responses to our surroundings. Thus, one's integration into the world depends on the emotional reactions he or she has toward different spaces and objects within those spaces: "When we see the 'world' in an unsteady and wavering way in accordance with our moods, what is at hand shows itself in its specific worldliness […]" (134). However, anxiety is not simply a mood: it is an overarching condition that governs our existence in the world. Thus, anxiety is a feeling that resides at the core of existence. As previously stated, *House of Leaves* directly emphasizes the relationship between the uncanny and anxiety: "In anxiety one feels <u>uncanny.</u> Here the peculiar indefiniteness of that which Dasein finds itself alongside in anxiety, comes proximally to expression: the 'nothing and nowhere'" (25). Associating the uncanny with anxiety is important because the text suggests that uncanniness creates a path upon which we return to the original anxiousness that rules being-in-the-world.

Holloway Roberts's disorientation and Heidegger's theorization of anxiety emphasize how the uncanny is founded on the process of a return. At the same time, Holloway's condition gestures towards the psychological relationship one develops with spatiality: the disorientation that he experiences causes a complete mental breakdown. Thus, while *House of Leaves* focuses on how subjects become (un)coordinated within the world, Danielewski's text also demands a consideration of the psychological relationship we construct with space as well as the spaces we construct psychologically. Always self-

aware and dangerously[34] prescriptive to the reader, Danielewski's text gestures toward the psychological characteristics that make up the interiority of space:

> As was already mentioned in Chapter III, some critics believe the house's mutations reflect the psychology of anyone who enters it. Dr. Haugeland asserts that the extraordinary absence of sensory information forces the individual to manufacture his or her own data. Ruby Dahl, in her stupendous study of space, calls the house on Ash Tree Lane "a solipsistic heightener," arguing that "the house, the halls, the room all become self – collapsing, expanding, tilting, closing, but always in perfect relation to the mental state of the individual. (165)

The above passage identifies the individualized nature of spatial interiority: understanding the interior composition of the Navidson house involves examining each person that enters its walls and how his or her disposition affects the shape of the house. Conducting such an examination would create a number of readings based on a number of different characters: Will, Karen, Tom, Billy Reston, Jed Leeder, Wax Hook, and Holloway Roberts – each character enters the space of the house and is met with an individual experience that corresponds to his or her psychological state. However, the relationship that Johnny Truant maintains with the narrative offers a more complex dynamic in relation to the actual construction of the spatial uncanny. To understand Truant's relationship with the text, we must return to the first condition offered by Freud in his theorization of the uncanny: "An uncanny experience occurs […] when repressed infantile complexes have been revived by some impression […]" ("The Uncanny" 17). In regards to Truant, repression is the phenomenon that establishes the psychological conditions of what we could call the interiority of the Navidson house. Constructing the text of "The Navidson Record" is an uncanny experience for Truant because it awakens an anxiety that he has repressed deep within his psyche. What makes Truant particularly

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[34] The danger here lies in what is essentially the general untrustworthiness of the text. *House of Leaves* is filled with false academic sources, red herrings, narrative lines that cannot be tied together, and unreliable narration. Consequently, believing any instruction on how to read *House of Leaves* from the text itself would ultimately be problematic.

important to the creation of interior space is precisely his position as the de-facto editor of Zampano's text. Truant's editorial position means that he is responsible for the construction of "The Navidson Record," which, in turn, means he is responsible for the construction of the thematic house that the manuscript represents. Truant is faced with a somewhat impossible task: to represent a space that resists representation. Piecing together the fragments of the narrative is a dynamic process: there is a story present, written by Zampano, and that story awakens something within Johnny Truant, which dictates the way that he puts the text back together. In "Repetition with a difference: Representation and the uncanny in *House of Leaves*," Laura Barrett speaks to the problems of representation that Truant faces and how they produce a sense of the uncanny: "The impossibility of pure representation – engendered by the gap between memory and event, articulation and experience – is itself uncanny, as it renders something familiar as strange through distance" (248). Barrett goes so far as to stress, "what is truly uncanny about Danielewski's novel, then, is representation in all forms, mediation whose familiarity and strangeness, clarity and obfuscation literally haunt us" (249). Consequently, the actual construction of "The Navidson Record" reflects Truant's own psychology as much as it does Zampano's original narration, and the uncanny is reflected in the return of his past. In other words, the repressed anxiety that the text awakens in Truant begins to overtake the original story created by Zampano. This is the solipsistic nature of the house, as described in the pseudo-criticism of Ruby Dahl: the representation of the Navidson house is a reflection of Truant's own experience with the uncanny.

Memory is an important link that connects spatiality to the uncanny because of the association uncanniness has with repression. In *The Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty also considers how memory contributes to the construction of space, in addition to the body:

> When I walk around my flat, the various aspects in which it presents itself to me could not possibly appear as views of one and the same thing if I did not know that each of them represents the flat seen from one spot or

> another, and if I were unaware of my movements, and of my body as
> retaining its identity through the stages of those movements. (235)

Merleau-Ponty's claim implies that memories organize space along with the perspective offered by the body. Memory coordinates space by retaining the movements of the body: "An interior space can be described not simply in terms of three dimensions but as a four-dimensional form, which critic Bruno Zevi defines as the experiences of a person moving through space" (Olsen 20). When bodies navigate space, memories of one's environment are created and stored within the mind of the subject: I see the layout of an apartment; I walk through it, and I remember the rooms and hallways and corridors. It is the memory of the apartment that creates spatial unity: if I leave one room and enter another, the former room does not disappear because I remember that it exists. However, the function of repression forces us to reconsider the way that memories effect the construction of space. Firstly, Merleau-Ponty creates a directive where new memories are formed by walking through space, and it is these new memories that pull the corners of a room together. Repression functions in an altogether different manner because it seeks to bury old memories that a subject no longer wants to remember, as opposed to creating new ones. Confronting the uncanny engages those repressed memories, calling them back to the surface of consciousness. To conceptualize the space of the uncanny, we must attempt to answer the following question: can the return of repressed memories alter and reconstruct representational conceptions of space?

The nature of what haunts Truant is essential to the theorization of uncanny space because it is his repressed past that pushes its way back to the surface of "The Navidson Record," altering its shape. *House of Leaves* stresses how subjects can augment space simply by inhabiting it: referencing Kevin Lynch's *The Image of the City*, Zampano writes, "[Environmental image, a generalized mental picture of the exterior physical world] is the product of both immediate sensation and of *the memory of past experience*, and it is used to interpret information and to guide action" (176). Zampano then elaborates on this by explaining, "Lynch's emphasis on the importance of the past allows him to introduce a certain degree of subjectivity to the question of space and more precisely architecture" (177). Here we have an elaboration on Merleau-Ponty's

contention that coordination between the body and memory shapes space. Instead of space coming into existence through the active process of mobility and remembrance, Lynch suggests that space can be altered simply by a past memory affecting the perception of space. In Freud's conceptualization, the "uncanny is that class of the terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar" ("The Uncanny" 2). Juxtaposing Lynch and Freud, we begin to see how the spatial uncanny functions: space produces uncanniness by representing the repressed past of a subject in its very structure. *House of Leaves* represents the spatial uncanny in the form of the Navidson house, and it is Truant's perspective that takes over the conception of both the house on Ash Tree Lane and the novel. The interaction conducted between Truant and the text closely mirrors the novel's own treatment of echoes. Zampano stresses the place of echoes in the text to his reader: "it is impossible to appreciate the importance of space in *The Navidson Record* without first taking into account the significance of echoes" (41). In "Nihilism and the House that Jacques Built," Will Slocombe addresses the function of echoes as "either a deconstructive deferral, slowly fading, or a nihilistic absence" (99). Slocombe elaborates on this by stating, "When the exploration of the House takes place, a deconstructive echo slowly turns into the complete absence of any defined sense of space, as the internal geographies of the house shift and become larger than the physical space that the house can actually occupy" (99). Slocombe's conception of echoes as representing absence directs us to the way in which the Navidson house is a representational vacuum. However, Slocombe's assessment fails to consider how the novel uses echoes as a mode of communication that transmits specific narrative information.

Zampano makes a distinction between two different ways of understanding echoes: "Myth makes Echo the subject of longing and desire. Physics makes Echo the subject of distance and design. Where emotion and reason are concerned both claims are accurate. And where there is no Echo there is no description of space or love. There is only silence" (41). The mythological conception is based on the myth of Echo in which she is pursued by both Pan and Zeus. However, Echo leaves their love unfulfilled, and she is punished, which "results in the total negation of Echo's body and the near negation of her voice" (41). However, as Zampano explains, "Echo is insurgent. Despite the divine

constraints imposed upon her, she still manages to subvert the gods' ruling. After all, her repetitions are far from digital, much closer to analog. Echo colours the words with faint traces of sorrow" (41). Those traces of sorrow exist in Echo's voice as it reflects back to her listener. Zampano gives an example of this when he describes how echoes function in the following exhange:

> "*Chi dara fine al gran dolore?*"
> "*L'ore.*"

The first question asks, "Who will put an end to this great sadness?" and the echoed response returns, "Passing hours" (44). Echo provides an answer by returning a response back to the original question, which illustrates a transmission of information. While the mythological conception of Echo is concerned with how sorrow is returned to a speaker, the physics-based approach concerns itself with the production of "acoustic light:" "As most people know who are versed in this century's technological effects, exact distances can be determined by timing the duration of a sound's round trip between the deflecting object and its point of origin" (47). Zampano further elaborates on this by stating that animals with sonar capabilities create "acoustic touch" via the construction of "extremely accurate acoustic images" (47). Much like the mythical conception, acoustic light and acoustic touch are notions concerned with the return of information through the movement of echoes back and forth between a point of origin and an external object. The transmission of information carried out by echoes can be applied to how we theorize the uncanny return of Truant's repressed memories. As the editor of "The Navidson Record," Truant is an origin point of narrative information, and it can be said that he projects sounds into the representational space of the novel as he compiles the text. However, those "sounds" are not audible in nature. Rather, the "sounds" are indicative of a symbolic projection that crystalizes his repressed history into the space of the text, which transforms the house into a reflection of his own repression.

However, Danielewski's text complicates the notion of echoes by instituting a third dimension to the transmission of information, and he does so by using the materiality of the text. The need for a third dimension stems from the fact that, for the majority of the

novel, Truant fails to achieve any direct understanding or epiphany that will help shed light onto the anxiety he experiences. However, this does not mean that there is no information in the narrative that can be collected and used to gain insight into the nature of his anxiousness. The responsibility of piecing together the information that could help contextualize Truant's anxiety falls upon the reader and the process of interpretation, which is a process the text does not take lightly: "It cannot be forgotten that the problem posed by exhaustion---a result of labor---is an inextricable part of any encounter with a sophisticated maze. In order to escape then, we have to remember we cannot ponder all paths but must decode only those necessary to get out" (115).

The density of Zampano's story, Truant's interventions and digressions, the Editor's sporadic amendments, and the information within the thickly compiled appendices constantly disrupt a linear reading of the novel. It is virtually impossible to state definitively what the novel is "about," which story is primary, or even whether the appendices provide necessary or unnecessary narrative information.[35] Thus, the question of when the novel ends is equally as difficult to answer. The story's chaos necessarily affects the reader, and he or she is forced to construct a vague and tenuous pathway out of the text. It is obvious that the material structure adopted by the novel is a labyrinth, and it is the labyrinthine maze that the text attempts to reproduce typographically. Reading *House of Leaves* is akin to navigating a narrative labyrinth: early in the novel, Zampano directs the reader to the fact that to find a way out of the text one interpretative thread must be followed because "anyone lost within must recognize that no one, not even god or an Other, comprehends the entire maze and so therefore can offer a definitive answer" (115). If the text itself is the labyrinth, and the labyrinth is essentially unknowable, as Zampano states, then it is necessary for the reader to select narrative information and filter specific features of the text so as to forge some kind of meaning. In "Rescuing Interpretation with Mark Z. Danielewski: The Genre of Scholarship in *House of Leaves*," Steven Belletto argues that the text praises the function of interpretation: "By including a

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[35] In "Return to the beginning: *House of Leaves* by Mark Danielewski," Sudha Shastri attends to the implacable sense of the story by illustrating the "complex issue" of locating how or where the novel actually begins (87).

range of scholarly approaches in particular, the novel legitimates various acts of interpretation that have seemed acceptable by the academy, and yet authorizes none of them" (116). While there is certainly merit to Belletto's argument, there is a danger built into interpreting the text, and that danger is interpretation itself: desiring a way to piece together clues in an effort to tie up the narrative strands can lead to a kind of anxious mode of reading where everything in the text becomes a possible clue, a potentially synthesizable piece of information necessary to construct a pathway out of Danielewski's novel. The continual work of the reader is architectural in so far as it reconfigures the materiality of the text to make sense of Truant's anxiety. However, it is also architectural in the way that it threatens to perpetuate the structural integrity of the labyrinth. Oversaturating a reading with too many clues merely builds more twists and turns, corners and dead ends that further obscure the possibility of escaping the house with any sort of meaning.

And yet we cannot ignore the echoes that travel between Truant, the space of the text, and the reader, which transmit narrative information that maps out the anxiety that surrounds "The Navidson Record." Regarding the spatial uncanny, the point of origin is Johnny Truant: in each moment that he intercedes in the text, when those lengthy footnotes disrupt Zampano's story, he sends out narrative information that echoes back to his repressed past. However, the information that Truant projects out into the space of the novel returns to the reader, as opposed to himself, because it is the reader that can organize a narrative path that leads back to Truant's anxiety. To be clear: echoes (as a metaphor for narrative construction) begin with Truant, reverberate in the space of the text, and are then organized by the reader who can identify the potential meaning held in each echo.

Throughout the entire course of the novel, Truant describes being pursued by a formless anxiety, and his work on "The Navidson Record" translates that anxiety on the surface of the narrative. First, Truant experiences the uncanny due to his work with "The Navidson Record:"

> A moment comes where suddenly everything seems impossibly far and
> confused, my sense of self derealized & and depersonalized, the
> disorientation so severe I actually believe---and let me tell you it is an
> intensely strange instance of belief---that this terrible sense of relatedness
> to Zampano's work implies something that just can't be, namely that this
> thing has created me; not me unto it, but now it unto me, where I am
> nothing more than the matter of some other voice, intruding through the
> folds of what even now lies there agape, possessing me with histories I
> should never recognize as my own; inventing me, defining me […] (326)

Truant describes a dynamic encounter with the uncanny that, at first, de-realizes his sense
of self before reconstituting his being as something unfamiliar. Triangulating Freud,
Jentsch, and Schelling, Vidler stresses how the uncanny is capable of derealization: "For
Freud, 'unhomeliness' was more than a simple sense of not belonging; it was the
fundamental propensity of the familiar to turn on its owners, suddenly to become
defamiliarized, derealized, as if in a dream" (7). In "Exploring the Architecture of
Narrative in *House of Leaves*," Caroline Hagood suggests:

> as a writer, Truant's awareness of [the limitations of his editorial work]
> also causes him to realize that there must be a larger external picture that
> his inner life does not allow him to absorb […] Truant has a sense that the
> story he is piecing together himself is but a fragment of a larger narrative
> hovering just beyond his mind's reach. (94)

Extending that view, Josh Toth argues in "Healing Postmodern America: Plasticity and
Renewal in Danielewski's *House of Leaves*":

> Although it may seem to, *House of Leaves* does not revel even more
> gleefully in the postmodern conviction that all has been lost in an infinite
> maze (or labyrinth) of sliding signifiers. Rather, and as a representative
> instance of what seems to be coming after postmodernism […] *House of
> Leaves* works to initiate a period of recovery, but a period of recovery
> without recovery. Or, put it differently, it initiates a very sincere process

of recovery that (because it follows postmodernism) knows that recovery can never be final or complete. (194)

Together, Hagood and Tosh illustrate how Truant's editorial work, piecing fragments of the story together, represents a process of recovery. In one sense, Truant attempts to recover the text and the meaning that eludes him. Furthermore, I argue that the process of recovering the text is translated into the process of recovering his own past, which, again, cannot ever be complete. Certainly there are a number of narrative fragments that could contain an infinite amount of meaning within "The Navidson Record," but the sense of something lying just beyond the reach of Truant's comprehension is much more intimate in nature than Hagood suggests. Coming into proximity with the "The Navidson Record" puts Truant into a relationship with the uncanny, and he facilitates this relationship by writing himself into the narrative and re-imaging the Navidson house in the reflection of his own history. Furthermore, Truant has a spatial reaction to anxiety, which is brought on by the uncanniness felt in Zampano's writing: "I checked to make sure my door was locked. Returned a second later to put on the chain. I need more locks. My heart started hammering. I retreated to the corner of my room but that didn't help […] Something was approaching. I could hear it outside" (150). The "it" that Truant describes is precisely the formless haunting that pursues him – the anxiety that will not let up. Consequently, Truant attempts to convert his apartment into a fortress to protect himself from anxiety. However, even his apartment comes undone by the anxiety produced by the text: "As a precaution, I've also nailed a number of measuring tapes along the floor and crisscrossed a few of them up and down the walls. That way I can tell for sure if there are any shifts. So far the dimensions of my room remain true to the mark" (296). Zampano's narrative clearly produces Truant's simultaneous need and failure to control space, which is mirrored in his editorial duties: the task of compiling the text produces the desperate need for "space, light and some kind of clarity" to compensate for the text's many "convolutions, […] incomplete suggestions, [and] maddening departures…" (179).

Truant's relationship with anxiety can be contextualized in the Heideggerian sense of the word:

> Anxiety "does not know" what it is anxious about. But "nowhere" does not mean nothing; rather, region in general lies therein, and disclosedness of the world in general for essentially spatial being-in. Therefore, what is threatening cannot come closer from a definite direction within nearness, it is already "there"---and yet it is nowhere. (180)

Anxiety is perpetual and always already present. But its amorphous nature means that the root of anxiousness remains hidden. Like Holloway, Truant experiences the essential character of anxiety in a spatial manner. However, Truant mediates anxiety by trying to take control of space so as to protect himself from the anxiousness he feels around him. Holloway, on the other hand, experiences anxiety as a result of spatial rules breaking down. However, the uncanny precipitates the individual experiences that Holloway and Truant have with anxiety. Furthermore, each experience has an object that can be linked as a cause to their anxiousness. Again, for Holloway, the object that ushers in the uncanny and the anxiety that it encompasses is the Navidson house. For Truant, one can use the logic of echoes to contextualize his extreme anxiety as a symptom of the uncanny return of his mother, Pelafina Leivre. As a child, Truant experienced the loss of his mother who was institutionalized in the Three Attic Whalestoe Institute after she attempted to strangle him. Having repressed both the violence and loss brought on by his mother, Truant has placed Pelafina within the latency of his consciousness, and Truant's editorial work, consequently, places Pelafina within the latency of the text.[36] When considering the subject who occupies a place within the home, Henri Lefebvre argues that a specific neurosis guides his or her perspective: "The rational neurosis of the suburban householder is echoed through by the neurotic rationality of the other [...]" (*Everyday Life in the Modern World* 122). Lefebvre's argument helps to explain how Truant's experience within the house on Ash Tree Lane is configured by the return of his mother: she is the other with which he must contend, the cause of his neurosis. In "What Has

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[36] In "The A-Mazing House: The Labyrinth as Theme and Form in Mark Z. Danielewski's *House of Leaves*," Natalie Hamilton argues that the labyrinth functions as the central metaphor that links Truant and his mother: "Considering the Whalestoe letters as an entry point into Truant's labyrinthine psyche, readers are again reminded of Faris's observation that the labyrinth is often guarded by a woman. In keeping with this tradition, Truant's past is guarded by the figure of his institutionalized mother" (8).

Made Me? Locating Mother in the Textual Labyrinth of Mark Z. Danielewski's 'House of Leaves,'" Katharine Cox, too, focuses on the relationship between Truant and his mother from a psychoanalytic perspective: "The action of gathering and critiquing Zampano's writings leads Truant to evaluate his life and begin, unintentionally, to approach the repressed memories of Pelafina […]" (6). While Cox's analysis is convincing in the ties that she draws between Truant and Pelafina, her work suffers from a tendency of being too conclusive. For instance, Cox keeps gesturing towards a "secret" that exists in the novel that "Truant and Pelafina [confront] and finally [resolve] in the space of the labyrinth" (6). The problem with this statement is that Cox never directly reveals the nature of that secret. Furthermore, *House of Leaves* is a text that resists handing over any conclusive answers to the questions it poses throughout the plot. However, Cox's essay aptly identifies how "The Navidson Record" enacts the uncanny return of Truant's mother.

To state that Pelafina exists in the latency of the text is to state that she exists in the narratological and typographical codes created by Truant. These codes transgress the space of the footnotes and enter into the field of the "primary" story. Thus, Pelafina's presence in the text comes in the form of an echo that reverberates back and forth from the unconscious and conscious spaces of the novel. However, without the presence of the reader, such information would remain disconnected. "The Navidson Record" is the site of anxiety for Truant: it is the space that elicits anxiety, and it is the space in which he represents that anxiety. Truant's presence on the periphery of the "The Navidson Record" reshapes Zampano's text so that the typographical house at the center of the novel reflects his own anxiety over his mother. However, connecting Truant's anxiety to the return of his mother necessitates that we reconfigure the term anxiety because an unidentifiable anxiousness no longer afflicts him. Rather, Pelafina represents the root of his anxiety. Contextualizing Truant's anxiety raises an issue in both Freud's and Heidegger's work on the uncanny, which is in need of reconciliation, specifically the difference between anxiety and fear. The original Freudian concept of the uncanny bears a relationship with fear:

> [The uncanny] undoubtedly belongs to all that is terrible – to all that
> arouses dread and creeping horror; it is equally certain, too, that the word
> is not always used in a clearly definable sense, so that it tends to coincide
> with whatever excites dread […] One is curious to know what this peculiar
> quality is which allows us to distinguish as "uncanny" certain things
> within the boundaries of what is "fearful." ("The Uncanny" 1)

While Freud does not explicitly associate the uncanny with fear, he does argue that
uncanniness has its origins within what is fearful. As stated earlier in this chapter, Freud
also configures the uncanny as a phenomenon that produces a recurrent mode of anxiety
that bears a close connection to fear. Classifying the uncanny as a type of fearful anxiety
that is so potent it operates as its own affect, independent from other emotional
sensations, is precisely how Heidegger defines anxiousness as a fundamental condition of
existence. However, Freud emphasizes that the *unheimlich* is made manifest in the fear of
the dead:

> Most likely our fear still contains the old belief that the deceased becomes
> the enemy of the survivor and wants to carry him off to share his new life
> with him […] we might rather inquire what has become of the repression,
> that necessary condition for enabling primitive feeling to recur in the
> shape of an uncanny effect. ("The Uncanny" 14)

The fear of the dead is so easily attributed to the theorization of the uncanny because it
can stand as a metaphor of repression: the return of the repressed past is symbolized as
the return of the dead.

Heidegger, on the other hand, admits that the sensations of fear and anxiety are intimately
related: "we designate as anxiety what is really fear, and call fear what has the character
of anxiety" (179). When attempting to differentiate these two sensations, Heidegger
qualifies fear in the following way: "Our interpretation of fear as attunement showed that
what we fear is always a detrimental innerworldly being, approaching nearby from a
definite region, which may remain absent" (180). Earlier in *Being and Time*, Heidegger

establishes a criterion to define what it means to be fearful. The fifth characteristic of his definition states:

> Something may be harmful in the highest degree and may even be constantly coming nearer but if it is still far off it remains veiled in its fearsome nature. As something approaches in nearness, however, what is harmful is threatening, it can get you, and yet perhaps not. In approaching, this 'it can and yet in the end may not' gets worse. It is fearsome, we say. (136-137)

By Heidegger's definition, fear is spatial in nature: it is something that approaches and becomes more fearsome as it comes nearer to us. Stating that fear is capable of traversing space suggests that it would come in the form of an object, force, or entity that embodies that fear. In "'There's Nothing So Black as the Inferno of the Human Mind': Infernal Phenomenal Reference and Trauma in Mark Z. Danielewski's *House of Leaves*," Conor Dawson offers a convincing argument that arranges Danielewski's text through the analogy of katabasis, which "models the experience of psychological trauma on the archetypal descent into hell, or *katabasis*" (284). As Dawson moves through his argument, he states that Truant's repression is established through specific confrontations: "For Johnny, the trip entails confronting repressed specters of his past as they return as uncanny composite figures" (288). These composite figures are precisely objects of fear: identifiable figures tied to the return of the uncanny. In *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, Freud distinguishes between two forms of anxiousness: "neurotic" anxiety, which is tied to the libido and the sexual characteristics that it produces, and "objective" anxiety, which is connected to an "external danger" (117). This external danger, as Freud describes, is connected to an object of fear: "what is feared, the object of anxiety, is always the emergence of a traumatic factor […]" (129). Freud's theorization of the uncanny is also associated with some form of fearsome object: as previously stated, dead bodies are feared because of their uncanny relationship to repression. However, Freud points to haunted houses, doppelgangers, ghosts, and madmen as things that we fear because they bear the mark of the uncanny. Thus, the uncanny is associated with tangible objects and space. However, associating the uncanny

with an object complicates both Freud's and Heidegger's notions of the uncanny as a symptom of anxiety because anxiousness cannot be placed.

This entire chapter has been focusing on two explicit objects that produce the uncanny: the Navidson house and "The Navidson Record." *House of Leaves* provides the narrative space in which we can conceptualize the uncanny as being inclusive of both fear and anxiety. For instance, an object that we fear can produce uncanniness. However, if that fear remains unspecified, if we do not know *why* we are afraid of a particular object, the object produces anxiety as a secondary, yet equal, symptom. For example, the uncanniness brought on by the text places Truant back into close proximity with Pelafina, and, as the memory of his mother approaches, his anxiety is transformed into fear. In other words, the uncanny takes its shape in the return of Pelafina. The spatiality of the text establishes her nearness: her presence is given through echoes that travel between pieces of narrative information, contextualizing moments of confusion, as they bounce back and forth in the story. Jessica Pressman acknowledges how narrative information is re-contextualized via the relationship between the Whalestoe letters found in the appendix of *House of Leaves* and *The Whalestoe Letters*, which was published by Danielewski separately in 2000: "*The Whalestoe Letters* shows how the arrangement and presentation of information affects its reception and meaning" (116). While Pressman is correct in her assessment of how Pelafina's appendix is contextualized in new meaning with the release of *The Whalestoe Letters* (which contains seven new letters and a foreword from an employee at the mental hospital), the relationship between the appendix and *House of Leaves* also illustrates how the novel's own previously acquired narrative information is re-contextualized with new meaning. For example, Truant describes a particular sensation that overwhelms him as he prepares himself for a fight:

> I stood there tingling all over, a dangerous clarity returning to me, ancient bloodlines colluding under what I now imagine must have been the very aegis of Mars, my fingers itching to weld into themselves, while directly beneath my sternum a hammer struck a timeless bell of war, a call to arms, though all of it still held back by what? Words I guess, or rather a voice, though whose I have no clue. (87)

At first, Truant's statement seems like benign nonsense that is symptomatic of a nameless deja-vu-like experience. However, the language in this passage and the question that Truant poses echo back to the reader later in the novel. Specifically, Pelafina's letters to Truant from The Three Attic Whalestoe Institute, located in Appendix II-E, give context and new meaning to Truant's statement. In a letter dated October 15, 1983, Pelafina tries to dissuade eleven-year-old Johnny from physically fighting his new foster parent, Henry: "You come from a long line of aggressors […] Indeed, if you ever decide to design some crest for yourself, you would find it impossible to accurately do so without incorporating at least some of the accouterments of Mars with the consequent symbology of carnage and bloodshed" (594). Pelafina then concludes her letter by stating, "I've little doubt your current lust for physical engagement is the result of this questionable genetic bequeathal. Do what you must, but realize greater strength lies in self-control. The more you learn to command your impulses, the more your potential will grow" (594). Pelafina's letter echoes Truant's words back to the reader, inflected with new meaning: his mother's plea to exercise restraint answers his question as to whose voice he hears because it is Pelafina's words that he cannot place. Furthermore, he takes on the voice of Pelafina by repeating the very same words she once used to describe him (ancient bloodlines/the lineage of aggressors and the Aegis/accouterments of Mars). The echo created in these two moments of the text illustrates how Truant begins to map his memory onto the novel, unconsciously, by pulling Pelafina out from the appendices and placing her within "The Navidson Record."

The interplay between Truant's statement and Pelafina's letter, which is a relationship between narrative and appendix, is emblematic of what Freud describes as "screen memories":

> The indifferent memories of childhood owe their existence to a process of displacement: they are substitutes, in [mnemic] reproduction, for other impressions which are really significant. […] As the indifferent owe their preservation not to their own content but to an associative relation between their content and another which is repressed, they have some

claim to be called 'screen memories', the name by which I have described them. (83)

The voice that Truant cannot place is precisely the memory of some indifferent content that screens the repressed material of his mother's instructions and her influence over him. Linking his statement to Pelafina's letter, however, excavates the repressed information and returns it to the consciousness of the novel. Furthermore, Truant's repressed memory returns in the way that he subtly codes Pelafina into the text via what look to be mistakes or typos within the novel. For example, footnote 177 is a notation that was taken out of the text by Zampano. In reference to wandering youth, the footnote tells the reader, "For instance, youth's peripatetic travails in *The PXXXXXXX Poems*; a perfect example why errors should be hastily excised" (138). Zampano's footnote is amended with the following context given by Truant, "i.e. The Pelican Poems" (138). The omniscient Editors of the text further contextualize Truant's footnote by telling the reader that the poems can be found in Appendix II-B.[37] However, a problem exists with Truant's statement: the number of Xs in Zampano's original note do not fit the word "pelican" – it is one letter too short. In a book so concerned with semiotics, one could say that it is not entirely coincidental that "Pelafina" corresponds to the exact number of Xs. It is also important to highlight the context of footnote 177, which focuses on "youth's peripatetic travails," because it coincides with the content of Pelafina's letters to Truant and the obsessive focus that she gives to her son's constant movement from one foster home to the next. Like most narrative threads in the novel, it is difficult to tie together conclusively whether or not Pelafina directly or indirectly influences the text. However, Truant's interventions repeatedly place her in the consciousness of the story, shaping the representation of the Navidson house. The interior composition of the spatial uncanny is entirely connected to the subject located within that space, and Truant illustrates how interiority can be built from repressed memories. As I have said, Truant is tasked with reconstructing the text left unfinished by Zampano, and with that task comes the

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[37] In "What's beneath the Floorboards: Three Competing Metavoices in the Footnotes of Mark Z. Danielewski's *House of Leaves*," Michael Hemmingson offers a detailed and straightforward analysis that attempts to make sense of the three levels of narration that (dis)order Danielewski's novel.

challenge of representing a house that essentially resists representation. The solipsistic nature of the Navidson house suggests that its interiority is intrinsically vacant until someone enters it. Constructing the text produces the uncanny as well as the symptoms of anxiety and fear. Consequently, Truant fills the house with a narrative construction of uncanniness. The novel treats space as having the ability to offer material conditions that represent uncanny experience, which is seen in the way that Truant codes his mother into the text. In other words, the representation of the house conforms to the return of his mother; Truant's editorial work creates an acoustic image in the form of his mother's ghost.

Late in the text, Truant consciously acknowledges his mother and the moment that she attempted to strangle him:

> As she explained it, her thoughts at that time had entirely deteriorated. The burden of life seemed too much for her to bear and therefore, in her mind, an impossible and even horrible burden to impose upon a child, especially her own. Based on these wild ratiocinations, she gathered me up in her arms and tried to choke me. It was probably a very brief attempt. Maybe even comic. (380)

Truant reiterates Pelafina's rationalization of why she attempted to smother him, and, in doing so, he finally brings his mother to the forefront of the novel. The above description is paired with the memory of watching Pelafina being taken away to the Three Attic Whalestoe Institute, as a consequence of trying to strangle young Johnny: "I suppose I remember [my father] leading her away. At least the shape of him in the doorway. With her. All blurred and in silhouette" (380). Gesturing directly toward Pelafina, Truant begins to transition his mother into an object of fear, as opposed to a source of anxiety, because no longer does she remain an ambiguous presence in the text. At the moment right before Truant disappears from the novel, he admits to this fear as well as the influence that his mother has always had over him: "My mother is right before me now, right before you. There as the docent, as the interpreter, maybe even as this strange and tangled countryside […] She is here now. She has always been here. 'Beware,' she might

have whispered" (502). Admitting that Pelafina is a presence in the text, an entity capable of influencing the shape of the narrative, necessarily reconstitutes our conception of anxiety. As Heidegger writes, anxiety "is not encountered as something definite to be taken care of; the threat does not come from something at hand and objectively present, but rather from the fact everything at hand and objectively present absolutely has nothing more to 'say' to us" (327). For the majority of the narrative, Pelafina remains at the edge of the novel, and she is something that Truant cannot face because he does not know that she pursues him. However, the moment that Truant tells the reader that Pelafina is there in the novel, he declares that she is at hand in the text – that she speaks to him and the reader.

Furthermore, the text is also transformed into an object of Truant's fear because it houses the threat of his mother: the memories he has repressed return to him through his relationship with "The Navidson Record," and he mediates that repression through his editorial work. Thus, the space of the uncanny is still represented by Zampano's text because it returns the dread of his mother back to Truant. In other words, that thing which "ought to have been kept concealed but which has nevertheless come to light" is precisely Pelafina Lievre ("The Uncanny" 13). However, anxiety still very much exists in the text; or better put, the text still produces anxiety. Truant perpetuates the sensation of anxiety when he states, "My mother is right before me now, right before you" (502). "You" is the most important word in Truant's statement because it implies that Pelafina sits before the reader. Implicating the reader transfers the anxiety once felt by Truant to the person reading *House of Leaves*: the reader is tempted into making sense of Truant's ominous claim. Anxiety is produced in the ambiguous nature of what Truant says: where is Pelafina? How does she exist in the text? How does she shape the words that we are reading? Shifting the onus of locating Pelafina onto the reader is one way that *House of Leaves* turns the act of reading into a symptom of anxiety. The aforementioned reading that I have conducted, linking Pelafina to Truant via the codes that contain echoes of narrative information, is a product of that anxiety; I am participating in the anxiousness created by reading *House of Leaves*. The fact that Danielewski tempts the reader through Truant's claim so close to the end of the novel cannot be coincidence because receiving this information on page 502 threatens to reconfigure the meaning of the entire novel:

suddenly the reader is prompted to go back to the beginning of the book and begin a search for Pelafina.

While the aforementioned examples of Pelafina's presence in the novel speak to the anxiety of reading/interpretation, the chaotic typographical shifts that occur throughout the novel further exemplify how the novel turns the space of the text into the space of anxiousness. The typography becomes unhinged in two places within the novel: first, during the explorations of the Navidson home, conducted in the ever-shifting labyrinth; second, in the space of Pelafina's letters to Truant. During the explorations into the house, the typography clearly attempts to translate the spatiality of the labyrinth into the pages of the text. Later, these typographical aberrations transmit the decline of Pelafina's psyche through the inability to control language. Furthermore, the relationship between these two sections of the text recreates the sensation of the uncanny: the reader is confronted with the same spatial/typographical shifts in The Three Attic Whalestoe Institute letters as he or she witnessed during the explorations of the house. Pages 432 and 433 of "The Navidson Record" eerily resemble Pelafina's June 23, 1987 to September 19, 1988 letters to her son. Again, Danielewski deploys the materiality of the text by unhinging the stability of the words on the page to signify psychological madness, as opposed to merely a typographical labyrinth. After viewing the letters, the passages in "The Navidson Record" that reflect the same typographical deviation become re-contextualized as symbols of Pelafina as well. No longer are they only symbolic of a typographically represented labyrinth, but rather the labyrinth becomes a symbol of what can be read as specifically Pelafina's psyche.

Martin Brick offers a concise summation of the narrative form that unhinges the text: "The compelling textual layout facilitates an unresolved competition of authority between various narrative voices. But more obviously, on a visual level, this instability of page structure operates as a mirror of the novel's plot […]" (6). Brick's description adequately introduces the form-content relationship that dominates Danielewski's text. However, the labyrinthine topography goes beyond simply mirroring the content of the story through the text's form. Specifically, the typographical experimentation conducted in the novel pushes the way that words signify. De-stabilizing their position in the text creates

material/typographical symbols that are understood not by reading the organization of sentences. Rather, meaning is achieved by understanding the way that those sentences are (de)positioned on the page. In "Saving the Subject: Remediation in House of Leaves," N. Katherine Hayles asserts, "through innovative typography and other devices, *House of Leaves* foregrounds its materiality […]" (790). Hayles elaborates on the function of the text's materiality by stating:

> Materiality thus *emerges* from the interplay between physical attributes and semiotic components […] Something like a hermeneutic circle is thus at work here. The verbal content gives meaning to physical properties, which inflect the verbal content at the same time. The verbal and nonverbal evolve together toward emergent meanings that change dynamically as the narrative progresses. (790)

The space of the text is extremely important because of how heavily it is thematized as a house,[38] how it attempts to represent the spatial anomalies of the Navidson home, and the mental resonance it has with Truant. The content and spatial arrangements of Pelafina's letters in conjunction with the twists and turns of the house (as labyrinth) represent the interplay between what Hayles refers to as the verbal and nonverbal and how these modes of narrative communication establish collective meaning: it brings Pelafina and Truant into a shared and identifiable space. Moreover, the verbal and nonverbal elements establish the mother-son relationship through the spatialization of the uncanny in so far as Truant represents and codes his repression into the house that he inherits from Zampano.

The typography of the text serves as a deliberate effort to transpose spatial dimensions linguistically in a novel. Danielewski's experimentation with page layout translates the experience of space within the text because it mimics the disorienting effects produced by the structure of the house on Ash Tree Lane. The spatial uncanny developed by the text

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[38] Another popular critical approach to the novel is the argument that the space of the text is an analogue of digitally-based hypertext. See: Chanen, Brian W. "Surfing the Text: The digital environment in Mark Z. Danielewski's *House of Leaves*; or Hansen, Mark B.N., "The Digital Topography of Mark Z. Danielewski's *House of Leaves*.

affects the reader in more ways than simply dealing with the anxiety of interpretation. Abandoning the narrative tradition of telling a story from left to right turns the novel into the *unheimlich*: it turns the familiar space of the novel into something strange, and the reader must cope with this unfamiliarity. The simple augmentation of accepted narrative rules attempts to disorient the reader drastically, challenging his or her ability to navigate the space of the text, like those who enter the Navidson house are challenged to navigate its architecture. Spatial disorientation is accentuated by the form of the novel because it reveals the dependency the reader has on the structural organization at the level of the book. On a formal level, the typography of the novel participates within the anxiety of space by revealing the limitations or challenges posed to the reader when the structure of the text breaks down and becomes strange.

House of Leaves offers a treatment of the different architectural layers of the spatial uncanny and the interplay between physical and symbolic spaces. Together these layers work toward illustrating the dependency a subject has on his or her environment and the structures found within the world. Subjects are spatially coordinated, and they coordinate space to represent the state of their existence. The uncanny participates within these dialogues by revealing the effects of disorientation, and it gives voice to the physical and mental deterioration that occurs when the subject is faced with the impossibility of comprehending and constructing space. The spatial uncanny undermines our position in the world by calling into the question the processes we use to conceptualize space as a readable, comprehensible, and familiar phenomenon.

Chapter 6

6.   Conclusion: Considering the Spatiality of Text and Narrative

At the end of the previous chapter, I argued that Danielewski's novel converts the space of the text into the interior space of the house, which ultimately translated Johnny Truant's experience with the uncanny into architectural form. From a broader perspective, Danielewski's topographical experimentation turns the novel into a conceptual space: reading his book is likened to entering a house. In the remaining pages of this thesis, I would like to continue an examination into the spatiality of the text as it is conceived in the work of Faulkner, Auster, and Danielewski,[39] specifically in regards to how each author treats the form and function of the novel.

A novel is an object built almost entirely from words. Consequently, the space of the text is representational/symbolic in nature. However, the representational world of the text is not straightforward and can be somewhat deceptive. I would like to begin by considering Lefebvre's distinction between abstract space and absolute space. Examining Lefebvre's terms will help to understand the potential ambiguity of the novel's spatiality. Describing abstract space, Lefebvre writes:

> Homogenous in appearance (and appearance is its strength), abstract space is by no means simple. For it is both a result and a container, both produced and productive – on the one hand a representation of space (geometric homogeneity) and on the other a representational space […]. The supposed congruence of the formats of this duality serves, however, to mask its *duplicity*. For, while abstract space remains an arena of

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[39] Admittedly, conducting such an examination would seem to exclude *Apocalypse Now* from the concluding section of my thesis. However, I will incorporate Coppola's film into these remaining pages, and I will argue that his narrative is essential to understanding how these authors conceive of the text and the practice of reading.

> practical action, it is also an ensemble of images, signs, and symbols.
> (288)

The novel is a deceptively homogenous space: a composite whole, the book presents itself as a singular artifact, and in a practical sense it is such an object. However, the novel is duplicitous in nature, and this duplicity is a result of two distinct features that relate to the spatiality of the novel. First, the fictional world that exists between the front and back covers of the book is composed of a multilayered narrative, which is pre-established by the author. Second, the spatial practice of the text adds yet another layer to a narrative, which occurs as the reader attempts to understand the text through his or her interpretation. At its core, the novel establishes its plurality through representational space because both author and reader create layers of story and narrative via symbolic signs and symbols. It is necessary then for me to make a distinction between my own reading of abstract space and Lefebvre's understanding of the term. Again, Lefebvre envisions abstract space as a relationship between representational space and representations of space. However, I argue that the specific context of the novel demands that we think of abstract space as a relationship between representational space and spatial practice. The abstraction of a novel occurs at the level of its representational space:[40] as I have previously noted, the author establishes his or her multilayered narrative, and the reader can then augment that narrative through his or her interpretative acts. The interpretative process of the reader is a form of spatial practice because the act of reading is the primary way that one navigates a text. Specifically, I will argue that spatial practice offers a clearer understanding of how the representational space of the text is both "produced" and "productive" (*The Production of Space* 288).

First, the author's pre-given, representationally-based world is the produced space of a novel. Regarding narrative theory, Roland Barthes's concepts of the readerly and writerly texts can help to understand what the produced space of a novel means. Although

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[40] I should note that the novel can be associated with representations of space: like the urban planners, mathematicians, scientists, and other pragmatists that Lefebvre associates with representations of space, an author can be seen as an architect of sorts because he or she constructs the space/world of the novel. However, the novel's essential representational/symbolic quality demands a consideration of the reader and spatial practice.

Barthes's *S/Z* is an older work, his theorizations on readerly and writerly texts offer a basic argument that helps to understand specific forms of narrative. Regarding the nature of readerly and writerly texts, Barthes argues that the readerly text creates a passive experience in which the "reader is thereby plunged into a kind of idleness […] instead of functioning himself, instead of gaining access to the magic of the signifier to the pleasure of writing, he is left with no more than the poor freedom either to accept or reject the text" (*S/Z* 4). In Barthes view, the author's pre-given symbolic world/representational world pacifies the reader. The text has already been produced, written, and the reader has no access to the signifier, no ability to re-write the text. In essence, the readerly text is a representational space that is entirely produced, a space that the reader inhabits simply by reading. However, a text can also be productive specifically when a reader is able to augment it through his or her hermeneutic work. To be clear, the reader becomes productive by creating and adding another layer of narrative to the original, pre-given world of the novel. In other words, production is hermeneutic because one's interpretation gives meaning to the text as soon as one begins to understand what the text means to him or her.

Barthes explains this hermeneutic production in regards to the concept of a writerly text, which allows the reader to become a "producer of the text" (*S/Z* 4). To produce a text, to re-write it, a reader exercises his or her interpretation: "to interpret a text is not to give it a […] meaning, but on the contrary to appreciate what *plural* constitutes it […] In this ideal text, the networks are many and interact […] this text is a galaxy of signifiers, not a structure of signifieds […]" (*S/Z* 5). To be clear, the writerly text is not one that allows a reader to create his or her own original meaning. Rather, it is a text that allows the reader the freedom to organize the multiple elements present in the text, which can produce a more comprehensive understanding of the novel. The distinctions made by Barthes between these two types of texts help to differentiate how a novel offers a representational space that is both produced and productive. However, plurality is not always so clearly separated from the readerly text. Whether passively read or actively interpreted, novels are composed of dynamic representational worlds. Though a produced, pre-given world might work to tell one story, many narrative elements (plot lines, characters, motifs, themes) coalesce to tell that story. In other words, the act of

reading, separate from interpretation - if there is such a thing - is always the psychic organization of multiple symbolic/representational elements contained in a novel. I argue that the deceptive nature of the novel is a symptom of its status as a homogenous, singular object because that singularity masks the plurality of its representational narrative. Therefore, the novel is both homogenous and abstract at the same time: it is a singular object that contains a representational space composed of various narrative components. Thus, I wish to consider the state of narrative as Faulkner, Auster, Coppola, and Danielewski treat it so as to identify some specific spatial aspects of the novel.

The etymological root of the word narrative means to know. Thus, to approach narrative as a representational space is to approach the transmission of knowledge – the communication of specific narrative information: "narratives are the product of agency, they are the means by which someone communicates a story to someone else. Narratives represent their stories, and do so in a special way characteristic of communication between agents" (Currie 1). In *Narrative Dimensions of Philosophy: A Semiotic Exploration in the Work of Merleau-Ponty, Kierkegaard and Austin*, Sky Marsen offers a brief cross-section of the layers of narrative and the agents responsible for the construction and communication of a story:

> In the analytical paradigm that involves the author, the agent, and the narrator, the following relations can be traced. The author carries implications of control of consequence (s/he knows what will happen); the agent carries the implications of freedom to act within an established environment (the 'given' in existentialist terminology); finally, the narrator carries implications of communicating represented action. (28)

Adding to Currie's assessment, Marsen argues that the agents of narrative are connected to specific levels of control: the author is omniscient and knows the entire trajectory of the story; the agent (or character)[41] has the freedom to act within the field of action

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[41] Another way to interpret the word "agent," as Marsen uses it, is that the word refers to the reader, and his or her interpretative action is the freedom he or she exercises within the field of the author's story.

created by the author; and the narrator is tasked with transmitting the narrative to the reader. Currie and Marsen offer a preliminary understanding of narrative that is shaped around the communication and control of a story, which demonstrates that narrative is connected to the telling a story. Treating the novel as the space where a story is controlled necessarily assumes that narrative is a product of knowledge: traditionally speaking, for one to be able to tell a story, he or she has to be able to know the plot, the sequence of events, and the meaning derived from the story's action. However, the problem with this definition is that it presupposes that all narratives can be competently told. The works of Faulkner, Coppola, Auster, and Danielewski challenge these presuppositions by organizing narrative as something fundamentally unstable and disconnected from knowledge. I argue that the particular challenges posed by these authors and their work gesture toward specific complications between story and narrative. Furthermore, the complications between story and narrative are treated specifically as particular forms of mental deterioration. In one sense, I mean that the texts within my thesis treat the construction of a narrative as a process that can be driven by either a specific neurosis or a specific psychosis. In another sense, I am gesturing toward the ways that these authors treat neurosis and psychosis as becoming manifest through the telling of a story. Ultimately, I look to suggest that the abstraction of narrative can be understood through the spatiality of the text and its relationships with madness, paranoia, compulsive repetition, and anxiety.

In *Narrative Discourse*, Gerard Genette gestures towards the complexity that is built into the word *narrative*. Specifically, Genette argues that narrative is a term that incorporates at least three forms of meaning: the "narrative statement," the narrative of "successive events," and the narrative that "consists of someone recounting something" (25-26). At the outset of his essay, Genette organizes his understanding of narrative in the following way:

> I propose […] to use the word *story* for the signified or narrative content […] to use the word *narrative* for the signifier, statement, discourse or narrative text itself, and to use the word *narrating* for the producing

> narrative action and, by extension, the whole of the real or fictional
> situation in which that action takes place. (27)

Genette's distinction between story, narrative, and narrating helps to clarify the potential difficulties the can arise when attempting to structure narrative. Following Genette's logic, the term narrative is a text that holds a story that is narrated by a particular agent. In other words, narrating a series of events creates the story held within a narrative. Consequently, we are tempted to place these narratological elements into a hierarchy that privileges the narrator and the responsibility of telling the events of a story.

Broadly speaking, *House of Leaves* is a novel that treats the story as something that cannot be contained by the narrator. As much as Truant's experience with Zampano's text produces crisis and anxiety, both the narrative and the story too are in states of crisis. For instance, "The Navidson Record" is an accumulation of film transcripts, letters, scholarly commentary (both fictionalized and real), photographic exhibits, sheet music, poetry, collages, various glossaries; and the language of the text cycles in and out of English, German, Latin, Aramaic, braille, and Greek. Furthermore, and possibly most important, the entirety of "The Navidson Record" is based on Zampano's retelling of a documentary film that he could not have possibly seen due to his blindness. Truant tells the reader in his introduction to the text, "Well that, of course, was Zampano's greatest ironic gesture; love of love written by the broken hearted; love of life written by the dead: all this language of light, film and photography, and he hadn't seen a thing since the mid-fifties. He was blind as a bat" (xxi). Zampano consciously gestures toward the issue of containability when he admits, "Much like its subject, *The Navidson Record* itself is also uneasily contained – whether by category or lexicon. If finally catalogued as a gothic tale, contemporary urban folkmyth, or merely a ghost story, as some have called it, the documentary will still, sooner or later, slip the limits of any one of those genres" (3). Additionally, *House of Leaves* impedes the spatial practice of the reader because of the problems produced when trying to understand a novel that self-admittedly does not understand itself. Moreover, Zampano is once again aware of the compromised state of "The Navidson Record" when he describes the controversy that surrounds the film's authenticity: "While enthusiasts and detractors will continue to empty entire dictionaries

attempting to describe or deride it, "authenticity" still remains the word most likely to stir debate" (3). Combining the struggle to represent the story with the question of its authenticity as a documentary, it is clear that "The Navidson Record" struggles greatly to tell and contain an authentic story through the medium of the novel. Consequently, I argue that the practice of reading and interpretation is turned into a form of literary anxiety by the fragmented state of the story.

Before I elaborate on the possible anxieties that are produced when reading *House of Leaves*, it is necessary to acknowledge that anxiety is but one possible response that a reader might have when reading Danielewski's text. For instance, there is a great deal of pleasure produced by the narrative fragmentation that occurs within the story. There is a certain level of enjoyment inherent to piecing the text together, linking narrative clues, and reorganizing the narrative so that it is aligned with one's particular interpretation. *House of Leaves*, in this sense, is seductive in nature because the disparate narratological fragments invite, goad, and tempt the reader into restructuring the novel through its characters and events. Enjoyment is a result of the reader establishing clarity within the story, which is a product of constructing an interpretation that can offer resolutions to the narrative problems that exist within the novel. How then do we reconcile the enjoyment of the text with the anxiety that it can produce? To answer this question is to understand that *House of Leaves* treats enjoyment and anxiety as two sensations that are intimately linked. Specifically, anxiety, as a response to the narrative, is possible through the presence of enjoyment: if enjoyment is produced when a reader establishes an interpretation that makes sense of the novel, anxiety is produced at the limits of that interpretation. In other words, enjoyment is converted into frustration and anxiety when a particular interpretation breaks down. As I stated in the last chapter, *House of Leaves* is not a text that will allow a reader to establish a conclusive reading of the novel. Thus, any interpretation will inevitably reach a limit: there will always be pieces of the narrative that cannot be organized hermeneutically, that refuse to be synthesized into a reading, that remain incomprehensible to the reader. These narrative limitations can cause the reader's interpretative thread to disintegrate, forcing him or her to look for another possible way of reading of the text. Anxiety is possible because the breakdown of interpretation constantly reminds the reader that his or her efforts cannot definitively

organize the novel. Ultimately, the relationship between enjoyment and anxiety can be qualified as being a system of checks and balances: the anxiety produced by the text is balanced by the enjoyment that occurs as a result of the reader's initial interpretative acts; and the enjoyment is checked by the limitations placed on interpretation and the subsequent anxiety that can occur when a reading remains incomplete.

Moving forward in this conclusion, I want to focus specifically on the ways in which *House of Leaves* establishes the space of the text in the image of anxiety. Anxiety proliferates *House of Leaves*: it is not simply a product of Johnny Truant's confrontation with the uncanny, but rather anxiousness can seep into the reader and the process of reading. Specifically, *House of Leaves* interrupts interpretation and turns hermeneutics against the reader. However, this is merely one way that *House of Leaves* takes issue with the function of understanding a story: the inability to interpret the text conclusively and the subsequent anxiety that is produced are symptomatic of the overall narratological problems built into the novel. In other words, the narrators of *House of Leaves* are unable to narrate the story in a controlled and defined manner, and it is their inability to do so that, in great part, leads to the reader's anxiety. Danielewski's text, then, can be said to disrupt the traditional function of narrative by converting the space of storytelling into the space of anxiety. To be specific, the majority of the anxiousness produced in *House of Leaves* is a product of spatial abstraction. Elaborating on the homogeneity of abstract space, Lefebvre writes, "Abstract space *is not* homogenous; it simply *has* homogeneity as its goal, its orientation, its 'lens'. And, indeed, it renders homogenous. But in itself it is multiform" (*The Production of Space* 287). As a representational space, a novel is abstract insofar as it too masks its multiform, multivalent nature behind a homogenous or unitary surface presentation: again, from the outside, the book is seen to be a singular object, but its pages contain a multilayered representational space. *House of Leaves* unmasks the singular and unified nature of a novel by suggesting that it is composed of surfeit storylines (for example, Truant's, Pelafina's, and the deleted Minotaur passages) that lie just underneath the "primary" narrative of "The Navidson Record." Thus, *House of Leaves* demonstrates the inherent anxiety that is built into the abstract space of the text by revealing the complexity involved with comprehending narrative structures and the "simple" act of reading a story.

Lefebvre, too, considers the production of anxiety within abstract space, questioning its exact nature: "Anxiety in face of what? In face of the shattered figures of a world in pieces, in face of a disjointed space, and in face of a pitiless 'reality' that cannot be distinguished from its own abstractions, from its own analysis, because it 'is' already an abstraction […]" (*The Production of Space* 302). The relationship that Lefebvre establishes between anxiety and abstraction can help to provide insight into what is clearly an intentional interplay between the form and content of *House of Leaves*. Specifically, the topographical fragmentation that occurs throughout the majority of the novel uses the disjointed representational space of the book to create pictograms that signify various forms of anxiety. Thus, the text itself turns reading and interpretation into acts intimately connected to anxiety. The relationship between the reader and the book can be seen as what Lefebvre defines as the violence found in abstract space: "And to the question of what takes the place of subjectivity, of expressiveness, the answer is: the violence which is unleashed in the modern world and lays waste to what exists there" (*The Production of Space* 302). In the context of the book, Danielewski's text unleashes a form of violence that constantly effaces the stability of the story through the disorienting form of the novel, the surfeit interpretative acts that exist within its own metafiction, and the interpretative acts imposed by the reader.

However, before considering the way that the representational space of the text becomes augmented through the interpretative acts of the reader, it is important to examine fully the abstraction of narrative and the novel. To reiterate, Lefebvre connects abstract space to representational space by suggesting that abstraction is a product of "images, signs, and symbols" (*The Production of Space* 288). In the traditional sense of narrative, meaning and knowledge enables one to control a particular story, which suggests that language is the phenomenon that produces that knowledge. In other words, to control a narrative is to exercise control over the symbolic network of language. Marsen acknowledges how language sets narratives in motion:

> Narrative structure activates specific semantic aspects of signs through their juxtaposition with other signs within an integrated whole. In the study of narrative, therefore, as opposed to most other forms of linguistic

>analysis, the sign is not seen in isolation nor just in relation with its
>position in a syntagmatic chain, but through the way it is 'put in action' in
>a world which includes the negation of continuity marking the act of
>enunciation, the sematic structuring of the utterance, the syntactic co-
>ordination of information, and indices establishing the contract between
>the enunciator and the audience. (11)

According to Marsen, language activates narratives through the arrangement of specific utterances and enunciations, and it is these speech acts that communicate the transmission of the story from the enunciator to the audience, from text to reader. To believe in the narrative system that Marsen describes, one must necessarily believe in the stability of language because it is through linguistic arrangements that a novel tells its story.

As I argued in the third chapter of this thesis, *As I Lay Dying* is a text that challenges the stability of language by directly calling into question its ability to signify: the fundamental breakdown of signification produces and perpetuates states of madness. Furthermore, I argue that Faulkner's novel attacks the stability of narrative at the level of narration specifically in the way that it questions the efficacy of the sign's relationship to the signifier. Like *House of Leaves*, *As I Lay Dying* is a text that masks its duplicitous narratological structure behind a seemingly singular storyline. In its simplest sense, *As I Lay Dying* is about the death of Addie Bundren and the journey her family makes to bury her body in Jefferson, Mississippi. However, each character is consumed with his or her own personal narrative, which lies beneath the surface of the "primary" plot. For example, Anse hides his motivation to get a new set of teeth and a new wife in Jefferson; Dewey-Dell hides the abortion she seeks; and the actions that Jewel takes to buy his horse, which he attempts to hide from Anse, are revealed to his father, and his horse is sold. Personal narratives also distract Darl and Vardaman, and it is in their stories, I argue, that the novel establishes complex problems regarding narrative.

To be specific, both Darl and Vardaman attempt to communicate personal stories that rely upon their (dis)abilities to communicate the effect that Addie's death has on their individual existences. In other words, their stories are attempts at narrating the self in

relation to maternal loss. In *Narrative Identity and Moral Identity*, Kim Atkins suggests that there is a fundamental relationship between selfhood and narrative:

> Identity, or full-blooded selfhood, concerns the ways in which one integrates and renders intelligible one's various attributes to constitute a unified normative outlook and, thereby, a concrete sense of who one is. In this way, who one is and what one could do are two sides of the same coin. Selfhood is, essentially, an *activity* of self-constitution and self-understanding articulated narratively. (6-7)

Darl's failure with words illustrates his inability to narrate his self as a unified whole in the wake of Addie's death, and it is the tension between language and loss that makes up Darl's personal story. Moreover, Darl's story points toward a narrative that effectively signifies personal disintegration enacted by madness. Thus, there are two distinct elements at work in *As I Lay Dying*: the story of personal loss, which ironically is eloquently enunciated in the very breakdown of language, and the narrative that clearly signifies the profoundly inexplicable experience of loss. The overall space of the novel, in the specific context of Darl's story, then, is a combination of two somewhat paradoxical elements: the personal narration of self-dissolution, which is communicated in the broken and confused syntax of madness, and the narrative discourse that his story creates, which produces a clear narrative of loss. As I have already focused on Darl, I would like to turn to Vardaman and his own problems with language to offer a brief analysis that illustrates how he also contributes to the novel's overall discourse of loss. For instance, early in the novel, Vardaman struggles to describe his existence in the wake of Addie's death: "I am not crying now. I am not anything. Dewey-Dell comes to the hill and calls me. Vardaman. I am not anything. I am quiet now. You, Vardaman. I can cry quiet now, feeling and hearing my tears" (33). This short passage illustrates a complicated relationship that Vardaman has with his sense of self. First, he describes that his existence is dependent on his ability to cry: since he cannot cry initially, he believes that he ceases to exist – that he is not anything. At this moment, isolated from the rest of the family, Vardaman cannot describe his own subjectivity, and he becomes emptied of his identity. However, his identity is restored, somewhat, when Dewey-Dell calls him

back home, and he is able to cry once again. I argue that it is the external perspective of Dewey-Dell that confirms his identity when his own ability to signify his existence fails. This early moment in the text foregrounds the repetition that Vardaman performs throughout the text in which he constantly defines his own identity as being contingent on the existence of those around him.

In *Self, Value, and Narrative*, Anthony Rudd elaborates on how selfhood is a condition of narrative:

> One of the most fruitful and interesting suggestions made in recent decades has been that the self needs to be understood in terms of narrative. Alasdiar MacIntyre, Charles Taylor, Paul Ricoeur and others have argued that to understand someone---myself or anyone else---is to be able to tell a coherent story about him or her. But this epistemological thesis about how the self is understood is connected to a more radical, ontological thesis, according to which the self is---at least to some extent---constructed through its telling of its own story. (1)

As I Lay Dying treats telling one's own story as an essentially problematic endeavor. For instance, Darl continuously runs into problems with understanding his loss, and he cannot construct a stable image of himself, which is expressed via specific problems with falling asleep, the inability to understand Addie's death, and his eventual departure to Jackson. Vardaman, too, cannot seem to sustain his own identity. Again, Vardaman only achieves a sense of self through relationships with those people that surround him. For instance, when discussing the state of their existence, Darl and Vardaman have the following conversation:

> But my mother is a fish. Vernon seen it. He was there.
> "Jewel's mother is a horse," Darl said
> "Then mine can be a fish, cant it, Darl?" I said.
> Jewel is my brother.
> "Then mine will have to be a horse, too," I said.

> "Why?" Darl said. "If your pa is your pa, why does your ma have to be a
> horse just because Jewel's is?"
> "Why does it?" I said. "Why does it Darl?"
> Darl is my brother.
> "Then what is your ma, Darl?" I said. (58)

Movement between internal thought and external dialogue structures Vardaman's conversation. In this passage, Vardaman seeks to understand the death of his mother and the impact that it has on his own identity. To understand how the loss affects him, he attempts to align himself with his two brothers. First, Vardaman states that his mother is a fish, which signals the immediate association that he made between his mother and the killing of the fish shortly after Addie died. However, his perspective shifts when Darl states that Jewel's mother is a horse. Vardaman's logic tells him that, since Jewel is his brother, his mother, too, must be a horse, as opposed to a fish. Attempting to identify with the horse illustrates the way that Vardaman can only make sense of his self in relation to Jewel: Vardaman reinforces his place in the world by defining his existence through his brother. When Darl challenges his statement, Vardaman merely repeats the process: he states that Darl is his brother and looks to establish a new association by asking the question of what their mother represents to Darl. Vardaman's inability to establish an independent and coherent self is emblematic of the novel's overarching skepticism towards language: similar to Darl, he does not possess the linguistic capabilities to make sense of the death of his mother and how it affects him. Thus, while one could make the argument that Vardaman clearly articulates his experience, he is not consciously articulating his loss through his personal story. Rather, his narration adequately tells the story of a young boy struggling with the death of his mother.

However, the reader can clearly identify that Vardaman's story contributes to an overall narrative discourse of loss, shared between his self and Darl, which is brought on by specific problems with language. The sections that are devoted to Vardaman and Darl illustrate the complexities between the story of *As I Lay Dying* and the narrative discourse produced by the novel. Specifically, their constant failure to describe their experience with loss creates a story that is, in one sense, almost impossible to tell: they cannot

represent the death of Addie and what it means to them. However, their failures at describing that loss produce a narrative discourse that is deeply lyrical, intricate, and moving in its depiction of consciousness. For instance, the complexity of Vardaman's consciousness cannot be translated into the words that he speaks publicly, but his interior thoughts remain connected to the overall narrative discourse of the novel. Ultimately, Darl and Vardaman both illustrate the challenges that Faulkner faced as an author: simultaneously telling a story of linguistic breakdown and constructing a clearly defined discourse that concerns how consciousness interprets loss.[42] The problems that Faulkner establishes with telling a story complicate the space of the text at the basic level of language because using words pushes one away from signification and toward madness. In other words, language creates an experience with insanity as opposed to offering a mode of coherent communication. In Faulkner's text, language seems to function as an abstract idea: it exists as an idea, something that both Darl and Vardaman attempt to use. However, the words they speak do not correspond to a specific object. Again, Addie's section illustrates the abstract quality of words: language "dont ever fit even what [it is] trying to say at" (*As I Lay Dying* 99).

Again, Lefebvre's treatment of abstract space can help to shed further insight into the space of the novel, specifically in regards to language and its failures. Discussing the nature of abstract space and its specific relationship with violence, Lefebvre writes:

> Abstraction passes for an 'absence' – as distinct from the concrete 'presence' of objects, of things. Nothing could be more false. For abstractions *modus operandi* is devastation, destruction (even if such destruction may sometime herald creation). Signs have something lethal about them – not by virtue of 'latent' or so-called unconscious forces, but, on the contrary, by virtue of the forced introduction into nature. The violence involved does not stem from some force intervening aside from rationality, outside or beyond it. Rather, it manifests itself from the

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[42] In basic psychoanalytic terms, Vardaman experiences the profound associative Oedipal bond even though he does not possess the linguistic faculties to express it.

moment any action introduces the rational into the real, from the outside, by means of tools which strike, slice, and cut – and keep doing so until the purpose of their aggression is achieved. (289)

Firstly, Lefebvre's statement provides a way of understanding how Darl's and Vardaman's use of language abstracts the representational space of Faulkner's narrative. Both Bundren brothers can help clarify Lefebvre's contention that signs become violent when they are forced into nature: words cannot organize their existence, and using language consequently becomes a violent act because it continually abstracts self-understanding. However, as linguistically-derived subjects, these characters do not disappear and become absent from the text, but rather they constantly efface their existential stability through multiple failed attempts at describing how the loss of their mother affects them. Furthermore, Addie's condemnation of language foregrounds the violence inherent to the failure of language, which Darl and Vardaman inflict upon their selves. Thus, the more that the brothers attempt to narrate their own identities, the more the representational space of the text becomes abstracted because the language of the novel cannot describe their existence. There is a sense of irony that hangs over the text in specific regards to the process of storytelling. For instance, Addie's warning that words do not signify amounts to a specific declaration aimed at the reader: the words in front you cannot tell the story they wish. Moreover, the stories that Darl and Vardaman try to tell through language cannot be told in full. Basic Freudian trauma theory is at work here: the two brothers cannot enunciate the traumatic experience of losing their mother. However, again, the narrative discourse produced by the novel remains intact because the discourse of how consciousness and unconsciousness handle loss is established in the experiences that Darl and Vardaman struggle to tell.

Secondly, Lefebvre offers a way of theorizing interpretation as another method through which representational space becomes abstracted, and it is in regards to interpretation that we return to the spatial practice of the text. Lefebvre refers to the production of violence as a moment where "action" attempts to exert an external "force" or "rationale" over the signs and signifiers of abstract space. Applying this theory to the representational space of the text, I argue that a novel becomes abstracted when the reader imposes, or is

compelled to impose, his or her interpretation upon a story. While *As I Lay Dying* is not necessarily concerned directly with how interpretation actively shapes or reshapes narrative, it is necessary to understand the novel's indictment of language to comprehend how the other texts collected in my thesis engage with interpretation. Both *City of Glass* and *House of Leaves* share the linguistic skepticism introduced by Faulkner's text, and they develop further the symptoms produced by the breakdown of language. Thus, it is not an arbitrary decision to begin my thesis with an examination of *As I Lay Dying*, the language of madness, and spatiality. Rather, I use Faulkner's treatment of language as a foundational text that sets up the rest of my analyses. In the context of narrative, *As I Lay Dying* is also a useful text to introduce the way that Auster and Danielewski extend basic problems with language into the realm of interpretation, the spatial practice of the text, and the abstracted representational space of the novel.

The spatial paranoia created in Paul Auster's *City of Glass* is a product of the novel's overall problems with interpretation. One of the primary concerns that Auster's text poses is how one is supposed to compile a story or resolution through the process of interpretation. For instance, Quinn suffers from the tensions produced by a particular paradox: he possesses an overabundance of narrative choices to build a story or resolution to his case. However, these surfeit possibilities make it impossible to build a singular resolution, which ultimately produces the absence of singular knowledge. The text suffers from Quinn's inability to interpret the events that surround him because the novel's protagonist is unable to structure any narratological action. Furthermore, the narrator exacerbates the text's problems with ordering a story simply by admitting that some events and information lie outside the scope of his or her knowledge. In the opening moment of the story, the narrator confesses to the reader that any pursuit of meaning is going to be difficult: "In the beginning, there was simply the event and its consequences. Whether it might have turned out differently, or whether it was all predetermined with the first word that came from the stranger's mouth, is not the question. The question is the story itself, and whether or not it means something is not for the story to tell" (3). From the moment the novel begins, the narrator states plainly that *City of Glass* is unconcerned with meaning. In one sense, *City of Glass* is an empty narrative: it signifies no meaning, no coherent discourse, and the telling of a story is the focus of the novel. Refusing to

address any meaning is a curious omission for a detective story to make because traditional detective stories are, almost entirely, structured around the pursuit and eventual discovery of a narrative resolution. In other words, meaning comes in the form of creating a story that solves the crime. Quinn, the story's de facto detective, suffers greatly from the overabundance of information because any interpretative act he makes when trying to solve the Stillman case will not lead back to any conclusive information. Broadly speaking, we can think of detective work as akin to putting a puzzle together through interpretive modes (e.g., deduction or ratiocination), and Quinn's primary problem is that he is unable to discern which pieces fit with one another.

The constant hermeneutical breakdown that surrounds the story is at the heart of the paranoia in the text, in one sense, because, as I suggested in the fifth chapter, Quinn is only able to develop partial information, and he remains just out of reach from a unified story that could explain the movements of Stillman. Quinn's inability to construct a coherent story in regards to the Stillman case mirrors the overarching narratological structure of the text. Specifically, the narrator repeatedly acknowledges his inability to tell the story of *City of Glass*. For instance, towards the end of the novel, Auster's narrator begins to lose track of Quinn:

> A long time passed. Exactly how long it is impossible to say. Weeks certainly, but perhaps even months. The account of this period is less full than the author would've liked. But information is scarce, and he has preferred to pass over in silence what could not be definitely confronted. Since this story is based entirely on facts, the author feels it is his duty not to overstep the bounds of the verifiable, to resist at all costs the perils of invention […] We cannot say for certain what happened to Quinn during this period […]. (111)

In this passage, the narrator states that the relationship between his or herself and the author is founded upon a two-step process in which the author relays narrative information to the narrator, and the narrator then transmits that information to the reader. However, the narrator admits that the transmission of the story breaks down, and the

story suffers on account of missing information. Thus, both Quinn and the narrator contend with the inability to create and control the telling of the story. Similar to *House of Leaves* and its issues with containability, Auster's text treats narration as something fundamentally unstable. However, *City of Glass* uniquely treats the process of creating a functional story as an act of paranoia.

Like *As I Lay Dying*, Auster's text suggests that the novel's problems with telling a story are due to problems with language. For example, when Quinn finally speaks to Stillman, the reader comes to understand a possible position the novel takes in regards to language:

> You see, I am in the process of inventing a new language […] A language that will at last say what we have to say. For our words no longer correspond to the world. When things were whole, we felt confident that our words could express them. But little by little these things have broken apart, shattered, collapsed into chaos. And yet our words have remained the same. They have not adapted themselves to the new reality. (75-76)

Stillman offers a critique of language that greatly mirrors Addie Bundren's argument that signifiers cannot signify their intended meaning. And yet, Stillman's description of language is slightly different: Addie believes that language has never been able to describe meaning whereas Stillman suggests that signs once had the capacity to signify. The new language that Stillman seeks to invent is essentially a language that would correspond to the collapse and chaos of the contemporary world, which is a world that current systems of language cannot describe. While Stillman offers a pointed critique of words, this is not the first glimpse of linguistic failure offered to the reader. For instance, there is an earlier moment where the narrator describes the work of Henry Dark and the tower of Babel:

> Dark based his conclusions on a reading of the Babel story as a prophetic work. Drawing heavily on Milton's interpretation of the fall, he followed his master in placing an inordinate importance on the role of language. But he took the poet's ideas one step further. If the fall of man also entailed the fall of language, was it not logical to assume that it would be possible to

> undo the fall, to reverse its effects by undoing the fall of language, by striving to recreate the language that was spoken in Eden? (47)

Stillman's perception of language is influenced by Dark, a fictionalized assistant to John Milton, and they both share the desire to reconstruct a "'natural language'" that is more functional than the words we have been using since the fall of humanity into sin. Thus, Stillman's depiction of language, while similar, differs from *As I Lay Dying* because he believes in alternative systems of language that could once again signify. However, it is clear that the novel is composed of a language devoid of signification, and Quinn illustrates as much after he meets Peter Stillman, Jr.: "Quinn looked out the window and wondered if these were the same trees that Peter Stillman saw when he walked out into the air and the light. He wondered if Peter saw the same things he did, or whether the world was a different place for him. And if a tree was not a tree, he wondered what it really was" (37). While there is no direct mention of language in what Quinn wonders, he suggests that signification is not a standardized phenomenon - that we do not universally understand language in one way. Furthermore, the narrator suggests that the relationship between sign and signifier is unstable through the example of the tree, which echoes Ferdinand de Saussure's *A Course in General Linguistics* and his example of one-to-one signification, which he explains through the example of a tree or arbor.

I argue that the novel's skepticism towards language and the resulting paranoia cause Quinn to develop a spatialized language that could serve as an alternative system of signification. More precisely, Quinn looks for alternative signs and symbols by topographically mapping out Stillman's steps when he is unable to piece together the story through traditional modes of language. Paranoia motivates Quinn's desire to use a map to develop a spatial language. He is compelled by the desire to signify the meaning he desperately believes is there despite the absence of any sort of clear resolution. Therefore, *City of Glass* treats the construction of a story as an act of paranoia because resolving the case is driven by Quinn's anxiety, which is caused by his need to explain Stillman's behavior. It would seem that at a fundamental level *City of Glass* is not a text that believes in resolution, whether narratively constructed or otherwise. Consequently, both the Stillman case and its potential resolution become abstract ideas that never come

into being, and each step that Quinn takes to bring closure to the case/novel only abstracts any sense of unified meaning.[43]

Earlier in this conclusion, I stated that the spatiality of a book is composed, primarily, of representational space: narrative is structured through the system of symbolic language, which is organized so as to tell a story. I also stated that we must think of the representational character of a novel as being linked to a spatial practice, as opposed to representations of space, to consider fully the spatiality of the novel. It is necessary, then, to describe in detail the spatial practice of the text, which, in and of itself, is a simple concept: the spatial practice of the text is simply the act of reading. And yet, the act of reading can abstract the space of the text further via interpretation. *City of Glass* offers an illustration of how interpretation effaces the space of the text from the inside. Language, again, plays an important role in the abstraction of the text because Quinn is unable to rely upon or construct any system of signification that would help explain Stillman's actions. Moreover, whether linguistic or topographical, the systems of language found in the text only create more confusion because they repeatedly offer incomplete signs. Therefore, interpretation as a mode of investigation is doomed to fail because Quinn

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[43] It should be noted that much like the interpretative efforts of Quinn, my own attempts at theorizing *City of Glass* necessitate their own qualifications. Specifically, writing/narration does have the ability to sustain Quinn in a very specific way. One of the central mysteries in the novel is Quinn's disappearance from the text, which occurs at the end of the story. One way to approach his disappearance is to consider his relationship with the red notebook. In the notebook, Quinn details the progress of the Stillman case, and, when the case breaks down, he resorts to filling its pages with thoughts that concern the state of his own identity. The novel suggests that writing in the notebook is the only thing that sustains him, which has an important impact on the state of his existence. Near the end of the novel, the narrator offers a final description of Quinn: "This period of growing darkness coincided with the dwindling pages of the red notebook. Little by little, Quinn was coming to the end. At a certain point, he realized that the more he wrote, the sooner the time would come when he could no longer write anything" (128). Quinn's anxiety extends beyond simply being aware that his notebook will soon run out of pages on which to write. Rather, the dwindling pages of the red notebook correspond to the concluding pages of *City of Glass*, and when Quinn can no longer sustain himself through language, whether in the topography of a map or on the pages of his notebook, he will disappear along with the story. Thus, narration is the basis of Quinn's existence: if he cannot graphically imprint his identity within the pages of the red notebook, he simply ceases to exist. While there is no concrete answer as to why self-narration works in this moment of the text, I speculate that it is in these concluding pages that Quinn adheres to the advice of the novel's narrator for the first time: isolated in the apartment, Quinn stops his search for meaning and he simply writes his immediate thoughts and impressions of his self. In doing so, he follows the narrator's immediate advice that meaning is "not for the story to tell" (3).

abstracts the Stillman case with every attempt he makes to understand the behaviour of Peter Stillman.

House of Leaves, too, illustrates that interpretation can alter the representational space of a novel. However, Danielewski's text questions the effectiveness of interpretation through the outside presence of the reader. Involving the reader in the way that the space of the text is constructed, *House of Leaves* takes specific issue with the spatial practice of the text. Often considered to be an example of ergodic literature, Danielewski's novel is emblematic of a form of storytelling that focuses the text on "the mechanical organization of the text, by positing the intricacies of the medium as an integral part of the literary exchange" (Aarseth 1). In *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature*, Aarseth elaborates on how ergodic literature functions: "However, it also centers attention on the consumer, or user, of the text, as a more integrated figure than even reader-response theorists would claim. The performance of their reader takes place all in his head, while the user of cybertextual also performs in an extranoematic sense" (1). More specifically, Aarseth explains, "This phenomenon I call *ergodic*, using a term appropriated from physics that derives from the Greek words *ergon* and *hados*, meaning 'work' and 'path'" (1). The ergodic text is one that does not let a reader simply sit back and trivially move throughout the text via "eye movement and the periodic or arbitrary turning of the page" (2). Rather, the ergodic text is one that necessitates work, on the reader's part, to carve a path through the text. In many ways *House of Leaves* is an ergodic novel: the fractured, multilayered story is one that can raise "the stakes of interpretation to intervention," which requires an "investment of personal improvisation that can result in either intimacy of failure" (4). In other words, "The tensions at work in [ergodic literature], while not incompatible with narrative desire, are also something more: a struggle not merely for interpretative insight but also for narrative control […]" (4). While I do not propose to analyze *House of Leaves* as an explicitly ergodic novel, I have chosen to offer an introductory sketch of Aarseth's work for an important and productive reason. Specifically, the concept of a reader exerting narrative control is intimately related to what I argue is the specific form of spatial practice that *House of Leaves* demands of its reader.

Before moving into an analysis of the novel and spatial practice, it is necessary for me to clarify my terms, specifically in regards to the way that I am borrowing from Lefebvre's *The Production of Space*. As I said earlier in this conclusion, stating that spatial practice is a central component to the spatiality of the text necessitates reconciliation between abstract space and absolute space. As described by Lefebvre, absolute space has an intimate connection with the signs and symbols of representational space:

> Considered itself – 'absolutely' – absolute space is located nowhere. It has no place because it embodies *all* places, and has a strictly symbolic existence. This is what makes it similar to the fictitious space of language, and that of mental space, magically (imaginarily) cut off from the spatial realm, where the consciousness of the 'subject' – or 'self-consciousness' – takes form. (236)

In Lefebvrian terms, the space of the text can be considered absolute since it is a construction that uses language to create fictitious spaces that readers must navigate. Furthermore, the novel offers a space where different levels of consciousness are shaped. When Lefebvre refers to the subject and the formation of self-consciousness, he is referring to the way that subjects come into being through their symbolic/representational language and the way that it overlays space. However, in regards to the novel, consciousness comes in at least two forms: the self-consciousness of the author and the consciousness of the reader who shapes the narrative through interpretative acts. In one sense, the author's self-consciousness is the mechanism that actively creates a narrative world for the reader, setting up the necessary parameters for the reader to navigate the text. On the other hand, the consciousness of the reader is enacted through his or her interpretation of the text, which also constructs the narrative. Thus, the absolute nature of the text's spatiality (the fictionalized language, signs, and symbols) is responsible for setting spatial practice/interpretation in motion. Without the space created by the author, there is no reader, no interpretation.

Again, to be clear, the spatial practice of the text is, in its most basic sense, the act of reading; reading is how the reader inhabits the space created by the author. However,

interpretation is a deeper, more complicated practice. Like Barthes's writerly text or Aarseth's ergodic text, interpretatively-based spatial practice requires the active, conscious participation of the reader. However, the texts I have chosen to analyze complicate the function of interpretation because they do not treat interpretative acts as simply reading and understanding a story. Rather, each text treats interpretation as a process of creating the story. Though interpretation relies on a linguistic system akin to absolute space, the interpretative acts of the reader contribute to the abstraction of the text because his or her reading imposes yet another layer of meaning to the story. Abstraction in this particular sense refers to the way that interpretative acts rework the author's original story through his or her own perspective, thereby adding other possible sets of meaning to a novel. I stressed the role of interpretation in the sixth chapter of this dissertation, and I argued that *House of Leaves* turns the act of interpretation into the sensation of anxiety. Any anxiety that the novel creates is fundamentally connected to complications with interpretation. Specifically, Danielewski's text invites the reader to interpret the text by suggesting that it seems impossible to make sense of the novel without the intervention of the reader, and in this sense the text is at its most ergodic. However, the novel never fully allows the reader to construct conclusively a particular interpretation. Therefore, the reader confronts a similar problem to Johnny Truant and his editorial efforts: like Truant who must represent a house that resists representation, the reader must interpret a text that resists interpretation.

When reading Danielewski's text, one confronts the complete formal breakdown of the novel, and, as a consequence, the spatial practice of the reader is impeded. The obstacles that the reader face come in at least two forms: the story cannot be contained or told by its various narrators, much like *City of Glass*, and the typographical experimentation greatly complicates the process of reading. Regarding textual space, the narrators cannot sustain the novel in an absolute manner, but rather the conflicting narratorial voices merely confuse the language of the text, which leads the story to become almost entirely confused. *House of Leaves* contains myriad examples that show how the narrators cannot maintain control over the story. One such example occurs in several footnotes offered toward the middle of the book. During this particularly complicated sequence, Truant offers a note from Zampano's journal concerning the relationship between two travelers,

Quesada and Molino. In the first footnote, numbered 171, Truant states that the

information he is returning to the text comes from Zampano's journal, and then he offers

the following excerpt:

> As I have often lingered on Hudson in his shallop, I have in the late hours
> turned my thoughts to Quesada and Molino's journey across those waters,
> wondering aloud what they said, what they thought, what gods came to
> keep them or leave them, and what in those dark waves they finally saw in
> themselves. Perhaps because history has little to do with those minutes,
> the scene survives only in verse: *The Song of Quesada and Molino* by
> [XXXX]. I include it in its entirety.
>
> [In Truant's voice] Then:
>
> Forgive me please for including this. An old man's mind is just as likely to
> wander as a young man's, but where a young man will forgive the stray,
> an old man will cut it out […] Perhaps this is no news to you but then I
> have killed many men and I have both legs and I don't think I ever quite
> equaled the bald gnome Error who comes from his cave with featherless
> ankles to feast on the mighty dead. (137)

Additional footnotes that attempt to clarify what the reader is seeing further complicate

this passage. First, footnote 172, which is connected to the "[XXXX]," tells the reader

that the author of the song is "Illegible" (137). Second, footnote 175, which is connected

to "I include it here in its entirety," directs the reader to Appendix E, which actually does

not contain *The Song of Quesada and Molino* – it is absent from the text. Third, footnote

173, which is connected to "the mighty dead," is given by Truant, who writes, "You got

me. Gnome aside, I don't even know what to make of 'I've killed many men.' Irony? A

confession? As I already said, 'You got me'" (137). Truant's footnote then contains two

more footnotes: footnote 176, which is connected to the first "You got me," directs the

reader to Appendix B, which is entitled "Bits" and contains fragments that may or may

not have been removed from "The Navidson Record"; footnote 174, which is connected

to the second "You got me," is offered in the words of the omniscient Editors and tells

the reader, "For reasons entirely his own, Mr. Truant de-struck the last six lines in footnote 171. – Ed." (137).

Unpacking this confusing sequence of footnotes illustrates, firstly, how the three narratorial voices cannot clearly present the information in the text. The relationship between Truant and Zampano, at this moment, is based on a struggle over narrative authority because, as the Editors tell us, Truant decides to change the original text by de-striking the last lines of Zampano's material. In essence, Truant disobeys Zampano's intentions by reinserting the lines that Zampano intended to excise from the novel. The implication here is that Truant must have a reason for deciding to include the information which Zampano wanted to remove. The possibility that Truant had a motive is accentuated by the Editors' statement that he had reasons for doing so and that those reasons remain unknown. In *Story and Discourse*, Seymour Chatman makes the distinction between overt and covert narrators, which can help clarify the narratological problems that occur between Danielewski's narrators. For Chatman, overt narrators maintain an identifiable position in the narrative as they openly communicate the story: "The set description is the weakest mark on the overt narrator […] But a narrator's overt presence *is* marked by explicit description, direct communications to a narratee about the setting that he needs to know" (219). In regards to covert narrators, on the other hand, "we hear a voice speaking of events, characters, and setting but its owner remains hidden in the discursive shadows" (197). Covert narration, then, is simply the narrating of events from a concealed narrator or narrative source: "the terrain of covert narration is bewildering, and it is easy to lose one's bearings" (197). On a surface level, Danielewski's three narrators are overtly present in the text. With the exception of the Editors,[44] the narrators are able to describe the sequence of events, communicate the actions of specific characters, and describe the settings held in the novel. However, as the aforementioned footnotes express, the collective story that they attempt to narrate is quite bewildering. I argue that the complexity of the narrators' relationship and the never-

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[44]The editors, however, are not completely removed from affecting the novel because they can describe (alleged) contradictions that occur in the text, contradictions that are usually existent in the descriptions of Zampano and Truant.

ending convolution that it produces illustrate a breakdown in narration that occurs when overt narrators communicate covert or obscured information. For instance, two forms of covert narration are revealed when Johnny Truant re-inserts the portion of the text that was excised by Zampano: Truant reveals a section of the text that Zampano had intended to keep hidden, and the Editors expose that Truant attempted to hide the fact that he re-inserted the original passage. Thus, the struggle over narratorial authority between Zampano, Truant, and the Editors is, in part, based on deception: Truant seems to establish an omniscient overtness by revealing Zampano's covert omissions. However, the Editors reveal the covert omissions that Truant often attempts to keep from the reader. Ultimately, the space of the narrative continues to be abstracted via the complex relationship between the narrators because their constant inability to tell a coherent story make it difficult for the reader to understand fully what "the text is truly about."

While the complex nature of narration complicates how the novel is understood, the confusion built into *House of Leaves* begins at its most basic level: the question of who authored the book is immediately put into question. The problem of who wrote the novel exists in one of the more subtle typographical features of the book. From the outset of the novel, the Editors attempt to establish the overt nature of the narration that will occur throughout the text by identifying how specific fonts will signify each narratorial voice. Footnote number five relays the following information: "In an effort to limit confusion, Mr. Truant's footnotes will appear in Courier while Zampano's will appear in Times" (4). However, specific voice-typography relationships exist beyond Zampano and Truant: the Editors, too, have their own distinct font, which comes in the form of Bookman; and Pelafina's presence is signified through her own typeface - Dante. These typographical distinctions are important to note because they are key to understanding how Danielewski uses the form of the book to displace individual authorial control - including his own. First, Danielewski complicates the question of who wrote the novel through discrepancies between the front cover and the third page of the book. For example, on the front cover, Danielewski's full name appears along with the title *House of Leaves*. The relationship between these two pieces of information is much like every other book: Danielewski's name signifies that he authored *House of Leaves*. However, the third page of the book offers conflicting information, which reads: *House of Leaves* "by Zampano with

introduction and notes by Johnny Truant." It is as though the narrative has begun before the actual story because immediately, before the first page of the story, the author of the book is put into question: Zampano is given credit for writing *House of Leaves*. It is important to state that Zampano is *given* credit for writing *House of Leaves* for two reasons. First, *House of Leaves* is not the title of the work that Zampano takes credit for in his own words. Rather, the title of that work is "The Navidson Record." Second, if were are to believe in the signifying practice given to the typeface in the book, it is not Zampano's voice that takes credit for *House of Leaves* on the third page of the novel. In other words, the font on that page is not Times, but rather the information is communicated in Dante, which again is the font through which Pelafina speaks. Thus, the problems with authorship and narration extend beyond the tensions between Zampano, Truant, and the Editors; they extend into questions concerning the place of Danielewski, Zampano, and Pelafina. Of course, we know that Danielewski is the *true* author of the book, but it is difficult not to read the typographical play that occurs between typefaces as a play that concerns ownership of the book.

Within the context of the story, these three narratorial voices abstract the absolute/representational space of the text due to their inability to control the novel. Essentially, the conflicting narration of Zampano, Truant, and the Editors illustrates the duplicitous nature of the novel by unearthing multiple and conflicting narrative layers that lie hidden under the surface of "The Navidson Record." However, the multivalent structure of the novel is perpetuated by the reader: the interpretations that he or she make necessarily add yet another layer to the text. To be clear, it seems that *House of Leaves* and the other texts I have taken up in my thesis are directed at a particular kind of reader: the type of person who feels a sort of responsibility to the text, one who feels compelled to make sense of the narrative despite the challenges one might face. It is this particular kind of reader who becomes trapped within the house on Ash Tree Lane as soon as he or she enters it because *House of Leaves* is not a text that offers any form of conclusive answers or interpretation – there are too many narrative choices, possibilities, and too much narrative information to organize. If Danielewski's text is a labyrinth, there is no singular thread that will lead the reader out, but rather there are many crisscrossing strings that will inevitably entangle the reader if he or she follows any one for too long.

For instance, Appendix B, again, entitled "Bits," is a collection of narrative possibility. It is a catalogue of fragments that seem vaguely connected to moments from the text: the fragment from April 29, 1975, reads, "Mother wants you to call home STOP It is 105 degrees and rising STOP White Christmas indeed!" (543). One cannot help but assume that this is a telegram, indicated by the "STOP" periods, sent to Truant from his mother: the possibility that she wants him to visit the Whalestoe Institute for an abnormally hot Christmas tempt the reader into making these, ultimately unstable, connections. Even the instructions to the Appendix, which are provided by the Editors, are ambiguous in nature: "Presumably 'Original' indicates an entry written in Zampano's own hand, while 'A' 'B' 'C' etc., etc., indicate entries written by someone else" (542). Rather than providing clarity, the Editors' instructions further confuse the narrative by stating directly that there is a possibility that numerous voices have shaped "The Navidson Record." The question necessarily becomes: whose voices are they? *House of Leaves*, then, illustrates the limits of interpretation in conjunction with the limits of storytelling: the spatial practice of interpretation obscures the space of the novel by allowing the reader to complicate the story via hermeneutic interventions that cannot put the text back together. Ultimately, *House of Leaves* questions whether or not a story can be fully told or fully comprehended.

In examining the space of the book, I have necessarily pushed *Apocalypse Now* to the margins of this conclusion. Again, the majority of texts within my thesis are novels, which is why I have chosen to conclude with an analysis of the spatiality of the book. However, my intention is not to minimize the importance of Coppola's film within the overall analytical structure of my work. In regards to both this conclusion and the overall scope of my thesis, *Apocalypse Now* occupies an important position because it offers a way to link each of the texts I have chosen to analyze. Specifically, the neurotic compulsion to repeat is a common neurosis that drives *As I Lay Dying*, *City of Glass*, and *House of Leaves*. In the fourth chapter, I argued that both Willard and Kurtz suffer from the need to repeat specific sets of action: for instance, I suggested that Willard's identity is dependent on returning to the war, and Kurtz constantly repeats the violence he witnessed as an officer in the U.S. Special Forces. Furthermore, each character carries out their compulsive repetitions spatially: to maintain a sense of identity, Willard must

perform the role of the soldier within the active space of the conflict, and Kurtz mediates his repetitions by inflicting violence within and upon the landscape of the jungle. In essence, I argued that both officers converted spatial practice into the compulsion to repeat. Within the context of a novel, Coppola's treatment of space introduces a way to conceive of narrative and storytelling as forms of compulsive repetition.

In *Reading for the Plot*, Peter Brooks uses Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* as text through which to read narrative as essentially linked to repetition: "Narrative always makes the implicit claim to be in a state of repetition, as a going over again of a ground already covered […]" (97). Expanding upon his argument, Brooks argues:

> Repetition creates a *return* in the text, a doubling back. We cannot say whether this return is a return *to* or a return *of*: for instance, a return to origins or a return of the repressed. Repetition through this ambiguity to suspend temporal process, or rather, to subject it to an indeterminate shuttling or oscillation that binds different moments together as a middle that might turn forward or back. This inescapable middle is suggestive of the demonic: repetition and return are perverse and difficult, interrupting simple movement forward. (100)

Brooks's conception of repetition can be interpreted in at least two ways: repetition as a process that is connected to the interior story of a novel and repetition as a process that is connected to the exterior position of the reader. First, *City of Glass* and *House of Leaves* illustrate how compulsive repetition is an innate part of the story told by the each texts' respective narrators. Danielewski's novel translates narration as a process of repetition which is driven by the repressed memories of Johnny Truant, as I argued in the fifth chapter. *City of Glass*, too, activates repetition as the central mode that propels the story: Quinn's paranoia comes in the form of repeated attempts at story-building. However, Quinn fails to organize the overabundance of possible meaning, which ironically produces the absence of meaning, and the story falls apart. Following Genette's three-part system, all that is left in regards to Auster's text is a narrative, a signifier that points not to an internal story but to the discourse of (spatialized) paranoia. As I argued in the fourth

chapter, the spatially motivated and spatialized repetitions carried out by Willard and Kurtz organize *Apocalypse Now*. Coppola's film approaches the problem of understanding the war through the telling of a specific story: by focusing on the fragmentation of two officers and the soldiers that they encounter, Coppola's film suggests that to understand the complexity and impact of the war is to tell stories of individual breakdown. In other words, the war itself cannot be approached directly, but rather it must be told through the mediating forces of Willard, Kurtz, and their individual psychological breakdowns.

Both of their breakdowns are due, in part, to their inability to interpret the war and their place within it. Like Darl and Vardaman, Willard and Kurtz cannot sustain a clear sense of being, which occurs as a result of failing to interpret their places in the war. For instance, Willard's inability to see that he and the chief occupy separate symbolic spaces produces the tension between him and Chief Phillips. Phillips is situated in the official symbolic record of the war, and, consequently, he has been given a specific rank and a specific set of orders to fulfill as a solider. Willard, on the other hand, exists outside of the official record of the war near the classified fringes of military action. Willard, too, is given a set of instructions and orders that are unique to his specialized position, which conflict with the directives given to Chief Phillips. Thus, Willard misinterprets his ability to command the space of the boat, and Phillips reminds him, "Until we reach your destination, captain, you are just along for the ride" (Coppola). Additionally, Kurtz's inability to interpret and reconcile the brutal display of arms that he witnesses causes his own repetitions of violence that he performs in the jungle. For example, Kurtz states, "We went back there, and they had come and hacked off every inoculated arm. There they were in a pile, a pile of little arms. And I remember, I cried, I wept like…some…grandmother. I wanted to tear my teeth out; I didn't know what I wanted to do" (Coppola). At this moment, Kurtz admits that he cannot interpret the scene to which he bears witness, which produces symptoms of hysteria that he consciously converts into the desire to repeat the death drive compulsively.

By establishing a connection between interpretation and the compulsion to repeat, *Apocalypse Now* provides the grounds on which to think of literary interpretation as

being a process of compulsive repetition. In other words, the texts in my thesis share a specific commonality: they diagnose storytelling and the reading of a story as being structured through compulsive repetition. To be clear, each text has its own relationship to an individual psychosis or neurosis and space: *As I Lay Dying* illustrates how representational spaces and objects are connected to linguistic representations of madness; *City of Glass* establishes spatial practice as being a mode of paranoia; and *House of Leaves* develops the spatial uncanny and the space of anxiety. However, these specific psychoses and neuroses are all connected to the process of compulsive repetition. Specifically, the work of Faulkner, Auster, and Danielewski treat the practice of interpretation as a compulsive act. The compulsion itself is built out of the sense that narrative content - the story itself - is unstable: narrators struggle over and over to communicate the events, actions, and sentiments of character. Furthermore, readers are forced to repeatedly re-read these stories to understand them adequately. Each text in my thesis, including *Apocalypse Now*, depicts narrative as a struggle with interpretation that occurs in the face of various ontological and epistemological voids: Darl and Vardaman create a narrative that explains loss through broken languages that produce madness; Quinn is unable to interpret the Stillman case, and his repeated attempts at establishing a resolution to the case only confuse the text; and *House of Leaves* implicates the reader in the process of building a narratological labyrinth through interpretative acts that further atomize the text into shifting centers of knowledge.

In this concluding chapter, I have sought to illustrate that the spatiality of the text, as it is conceived in the work of Faulkner, Auster, and Danielewski, is a complex representationally-based world caught between what Lefebvre calls absolute and abstract space. A text will present itself as absolute since it seems to be a coherent and unified object that holds a coherent representational world. However, its true character is seemingly abstract because hidden beneath its absolute surface lies a multitude of narratological layers. I have also offered, throughout the course of this thesis, various analyses that illustrate the relationship that spatiality has to the production of psychosis and neurosis, and ways in which we can conceive of space as eliciting specific anxieties. Excluding *Apocalypse Now*, each of the texts I have analyzed comes in the form of a book, and, in this conclusion, I have sought to offer a reading of the book's spatiality.

Specifically, I have sought to provide a consideration of particular psychoses and neuroses that are connected to storytelling as well as the ways in which we read them. Each of these texts illustrates either a breakdown in story or the inability to communicate a story. For instance, characters experience indescribable crises and the events that surround them cannot be told, and none of these stories can adequately tell a unified and coherent plot. However, it would be incorrect to state that these texts are devoid of literary and cinematic substance. It is important, then, to re-emphasize the basic theoretical position taken by Genette, in regards to narrative theory: there exists a distinction between "story" and "discourse." Jonathan Culler supports this argument and expands upon it in *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction*:

> If narrative is defined as the representation of a series of events, then the analyst must be able to identify these events, and they come to function as a nondiscursive, nontextual given, something which exists prior to and independently of narrative presentation and which the narrative reports […] I am claiming that narratological analysis of a text requires one to treat the discourse as a representation of events which are conceived of as independent of any particular narrative perspective or presentation and which are thought of as having the properties of real events. (190)

Much like Genette's description, narrative is both associated and disassociated with the events of the story that it contains. Narrative is a signifier that points towards the discourse of a specific text, the central conversation invoked by the story and its sequences. The work of Faulkner, Coppola, Auster, and Danieleski share a similar manipulation of the distinctions between story and discourse: each author places the stability of his central action in question, emptying, complicating, and confusing the story to varying degrees. However, the effect produced by each text is almost exactly the same: as the meaning of the story recedes to the background, due to its own self-inflicted obfuscation, all that is left is the discursive signifier that points to specific narratives of spaitalized madness, compulsive repetition, paranoia, and uncanny anxiety. Therefore, each of these authors uses the breakdown of the story to establish specific narrative discourses that concern the spatialization of mental deterioration.

At the beginning of my thesis, I stated that one of my primary intentions was to identify the instability of subjects. These texts illustrate that instability by using space to organize and illustrate problems with symbolic language, comprehending space, and practicing one's subjectivity through spatial arrangements. Ultimately, we, as subjects, are spatially dependent beings, and we rely on the assumption that we can control the environments in which we find ourselves. The works of Faulkner, Auster, Coppola, and Danielewski offer depictions of our spatial dependence by placing subjects in spaces of collapse. These spaces are fundamentally incomprehensible, and the collapse is not necessarily produced as kind of architectural crumbling or physical deterioration. Rather, the collapse occurs at the level of the subject – the levels of language, spatial practice, epistemology, the comprehension of one's self, and the orientation of our bodies. Thus, spatial collapse refers to spaces that have broken down due to their own unsustainability. However, while a space itself may or may not be intact, the unsustainability is always a product of the subject's inability to sustain and be sustained by spatiality: madness, paranoia, the compulsion to repeat, and uncanny anxiety can all be produced symptomatically by one's inability to control space.

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Curriculum Vitae

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Post-secondary   University of Toronto

Education and   Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Degrees: 2003 – 2008 Honour's Bachelor Degree

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

2009 – 2010 M.A.

The University of Western Ontario

London, Ontario, Canada

2010 – Present Ph.D.

Related Work   Teaching Assistant

Experience   The University of Western Ontario

2010 – 2014

Sessional Instructor

Sheridan College

2014 – Present

Sessional Instructor

Humber College

2016 – Present