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FALSAFA

UNDERGRADUATE JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

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at the University of California, Irvine

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The Philosophy Club at the University of California, Irvine

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Letter from the Department Chair

I am very pleased to write a few words for the second issue of *Falsafa*, and I am grateful to the editors for asking me to do it. At a time when the University of California is launching an unprecedented action to promote diversity within it, it is impressive to see how much this is attuned to students' sensibilities. Not only is it part of the mission of the University of California to provide higher education to its people, in this region of the world which, due to its history, cannot overlook the contribution to global thought made by Latinos, but it is written into the very DNA of a University—universitas, in Latin—to be universal. Universal, today more than ever, means global. We are still in the process of figuring out the rules of engagement between the local and the global, between the particular constituencies and traditions we happen to live in, and their relationship with the far distant and the distant within, to which they are inextricably connected. Yet this is the world we all live in, and philosophy, at its best, is devoted to figuring out categories to make sense of the world and our experience of it. The content of this second issue of Falsafa is a testament to the relevance and timeliness of these issues, with papers spreading from the ancient Nahua tradition, to Al-Farabi's political theory, from William Blake's reflection on imagination and God, to the construction of abject figures in public consciousness. It also merits note that this second issue strikes a perfect gender balance, which we still have to learn how to achieve in academia, particularly in philosophy. I have learnt a lot by reading it. I am sure you, readers, will do too.

Annalisa Coliva
Professor and Chair
Department of Philosophy
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Letter from the Chief Editors

We are pleased to present you, our reader, with the second issue of *Falsafa*, the University of California, Irvine's undergraduate philosophy journal. *Falsafa* (Urdu for 'Philosophy'), is a platform for presenting on and being in dialogue with marginalized or underrepresented fields of philosophy. We think it is important to get undergraduates thinking about issues of representation in philosophy. Philosophy has countless areas of thoughts which aid us in our pursuit of greater understanding of the world around us, and which raise issues with what many philosophers might otherwise take for granted and overlook.

We should also make it explicit that the authors retain full control and ownership over their work. Our intention is to showcase their papers and help popularize the topics on which they write.

In this issue, you will find essays on the Tlamatini, the poets and moral educators of the Ancient Nahua tradition; the connection William Blake makes between imagination and religion; the association between Al-Farabi's conception of metaphor and body politic; and an ontology which can explain the construction of radically excluded figures in society.

We would like to thank our issue's authors for their wonderful submissions, our team of editors for reviewing the authors' submissions, and the professors who supported the making of this issue. We also would not have been able to make this issue without the help of those of you on Twitter who shared our call for papers, and those in the philosophy departments around the world who shared our call for papers with their students. Thank you all. Finally, we are immensely glad that you are here, reading this and supporting Falsafa.

Matthew Wang Downing
Club Mediator
The Philosophy Club at UC Irvine

Elise Hughes
Chief Editor
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Expanding Histories: the *Tlamatini* in the Ancient Nahua Tradition

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Abstract

History of Philosophy is an important aspect of the structure of philosophical inquiry in universities across the United States. The emphasis is largely rooted in the self as a member of a community with a particular philosophical history. Yet, Latinos are unable to access their community's philosophical history under the current philosophical curriculum because their specific philosophical tradition is ignored. In order to address this disparity, I examine Ancient Nahua history and philosophy, focusing on the role of *tlamatinime*, Nahua philosophers, as poets and moral educators. I conclude with the realization that the Ancient Nahua tradition, while historically valuable to Latinos, is also of worthwhile examination for philosophical academia as a whole.

Introduction

History of Philosophy comprises a great deal of the structure of philosophical study and inquiry. Undergraduate philosophy classes offer a general survey of 'history of philosophy' in various forms; ranging from courses like 'Ancient Greek Philosophy' and 'American Philosophy' to more particular history of philosophy courses like 'Aesthetics' or 'Ethics.' In the cases of classes like 'Aesthetics' and 'Ethics' the historical aspect is often found in the theme; 'Aesthetics' will likely present the history of aesthetic thought from the Ancients to contemporary thinkers and 'Ethics' will generally do the same with the topic 'Ethics.' There are, however, very few history of philosophy courses that present the history of Latin American philosophy, which is an issue when Latinos are, in the United States, the largest minority group.[11] It should be noted that this problem is more than merely a lack of representation. If one of the aims of philosophy is to increase knowledge of oneself and of human experience, the lack of history of philosophy courses within the Latino tradition is a serious impediment. Furthermore, while some history of

[1] U.S. Census

philosophy books in the tradition of Latino thought can be accessed through institutions, a great deal of them remain in the original, untranslated Spanish.

Although some Ancient Nahua prose and poetry remains untranslated from Nahuatl into Spanish there is also a great deal of literature that exists, and has existed, in Spanish since the Spaniards first came into contact with the indigenous Nahua in early sixteenth century. This is not surprising if one recalls that Catholic missionaries would, in their attempts to evangelize, serve as translators, ethnographers, geographers, and even—in the case of Sahagún—as the first anthropologists.[2] The issue is not, then, that there are no translations of Nahuatl into Spanish but that there are none from either Nahuatl or Spanish into English. And seeing as the percentage of Spanish-speaking Latinos in major cities has declined, it would not be unreasonable to assume that the percentage of those able to read Spanish has followed suit.[3] Of course, this would make what scholarship there is on the Ancient Nahua, which is mostly in Spanish, largely inaccessible to Latinos in the United States, which creates a larger hurdle for Latinos who may want to gain a deeper understanding of themselves through their community history.

Some Contextualization

Thinkers such as Friedrich Engels, Antonio Gramsci, and Martin Heidegger provide arguments as to how the self, community, and history are connected. Although arguments for the inseparability of the individual, community, and history are worth exploring and analyzing, the aim of this paper is not to delineate how the three are connected, since there is already a great deal of scholarship on that particular topic. Instead, this paper offers a practical application of the view that the three are inseparable in order to examine the value of expanding the history of philosophy courses beyond those currently offered by philosophical academia within the United States. With that said, it would behoove one to spend some time on historical context before delving into the *tlamatinime* of the Ancient Nahua.

The Spanish conquest of the Aztec Empire reached a crescendo in 1520 with the genocide of the indigenous Latin American population, notably affected were the native populations in Mexico.[4] It was not until 1521, however, that the Spanish began “their wholesale suppression of

[2] See León-Portilla, *Bernardino de Sahagún*
[3] Krogstad, *Spanish Speaking*
[4] Jonassohn and Solveig, *Genocide*, 202

native culture."[5] Among those suppressed under this new colonial rule were the Aztecs, whose empire had been largely decimated in the Spanish conquest. Prior to the Spanish conquest, the Aztec empire had stretched from the Pacific Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico with a total territory of roughly 200,000 square kilometers and a population of about 300,000 inhabitants, making it one of the larger empires of its time.[6]

With such a large territory to command, the unifying basis of the Aztec empire was the Nahuatl language.[7] And while the Aztec empire itself can be referred to as a singular entity due to the shared and common spoken language it would be incorrect to believe that they were the only people who would have shared the Nahuatl language. In fact, Nahuatl functioned as the "lingua franca of Mesoamerica," speakers of Nahuatl, outside of the Aztec empire, include the Tlaxcaltecas and the Huexotzincas, both of whom were enemies of the Aztecs.[8] Despite their differences, however, all of the speakers of Nahuatl, the Tlaxcaltecas, the Huexotzincas, the Aztecs, and others, would be collectively known as Nahua. This is not simply because they all spoke the same language but because "they all participated in a single culture" with a common view in regards to "thought, art, education, and history."[9] The issue of how one can arrive at anything resembling a philosophy of the Ancient Nahua, after the mass destruction of cultural artifacts at the hands of the Spanish becomes, in some ways, easier to understand. Although there may not be a great deal of cultural artifacts left on a specific Nahuatl community, some understanding of said group can be achieved by means of studying another Nahuatl community, since there exists a shared culture. This is not to minimize or undermine the gravity of the destruction of the indigenous communities at the hands of the Spanish conquerors but is only meant as an explanation for how it is that one may speak of something like 'Ancient Nahua Philosophy.'

On a final note, 'Ancient Nahua' will be used throughout the text as a way to distinguish between Nahua thought from the fifteenth century to the early sixteenth century, which is our concern, from that of the current Modern Nahua communities in Mexico. It would be absurd to expect the culture of the Modern Greeks to be the same as that of the Ancient Greeks; it would likewise be absurd to expect the Modern Nahua culture to conform to that of the Ancient Nahua.

[5] Kissam and Schmidt, *Flower and Song*, 9
[6] Garcia, *La Vision*, 31-32
[7] León-Portilla, *La Filosofia*, 1
[8] Ibid., 1
[9] Ibid., 1

And so, 'Ancient Nahua' will be used in order to guard against misunderstandings or hasty generalizations of a Modern community who deserve their own consideration, time, and inquiry. With that said, we may now delve into the role of the *tlamatini* in the times of the Ancient Nahua.

Tlamatinime as Poet

Of the little new Spanish scholarship produced on the topic of Ancient Nahua philosophy, most of it has centered around the notion of the poet. This could be, in part, due to the striking similarities between the Ancient Greek and Ancient Nahua in respect to their relationships between philosophy and poetry. However, it could also be due to the great emphasis the Ancient Nahua themselves placed on the role of *tlamatinime* as poets. But this raises the question: what was a poet for the Ancient Nahua?

In order to understand the philosopher's role as poet, it is necessary to know that the literary tradition of the Ancient Nahua is largely in the form of poetry; in the form of *in xochitl in cuicatl*: flower and song. Ancient Nahuatl is in many ways characterized by its highly metaphorical and diphrastic tendencies. For example, the word for 'poetry' is conveyed through the use to two separate phrases, *in xochitl* and *in cuicatl*, which create new meaning when combined. *Cuicatl*, the later portion of the diphrase means "not only 'to sing' and 'song' but poem as well."[10] In a similar fashion, *xochitl* carries the meaning of 'flower' but the same hieroglyphic that represents 'flower' is also the "conventional sign of 'word' - a will."[11] And so although the phrase *in xochitl in cuicatl* can be literally translated as 'flower and song' the notion is something closer to that of poetry as a 'flowering song,' or even a 'song of the word/will'.

The notion of *in xochitl in cuicatl* becomes further entangled for the Nahua when the notion of truth comes into play. In an Ancient Nahua poem, a singer relates:

> Ayocuan Cuetzpaltzin, who certainly knows the giver of life, spoke as such…
> There I heard his word, it is certainly his, the giver of life responds to the bellbird.
> He is singing, He offers flowers, offers flowers
> Like the emeralds and quetzal feathers
> His words are raining.
> Is the giver of life satisfied there?
> Is this the only truth on Earth? [11]

[10] Leander, *In Xochitl*, 3
[11] León-Portilla, *La Filosofia*, 142

The theme of song and flowers can be easily discerned, even in translation. There is also a clear call to a theological entity that is in possession of the 'flower and song'; in possession of truth. The poet-philosopher has access to the only truth on Earth because, according to the Ancient Nahua, the poet-philosopher is in possession of an "enthused heart" and, since the giver of life is in possession of truth, a person who has been possessed by the giver of life is also capable of speaking truth on Earth.[12]

This naturally leads to the question of how it is that the 'giver of life' can possess truth, while the *tlamatini*, without Him, cannot. In the tradition of the Ancient Nahua, the giver of life is in possession of what is true precisely because the giver of life lives in 'the beyond'. The origin of this theological figure is beyond the world, this allows the being to possess truth because, for the Ancient Nahua this world, the *tlalticpac*, and anything of this world is temporal and will be destroyed.[13] However, since poetry comes from the theological figure who is not a part of this temporal world poetry, the *tlamatini* can speak truth on Earth.

Tlamatinime as Moral Educators

As possessors of truth, the *tlamatini* also take on the role of educators, in particular, that of moral educators. In a translation of a different poem, a singer relates that:

> It is the wise one who transmits wisdom, he is the one who instructs, he follows truth. /
> Teacher of truth, he does not refrain from admonishing. /
> He makes wise foreign faces and makes others take on a face (personality), he makes them develop. /
> He opens their ears, he sheds light on them. /
> He is a teacher of guides, he gives them their paths. /
> One depends on him. /
> He places a mirror in front of others, he makes them sane, cautious; he makes it so that in them a face [personality] appears… /
> Whoever is confronted by him is corrected, is taught. /
> Thanks to him the people humanize their want and they receive a rigorous education. /
> He confronts the heart, confronts the people, aides, remedies, he cures all. [14]

[12] Ibid., 61
[13] Ibid., 60
[14] Ibid., 61

As mentioned previously, for the Ancient Nahua, the connection between 'word' and 'will' is tied in a single concept. This concept of 'word/will' is exceedingly similar to the English 'will', which carries a relationship between desire and action.[15]

For Nahua philosopher-poets the 'word/will,' however, achieved a certain connection to truth in their roles as moral educators. The issue of 'want' or 'desire' is of central ethical concern for the *tlamatini* of the Ancient Nahua. To better understand how this is, let us look at the diphrase for personality, which features throughout the poem that relates the *tlamatini* as moral educators. The diphrase for personality is comprised of 'face,' *in ixtli*, and 'heart,' *in yollotl*.[16] *Yollotl*, or the heart, for the Ancient Nahua is also implicated in action, a fact that can be seen in one of the components of *yollotl*: *ollin*, the root of *-otl*, which means movement or action.[17] As a whole, *yollotl* can be understood as "humankind who seeks and yearns" where the movement and action can be seen in conjunction with desire, the 'seeking and yearning.'[18] *Ixtli*, or face, becomes a type of conduit for the desires of the heart and so 'face and heart' become 'personality.'[19] The role of the *tlamatini*, in the time of the Ancient Nahua, as a moral educator can now be seen more clearly in the aforementioned poem where numerous allusions to faces and desire are abound.

That the *tlamatini* served as moral educators and not merely educators is indicated in the notion that he not only corrects, but admonishes, in relation to the want of the people. It can further be seen in the last line where the poet states that the *tlamatini* "confronts the heart, confronts the people" and "cures all."[20] If we recall that philosophers contained an 'enthused heart' that flowers also carry the meaning of word/will, that the giver of life "offers flowers, [He] offers flowers," and that "His words are raining," then the mode by which the *tlamatini* serve as moral educators can be understood.[21] The originator, who possesses truth, offers "flowers," or true will to the *tlamatini* through their enthused hearts. Since the *tlamatinime* have true will they are able to instruct, guide, and 'humanize' the will of others.

[15] See Oxford English Dictionary, *Will*
[16] León-Portilla, La Filosofia, 384-396
[17] Ibid., 384
[18] Ibid., 73
[19] Ibid., 396
[20] Ibid., 73
[21] Ibid., 142

Possible Objections and Criticisms

Although the previous two sections have focused on *tlamatinime* as moral educators and poets, the question of how it is that they can be thought of philosophers in the first place is still worthy of inquiry. The English word 'philosopher' is derived from the Greek *'phil'* and *'sophos'* which roughly means 'lover of wisdom.' Likewise the Nahuatl '*tlamatini*' has the root *'matini,'* or 'wisdom' while '*tlamatini*' as a whole is translated as 'one who has wisdom of things'.[22] From and etymological perspective, the similarities between philosophers and *tlamatinime* are obvious.

There remains, however, the question of how it is that the *tlamatini* acquire their wisdom of things. The contrast between authentic *tlamatini* and false *tlamatini* as elaborated by the Ancient Nahua can offer an explanation. In regards to authentic *tlamatinime* the Ancient Nahua relate:

> The true medic: *tlamatini*, gives life
> Knows experimentally of things: knows of herbs, rocks, trees, roots, through experimentation.
> Has tested his remedies, examines, experiments, cures illnesses,
> Gives massages, sets bones.
> Purges the people, he makes them feel well, gives brews [potions], bleeds them, cuts, sows....[23]

On the other hand, the Ancient Nahua say the following about false *tlamatinime*:

> The false *tlamatini*: is a man without feeling and, as an ignorant medic, claims to know about God.
> He has his own traditions, which he guards.
> He is vainglorious, his is vanity.
> He makes things difficult, is boastful and inflates things.
> He is a river, a rocky place.
> He is a lover of obscurity and corners.
> Mysterious wise-one, medicine-man, magician,
> thief of the public, taker of things.
> Medicine-man, who makes the face of others turn back:
> makes the face of people wander, makes others lose their face.
> Covers things, makes them difficult, makes them complicated, destroys them
> makes people perish, he mysteriously destroys all.[24]

[22] Ibid., 66
[23] Ibid., 85
[24] Ibid., 73

Authentic *tlamatini*, then, attain their 'wisdom of things' by experimenting; through some methodology, or science, the authentic *tlamatini* is able to obtain wisdom. It's also worth noting that the authentic philosopher is also one who utilizes the wisdom gained through experimentation to aid people.

The Ancient Nahua's characterization of what a false philosopher does is, in many ways, more telling than the description of the authentic philosopher. While the authentic philosopher has wisdom, which is gained through science, the false philosopher is a 'medicine-man': a quack doctor. There is no mention of experimentation or methodology of any kind in the description of the false philosopher, instead he is 'mysterious' and a 'magician'. A clear juxtaposition arises between the authentic, methodological, philosopher and the false, superstitious, 'philosopher'.

It is also interesting to note that although the *tlamatini* as a poet has a connection to and has knowledge of 'God' through truth, the false philosopher is 'ignorant' and merely 'claims' to have knowledge of God. Similarly, while the *tlamatini* as a moral educator is able to cultivate the 'faces' of people by educating them on true 'will', the false *tlamatini* makes the 'faces' of people 'wander' and get 'lost.' This is most likely because the false *tlamatini* does not know what is the true 'will' since the false *tlamatini* lacks methodology and knowledge of God, the source of truth.

In regards to the question of whether the poet and moral educator must be philosophers for the Ancient Nahua, the answer is a definite yes. The philosopher, the *tlamatini*, acquires the wisdom of things through methodology; for the Ancient Nahua, a *tlamatini* cannot be a poet or moral educator without science and still be an authentic *tlamatini*. If a person should try to convey anything about truth in connection to God—like the poet does—without having the methodology necessary to be someone who has wisdom of things, there would be only 'ignorance' and 'vanity'. Moreover, if a person should try to be a moral educator without science, there would not be a development of people's 'faces,' but instead 'wandering' and 'lost faces'.

The status of *tlamatini* as a philosopher becomes apparent through the distinction between true and false *tlamatini*. True *tlamatinime*, the 'ones who have wisdom of things', are able to gain wisdom through science, through methodology. False *tlamatinime* are unable to gain 'wisdom of things' because they lack science, methodology. Wisdom then, for the Ancient Nahua, is akin to knowledge which is distinct from opinion, unlike the unjustified beliefs of the false *tlamatini*.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Latinos would benefit from philosophical inquiry of the Ancient Nahua because it would help cultivate knowledge of their particular philosophical history. I have shown, however, that Ancient Nahua philosophy offers insights that merit study from philosophical academia in general. The necessary condition of science in philosophy for the Ancient Nahua allowed them to form ideas about the nature of truth, which lies outside or beyond time, and allowed the Ancient Nahua to arrive at some notion of good that, like truth, could be objectively observed; facts which can be seen in the Ancient Nahua descriptions of philosophers and their critique of false philosophers. The methodological approach applied to their considerations of philosophers and philosophy itself alone hints at the level of rigor one would likely find in the rest of their philosophical considerations on topics such as Aesthetics, Metaphysics, or Epistemology.

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The Philosophy of Imagination and William Blake's Jesus

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Abstract

The artist-poet William Blake claims that "Jesus & his Apostles & Disciples were all Artists."[1] Blake committed his artistic career to religious writing, and gave rise to a new Christianity, which better encapsulated the realities of the existential human condition. In what follows, I will explore Blake's philosophy of religion and of imagination. Through an explication of Blake's meta-poetry, I aim to illuminate Blake's depictions of the connection between the imagination and religion. In devising a Blakean philosophy of imagination, I consider the connection between metaphor and Blake's imaginative poetics, as well as the poetry of Wallace Stevens, which further corroborates that the Blakean notion of the imagination are indispensable and eternally necessary.

On his Engraving of the Laocoon, the artist-poet William Blake makes the claim that "Jesus & his Apostles & Disciples were all Artists." In Blake's art and poetry, a propensity towards the revolutionary—and even towards the apocalyptic—can be observed. Sacrilegious and controversial, Blake, in many ways, committed the entirety of his artistic career to religious (and spiritual) writing. It can be said that Blake's writing gave rise to a new Christianity, a revolutionary twist, if you will, on the "new religion" brought to life by Jesus (and Saint Paul), which better encapsulated the realities of the existential human condition: (1) the universal existence of the creative, visionary human imagination, and (2) the duality of the world and its metaphysical qualities (namely, Good and Evil).

Jesus, Blake's 'artist', manifests the harmonization of good and evil. Blake, influenced primarily by his contemporary Neoplatonist, Thomas Taylor, would have equated the body with *evil*, and the human mind with *good*. The tension-bearing dialectic

[1] Blake, William. *The Poetical Works of William Blake*, ed. by John Sampson. London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1908; Bartleby.com, 2011.

of body and mind is "solved" through the advent of the revolutionary Christ-figure: a harmonization possible only in and through the human imagination is *realized* through the 'artwork'[2] of Jesus Christ: the revolutionary marriage (of flesh and spirit) that he represents. Such paradigm—the deconstruction and amalgamation of the world's "binary opposites"—is illustrated in Blake's "Marriage of Heaven and Hell." In the "Marriage", Blake attempts to depict a world in which good and evil *coexist*, and are *interdependent*. Evil does not exist as an entity in and of itself. Rather, it exists upon a spectrum of *Good*, and in the end, *emanates* from the Good. Here we see Blake's Neoplatonism come to light. The example is oft cited with respect to the Neoplatonic conception of good and evil: let us suppose that we have a fire, and that fire represents *The Good*. As we distance ourselves from the fire—from *The Good*—we call that distance *evil*. Evil, as we see, therefore, does not exist on its own, but rather emanates from The Good—it is viewed in relativity to The Good. Nonetheless, Blake believed that the imagination—the mind, representing *The Good*—provides us with the ability to reconcile the merely apparent dichotomy that we face in our lived experience. Through art, and through the creative imagination, we are able to envision a *perfect world*, where the body—and by extension, all of the material world—is seen as divine, as truly emanating from *The Good*, rather than as *evil*, diametrically opposed to *Goodness*.

This artistic power, Blake believed, realized through the figure of Jesus Christ, was *democratic*; transcending all limiting, hierarchical boundaries of culture, language, and historical time. Man's responsibility, as a bearer of the creative, artistic imagination, Blake believed, was not to internalize the laws and creations of others, but rather to create a conception of *goodness*, on his own and for himself. We are all artists, Blake would claim, who can *realize* the impossible, and who *should*, as Christianity preaches, be like Jesus, the artist.[3] He writes in his *Engraving of the Laocoon*: "The Whole Business of Man Is the Arts, & All Things Common. No Secrecy in Art." The arts, for Blake, are universal. The creative imagination is held by all conscious beings—it is "Common." The power of the imagination—to marry the otherwise dichotomous world—is the purpose, or 'Business' of Man. Here, there seems to be a double-entendre found in Blake's usage of

[2] My use of the word "artwork" is here intentionally ambiguous. That is, I am to articulate that Christ, as God Himself, Christ *creates* artwork, and as God's *creation* (as man), He is Himself as *work of art*.
[3] ("Make real")

the word *"Whole"*: The first interpretation is that the *whole* business of Man's life, as Blake sees it, is indeed, "the Arts". Additionally, the arts, and the creative imagination, serve to make man *whole*, for they consummate his two parts: mind and body, spirit and flesh.

Blake's belief in the necessity of the reconciliatory in redemption is illustrated in the penultimate plate (99) of his *Jerusalem* series. The plate depicts a bearded elder embracing a younger woman (*Jehovah* and *Jerusalem*, respectively), below which appear the following lyrics:

> All Human Forms identified, even Tree Metal Earth & Stone.
> All Human Forms identified, living going forth & returning wearied
> Into the Planetary lives of Years Months Days & Hours reposing
> And then Awaking into his Bosom in the Life of Immortality.
> And I heard the Name of their Emanations they are named Jerusalem.[4]

In the depiction, the younger girl, *Jerusalem*, acts as a symbol of the physical world, which *looks up to* (as she does in the depiction) the elder *Jehovah*, the *God*, not of Jerusalem alone, but of "all the earth" (Psalm 47:2). The apocalyptic faith is outlined by Blake ("…Into the Planetary lives of Years Months Days & Hours reposing…"), as Jerusalem, confined initially by space and time, "awakes in the Life of Immortality." In Blake's depiction, the act of theosis occurs not with the neglect of the body, but rather with the enactment of bodily intercourse, as Jehovah is shown penetrating the body of Jerusalem. For Blake, whose spiritual notion of sexuality is best explained in Marsha Keith Schuchard's study, *William Blake's Sexual Path to Spiritual Vision*, the eidos of the reconciliatory act is intercourse—the orgasm—which brings together the body and the imagination. In the depiction, Jerusalem—the young girl—realizes the faith through her sexual encounter with Jehovah. Often regarded as exclusively evil, sexuality is a means of connecting with *The Good*, or *Jehovah*. The Good, as we now see, is not entirely distinct from its counterpart, *evil*; rather, with the advent of Jesus, and the penetration of Jehovah, *evil*, itself, or the *bodily*, it becomes clear, emanates from *The Good*, and is therefore a means of *re-connecting* with the creator. When the world became polluted with sin, and deviated from the creative vision of its creator, we were redeemed, according

[4] Blake, William. The Poetical Works of William Blake, ed. by John Sampson. London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1908; Bartleby.com, 2011.

to the Tradition, by *the person*, or *body*, of Jesus. Christians are asked to be like Jesus—a manifestation of the harmony of flesh and body. Since, as the Neoplatonist Blake would affirm, *all being* emanates from *Good*, then even the bodily, and what we call *Evil*, emanates from the *Good*, and can be used as an effective means of connecting with the Good.

Orgasm, moreover, for Blake, represents the perfect, Christ-like consummation of the bodily and the mental. Orgasm, a bodily manifestation brought on by the faculty of imagination, is a Christ-like example of the harmony of the flesh and the spirit. The *rising action* to the climax of sexuality occurs subsequent to an imagining, a fantasy. The non-empirical, "*unreal*" imagination penetrates the membrane of the bodily, 'real' (*tangible*) realm, and gives rise to orgasm. Blake refers to the orgasm, in the context of (the apocalyptic) religion, again, in his Plate 99 of the *Jerusalem* series. In Plate 99, Jehovah penetrates Jerusalem, and we are redeemed when the flesh and spirit become one, in the figure of Jesus Christ. Redemption occurs through reconciliation: "Deity, nature, politics, religion, art, body, and interiority are conjoined, but only conjoined in their ultimate reversal, as each becomes the very opposite of its given or manifest expression, thus making possible a truly comprehensive apocalyptic vision."[5] This reconciliation, as Blake portrays, occurs through self-annihilation: the self and the other—Jerusalem and Jehovah; the body and the imagination—became one. As John writes, "God is love."[6] Jesus *is* the eidos, or *model*, of love—an apocalyptic love that is made possible through self-annihilation, and the *becoming* of the *other*. Jesus *becomes* man: this self-annihilation and reversal *is* love. Jehovah loved His people—*Jerusalem*—so he became one with her. In orgasm, the imagination no longer envisions a dichotomous world; instead, we experience a unitary world. We become holy—like God—through the orgasm, because we take part in *enosis*. The imagination, which is the First Cause of the orgasm (which could not occur sans the imagination), allows us to reach *enosis*, or *theosis*. The imagination is a necessity, thus, in the living out of religious life: for only with the faculty of imagination can we actually erect the process of *becoming God-like*.

It is interesting, furthermore, to consider this concept as we see it in Blake's

[5]Altizer, Thomas. "The Revolutionary Vision of William Blake," The Journal of Religious Ethics, 37.1 (2009), 36-37.
[6] 1 John. 4:8.

Jerusalem, in the context of the Gospel of John, specifically in the Johannine double-entendre on *logos*. In becoming the *spoken* image—the *Word*—God reveals himself to humanity. When God becomes *man*, he not only enters the language of man, as the Word, but also enters into the *logic* of man. God is no longer a nebulous being, neither containable nor comprehendible to the human or in this world, but rather, He becomes evident to, and enters into direct dialogue with, his creation. In the Hebraic (Old-Testament) conception, the human imagination is limited: it is to reflect the otherworldly God that exists in a separate (Formal) realm. With the advent of a more transcendental, "lamp-like" concept of the imagination, as Blake exhibits in his artwork, writing, and philosophical thought, it is seen that the human is able to *logically* comprehend God (through the revolutionary Christ), who embodies and communicates through the Word, the language of His beloved people. This comprehension, nonetheless—a harmonization of the dichotomies of the world (flesh and spirit), as seen through Jesus Christ—is facilitated by the creative imagination, a necessary gateway, I argue, to faith in the revolutionary Jesus Christ.

If Blake, nonetheless, believes that Jesus and his disciples were artists, then would it not hold that Blake, the poet and painter, is himself, Jesus-like? Much like the *Logos*, Blake contains, through his art, the offspring of the creative imagination. His art is an *incarnation* of the imagination—the divine imagination, which, much like God, the father, creates *ex nihilo* (pursuant, of course, to the Romantic, Modern paradigm of the lamp-like imagination). Through the imagination—the source of his art—Blake claims, in his "Auguries of Innocence," that the imagination can assist us "To see a world in a grain of sand / And a heaven in a wild flower, / Hold infinity in the palm of your hand / And eternity in an hour."[7] Through the poetic imagination, we are able to connect with the divine. We, temporal beings, can understand "eternity" within our "hour". The ancient mimetic conception of imagination would hold that our *imagining* of eternity within the hour—our *copy* of eternity into our spatiotemporal, fallen realm—would be illusory. The modern paradigm of the human imagination, however, holds that we are given all the parts in the here and the now to understand divinity—to create our own conception of God, as creative beings ourselves. Sexuality, as Blake holds, is a means of spirituality. Out

[7] Blake, William. "Auguries of Innocence". Poetryfoundation.org.

of ourselves, and our own powers, we realize the divine. The way that we make meaning—make worlds out of grains of sand, as Blake says—is the way that we understand and order our world. The divine is orderly, and through art, and through the Word (through *logos*), we order—or make *logical*—our world. God is order and logic. God is the implication of causation that we derive from correlation. This godly order and logic enters our world through the imagination, and through the way that we *envision* and *imagine* the purpose of various things in our world. The creative artist, thus, as Jesus, reconciles and harmonizes through his imagination: this, after all, *is* the "The Whole Business of Man."[8]

This artistic and poetic act, nonetheless, comes through the use of metaphor, which becomes indispensable as a result of the aforementioned act of self-annihilation, much in the way that metaphor becomes necessary as a result of the annihilation of (or realization of the arbitrariness of) the linguistic sign. If we posit, as a result of the realization of the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign, that predication comes about through negation, then it must be the case that in his "whole business," man perpetually creates metaphor. That is, if we accept that the nature of the linguistic sign is arbitrary and the signifier and signified are bound merely by a superficial social contract, then it must be the case that our own being—existence—is always realized through negation, and not predication. In the statement "I am me", 'me' is an empty sign. It gives us no information about the 'I', and the 'I', therefore, also remains empty. However, if I were to say that "I am not a tree", then the 'I'—the ego—would begin to take on meaning. In fact, the 'I' can be defined merely through an infinite list of negations. Language, thus, seems always to be poetic and metaphorical. Even in stating what something *is*, we compare that *something*, in a metaphorical manner, to what it is not. In Jehovah's ecstatic emptying of the self, a metaphorical act comprised of the relationship of non-identical objects must occur. For Blake, the artistic and poetic act—marked by its metaphorical nature—gives way to theosis and the possibility of Christ, marked, like poetry and art, by a metaphorical nature, a comparison, or harmonization, of contraries.

This understanding of the imagination prevails throughout the Romantic Movement, into modernism (indeed, my aforementioned consideration of language, and the linguistic sign, is, in many ways, a modernist consideration). In demonstration, I cite

[8] Ibid.

the poetry of Wallace Stevens. But first, I believe that an excerpt from Matthew Maguire's *The Conversion of Imagination* situates Stevens in the context of Blake:

> . . . a poet like Wallace Stevens would seem to have a speculative aesthetic radically distinct from Blake—or for that matter from Deleuze, or from the global culture of spectacle—but he too finds in imagination a power that expands infinitely beyond its assistance to his art . . . elsewhere Stevens can say for others, 'we say God and the imagination are one.[9]

Notwithstanding, in Stevens' "The Plain Sense of Things," we see the importance of the imagination. Stevens begins his poem with a death—the death of nature, and of the imagination: "After the leaves have fallen, we return / To a plain sense of things. It is as if / We had come to an end of the imagination [...]"[10]. Though, by the penultimate stanza, the poet ejects himself from his dark surroundings and sees his words—his morose words—as products of the imagination. The paradox is thus highlighted: "Yet the absence of the imagination had / Itself to be imagined." By the conclusion of the poem, Stevens comes to terms with the *requirement* of imagination in human existence: ". . . all this / Had to be imagined as an inevitable knowledge, / Required, as a necessity requires."[11] The imagination thus appears as curse and charm. Its desires and expectations, unfulfilled, precipitate melancholia, though the imagination itself, through which we devise meaning, leads also to the understanding of (existential) purpose. Through the imagination, we transcend the "plain sense of things." We relinquish a sense of purposelessness, especially in the face of a changing, evolving nature and append a sense of artistic beauty to the natural, physical world. As Blake consistently articulates, through the imagination and through art, we transcend the "evil", fallen world of matter, and are enabled to become Jesus-like. The human imagination dominates nature. Everything becomes conquerable with the imagination—including evil, and including "the plain sense of things." Through art, Stevens the poet transcends this 'plain sense.' The imagination is therefore legitimately compared to God by Stevens: the imagination, like God, *creates* the world (the sense of the world that we experience), and conquers nature. Thus, we can interpose Blake's words regarding Jesus the artist with those of Saint Paul in his letter to the

[9] Maguire, *The Conversion of Imagination: From Pascal through Rousseau to Tocqueville.*
[10] Stevens, "The Plain Sense of Things".
[11] Ibid.

Philippians: "I can do all things through Christ [the artist], who strengthens me."[12]

Blake's art makes us aware of the power of the imagination: its Christ-like power, to be precise. Blake's Jesus exemplifies the manner in which we are to imagine the essence of our world. Through Jesus, we see not a pied, dichotomous world, in which our *enmeshment in matter* is in tension with our possibility of realizing divinity. Through art—and through the *artwork* of the figure of Jesus—we are able to imagine a harmonious world in which *all* is Good. Through the imagination, we transcend our "plain sense of things," and become like God. Blake's Jesus, who correctly, I claim, reflects that of the Bible, is apocalyptic and revolutionary. We are all artists, says Blake, and we therefore are Christ-like—able to transcend the dichotomous world of flesh and spirit—and become closer with the divine, through our power of imagination. There seems to be no difference among Blake the artist, the conscious, imagination-bearing human being, and Jesus.

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[12] Phil. 4:13.

Of Hearts and Kings: The *Body Politic* and Metaphor in Al-Farabi's *Perfect State*

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Abstract

The *body politic*, the metaphor that likens states to bodies, is one of the oldest political metaphors in history. This paper examines the role of the *body politic* in the work of medieval philosopher Abu NasrAl-Farabi, specifically his magnum opus *Perfect State*. Recent discussions of Al-Farabi's *body politic* have focused on its role in justifying a certain political structure. As I argue, however, such accounts fall short on the complex understanding Al-Farabi exhibits of the functionality of metaphor. Drawing on Al-Farabi's own writings the paper identifies four distinct versions of metaphor in Al-Farabi's work: (1) poetic metaphors, (2) metaphors as "transferred terms", (3) metaphors as concealment and (4) metaphors as didactic tools. These concepts are subsequently applied in a close reading and confronted with normative criticisms to produce a multi-faceted account of Al-Farabi's use of the *body politic*. Accordingly, the paper demonstrates that Al-Farabi's political philosophy and his theory of metaphor are inextricably linked.

Al-Farabi and the Birth of Islamic Political Philosophy

In the tradition of Islamic philosophy Abu Nasr Muhammad Al-Farabi (ca. 870-950)[1] is known as the "second teacher" after Aristotle, a title that bears witness to his paramount importance to the discipline. While leaving only a few biographical traces, Al-Farabi has bequeathed the afterworld with an oeuvre ranging from influential works on music to commentaries on Greek philosophers and treatises on metaphysics and epistemology. He is also considered the founder of Islamic political philosophy.[2] Inspired by Plato's *Laws* and his *Republic,* as well as Aristotle's *Politica* and *Nicomachean Ethics,* Al-Farabi developed a "highly differentiated account" of the philosophy of society in several books.[3]

Al-Farabi's arguably most famous book is titled *The Opinions of the People of the Virtuous*

[1] All dates are CE unless specified otherwise.
[2] Dunlop and Al-Farabi, *Fusul Al-Madani,* 5.
[3] Germann, "Al-Farabi's Philosophy of Society and Religion."

City (Mabadi' Ara' Ahl-Madîna-Fadila), subsequently referred to by the title of its most common Anglophone translation as *Perfect State.*[4] Finished and published only shortly before Al-Farabi's death, the book can be seen as his *Summa Philosophiae,* in which he combines and systematizes his cosmological, metaphysical and political thought. *Perfect State* can essentially be divided into five parts:[5] Its first part deals with the unchanging eternal world and the *first cause*, from which all being emanates. The second part then investigates what Al-Farabi calls the "sublunary world" and with celestial bodies, followed by a third part concerned with the human itself. In the fourth part, Al-Farabi discusses structures of society, the perfect state and its aberrations. The final and fifth part constitutes a critique of what Al-Farabi considers false views held by the citizens of his contemporary, imperfect states.

Metaphorical language is pervasive throughout all five parts of the *Perfect State*. Often, Al-Farabi uses illustrative metaphors to explain to his readers some of his more complex philosophical concepts. For instance, Al-Farabi compares the "first cause" to a source of light, which is so bright the human eye cannot conceive it.[6] Light-metaphors keep reappearing throughout the book, for example in Chapter 13.[7] where Al-Farabi employs the same figure to rationalize the relationship between "intellect in actuality" and "material intellect". Another case is Al-Farabi's usage of the example of a wooden bed to elucidate the difference between form and matter in the fifth chapter[8]. And in chapter 16, he invokes the image of an artist or a craftsman to develop a general theory of the attainment of felicity[9], this, too being a comparison frequently made. The given examples illustrate not only that metaphorical language is present in *Perfect State*, but also that these metaphorical expressions keep falling back to the same underlying structural patterns and sources.

Probably the most prominent case of conceptual metaphor in Al-Farabi's *Perfect State* is his employment of the *body politic*, "the oldest political metaphor in history."[10] The *body politic* equates a state or nation to a corporeal entity, in other words: it likens states to bodies. Recent discussions of the *body politic* in Al-Farabi's work (e.g. Fekkak 2012) have focused on their role

[4] Perfect State is the title of Richard Walzer's 1985 translation of the text, which will be used in this paper. The translated title falls short the original title of the book, but will be adopted for simplicity purposes hereafter.
[5] Walzer and Al-Farabi, *Perfect State,* 7.
[6] Ibid., 79.
[7] Ibid., 201.
[8] Ibid., 109.
[9] Ibid., 261.
[10] Harvey, A. D. "The Body Politic", 85.

in explaining and justifying certain modes of politics—the kingly craft and the role of civil society. This paper, however, is going to argue that there is more to Al-Farabi's employment of the *body politic*. As I am going to argue, the key to understanding the *body politic* as a conceptual metaphor lies in Al-Farabi's own theory of metaphor, which is developed in his comments on Aristotle and other works. If we want to understand Al-Farabi's metaphors, we have to understand his own theory of metaphor first.

Al Farabi's Theory of Metaphor

It is barely known or discussed that Al-Farabi was himself an important scholar of metaphor, whose works on metaphor had a considerable impact in the medieval world. Just one example is the influence Al-Farabi had on Moses Maimonides, as delineated by Mordechai Cohen in his article *Logic to Interpretation: Maimonides' Use of al-Farabi's Model of Metaphor*.[11] Al-Farabi's theory of metaphor, as outlined in his *Short Treatise On Aristotle's De Interpretatione*, distinguishes between two different principles of semantic substitution:

> (1) A term is used metaphorically [*bi-sti`aratin; "borrowed", the technical term for metaphor in Arabic,* E.K.] if at the time it was first introduced it was allotted to a certain thing as a proper signifier, but as time went by another thing came to be labeled by it owning to some affinity, no matter of what kind, between it and the original <referent>, though the word is not the appointed signifier of the second <referent>[12]
>
> (2) A term is transferred [*al-ism al-manqul, a term closer to the Greek metapherein,* E.K.] if a word generally known to have been the signifier of a certain thing ever since it was first introduced is later taken and used to signify a certain other thing, but remains the common name of the first and the second. The situation arises when discoveries are made by developing disciplines. Before that, the things discovered had generally been unknown and therefore remained unnamed. The discoverer then transfers to them the name of the known thing he thinks most closely akin to it.[13]

Al-Farabi's *Bi-sti`aratin*—the first term—offers a historical account of metaphor. It suggests that semantic substitutions may happen due to similarities in the meaning of certain concepts. Later in the text, Al-Farabi clarifies that *Bi-sti`aratin* are basically poetic metaphors: They "are not used in any science, nor in disputation, but they are used in religion and poetry."[14] The second

[11] Cohen, "Logic to Interpretation."
[12] Al-Farabi and Zimmermann, C*ommentary and short treatise on Aristotle's De interpretatione,* 227.
[13] Ibid., 227.
[14] Ibid., 231.

term, *Al-ism al-manqul*, on the other hand, refers to the conscious application of "old" terms to new concepts and ideas. According to Al-Farabi, it serves specifically scientific and philosophical pursuits: "Transferred terms are used in sciences and other disciplines for things whose knowledge is particular to specialists. But when dealing scientifically with things generally known which have generally known names, scientists and other specialists should retain these names and use them in their disciplines in the way the general public understands."[15]

As Damien Janos points out in his book on Al-Farabi's cosmology, transferred terms are crucial to understanding Al-Farabi's "perception of the evolution of philosophy."[16] Janos also points out that Al-Farabi does not use these metaphorical terms at random, but that there is a method to his employment of these terms: "They go hand in hand with an analogical method called *naqlah*, which Al-Farabi appears to be using in his works."[17] And indeed, analogies or similes are at the core of Al-Farabi's work, especially the *Perfect State* and used consistently to describe cosmological, biological and political concepts. Just like with single transferred terms (*al-ism al-manqul*), the idea here is to explore rather complex matters through more accessible conceptions. Janos' remarks show that there is this link between Al-Farabi's single metaphorical expressions and his *naqlah* method, a link that this paper aims to capture through the analytical term of a "conceptual metaphor". Conceptual Metaphor Theory poses that while some metaphorical expressions might be incidental or specific to a certain situation, many can be traced back to certain underlying conceptual metaphors. The metaphorical expression "Our relationship is a dead-end street", for example, is just one of many expressions that would fall back to the conceptual metaphor "Love is a journey." Likewise, the expression "Barack Obama is the *head* of state of the USA" is just one of many metaphorical expressions that recur to the underlying conceptual metaphor that we have labelled the *body politic*. Conceptual Metaphor Theory thus draws our attention to the fact that metaphors are more than just ornamental rhetorical devices. They are "pervasive in everyday life, not just in language, but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature."[18]

So far, I have established two different kinds of metaphor in Al-Farabi's work, poetic

[15] Ibid., 231
[16] Janos, *Method, Structure, and Development,* 101.
[17] Ibid., 101
[18] Lakoff, et al., *Metaphors We Live By*, 3.

metaphors and transferred terms. Moreover, I have noted that in line with Al-Farabi's *naqlah* method these metaphors help us not only to analyze single metaphorical expressions, but also conceptual metaphors like the *body politic*.

The Farabian Jungle

Al-Farabi's uses of metaphor are, however, not limited to the two categories of poetic metaphor and transferred terms. In their foreword to Al-Farabi's *Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle,* Butterworth and Pangle quote a passage of Al-Farabi commenting on Plato's literary style:

> The wise Plato did not feel free to reveal and uncover every kind of knowledge for all people. Therefore he followed the practice of using symbols, riddles, obscurity and difficulty, so that the knowledge would fall into the hands of those who do not deserve it and be deformed, or into the hands of someone who does not know its worth or who uses it improperly. In this he was right.[19]

While metaphors are not explicitly mentioned here, there is a strong indication that language might not only be used by Al-Farabi to serve poetic or scientific pursuits, but also to conceal certain knowledge from the uninformed reader. To this day, scholars are grappling with the implications of this attitude. Some researchers, mainly in the tradition of Leo Strauss and his discipline Muhsin Mahdi, divide Al-Farabi's views into exoteric ones for a broad audience and esoteric ones written for an intellectual elite, while others read them more literally.[20] This goes as far as discussing whole chapters of Al-Farabi, like the early chapters of the *Perfect State* as essentially metaphorical maneuvers.[21] While this particular discussion is peripheral to the content of this paper, it reminds us to consider another possible use of metaphor in Al-Farabi's opus. I am going to call this use of metaphor 'metaphor as concealment'.

In a seemingly contradictory move, Farabi also emphasizes the educational or didactic value of metaphors in other texts of his. In *Philosophy of Aristotle*, for example, he remarks that: "image-making and imitation by means of similitudes is one way to instruct the multitude and the vulgar in a large number of difficult theoretical things so as to produce in their souls the impressions of these things by way of their similitudes."[22] In the *Perfect State* itself, Al-Farabi highlights the art of "symbolic representation" as a means to conveying the truth.[23] Metaphors, to Al-Farabi, are then not only thinkable as means of concealment, but also possibly the opposite,

[19] Butterworth and Pangle, "Foreword", 6.
[20] Druart, "Al-Farabi."
[21] Mahdi and Al-Farabi. *Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, 58-60.
[22] Ibid., 93.
[23] Walzer and Al-Farabi, *Perfect State,* 279.

didactic tools.

Amidst this Farabian jungle of ambiguous intentions and internal contradictions, we have hence established a total of four accounts of metaphor to guide our reading of the *Perfect State*: (1) poetic metaphors, (2) metaphors as transferred terms, (3) metaphors as concealment and (4) metaphors as didactic tools. All the while bearing in mind the implications of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, which reminds us not only to consider single metaphorical expressions, but the conceptual space they inhabit, this sets us ready for a more detailed examination of the *body politic* in Al-Farabi's *Perfect State*.

The *Body Politic* in *Perfect State*

The *body politic,* the understanding of society or a nation as a corporeal entity, is one of the oldest conceptual metaphors in the history of political ideas. Its roots date back as far as the Sanskrit *Rig-Veda* and Aesop's fable of the Belly and the Members. As Andreas Musolf's research demonstrates, the metaphor not only has a long history in the West but can be found in different variations in many various cultural contexts.[24] Most commentators focus on the metaphor's prominence in medieval Christianity, but it also played an important role within the Islamic tradition, as the thought of the believers as "one body" exemplifies.[25] The *body politic* already played a role in *Perfect State's* famous predecessor, Plato's *Republic.*[26] Maintaining that there is some sort of similitude between body and the state seems therefore to have been a familiar metaphor to Al-Farabi's contemporaries, both worldly and religious.

The first instance of the *body politic* in the *Perfect State* can be found in chapter 10 of the book. In chapter 10, Al-Farabi sets out to explain the human body and soul and their different capabilities. To understand these, he uses the metaphor of the body as a kingdom. For example, he compares the human heart to a "ruler," and concedes that all human faculties are "governed" by the heart's "ruling faculty."[27] This cardio-centric understanding of the body is also reflected in Al-Farabi's remark that "the ruling faculty is like the king in whose house the news in which the messengers from the provinces have to put it together."[28] These excerpts show that Al-Farabi's understanding of the human body is structured around the understanding of the body

[24] Musolff, Andreas, "Body Politic across Languages and Cultures."
[25] Grunebaum, *Medieval Islam.*
[26] Geroux, Robert. *Healing ideas.*
[27] Walzer and Al-Farabi, *Perfect State,* 167
[28] Ibid., 168

as a kingdom. The human heart, to him, is analogous to the ruler of his kingdom, while other body parts are compared to "messengers" and "auxiliaries" and "subordinates".

In chapter 15, Al-Farabi presents his readers with a second, slightly different version of the body politic. Why his usage in chapter 10 could be subsumed under the conceptual metaphor "body-as-kingdom", his employment of the metaphor in chapter 15 follows the pattern of "state-as-body". The chapter is dedicated to the character of the virtuous city, which Al-Farabi compares to a healthy body: "The excellent city resembles the perfect and healthy body, of all whose limbs co-operate to make the life of the animal perfect and to preserve it in his state."[29] As per Al-Farabi, the ruler of the city is comparable to the "most perfect and most complete of organs in itself and in its specific qualification"—the heart. He is "the most perfect part of the city in his specific qualification and has the best of everything which anybody else shares with him; beneath him are people who are ruled by him and rule others."[30]

Al-Farabi's other political writings confirm this understanding and its centrality to Al-Farabi's thought. For instance, aphorism 22 of his *Fusul al-Madani* reads as follows:

> The city and the household may be compared with the body of a man. Just as the body is composed of different parts of a determinate number, some more, some less excellent, adjacent to each other and graded, each doing a certain work, and there is combined from all their actions mutual help towards the perfection of the aim in the man's body, so the city and the household are each of different parts of a determinate number, some less, some more excellent . . . .[31]

A close reading of Al-Farabi's text thus proves that metaphors expressions which compare state and body are not accidental or ornamental devices in his texts, but part of an underlying conceptual metaphor that permeates his theory. The preceding analysis has also shown that he uses two distinct version of the body politic: "body-as-kingdom" and "state-as-body".

The Problem of Naturalization

There seems to be a crux to Al-Farabi's usage of the metaphor: In comparing the human body to a kingdom in the first step, Al-Farabi already precludes the monarchical order of the ideal state likened to a body later. This way, hierarchy and domination are inscribed into the logic of his implicit, two-step argument. Along with Al-Farabi's strong language of naturalness, this seems

[29] Ibid., 253
[30] Ibid., 253
[31] Dunlop and Al-Farabi, *Fusul Al-Madani,* 37.

to imply an inevitability of a stratified, autocratic political system. While El-Fekkak does not formulate it as sharply, he argues along similar lines that the *body politic* allows Al-Farabi to "put forward a justification of legitimate political authority."[32]

But is Al-Farabi really guilty of naturalizing power and societal domination? In chapter 15, §4, of *Perfect State,* he addresses this issue himself: "But the limbs and organs of the body are natural, and the dispositions which they have are natural faculties, whereas, although the parts of the city are natural their dispositions and habits . . . are not natural" and furthermore "To the natural faculties which exist in the organs and limbs of the body correspond the voluntary habits and dispositions in the parts of the city." Consequently, Nadja Germann rightly points out that it is not at all Al-Farabi's aim "to deny the distinction between the voluntary and the natural—quite the contrary . . . ." [33]. Indeed, Al-Farabi's whole book is based on the notions of free will, self-determination, and people's capability to attain happiness and organize in societies. And even the existence of a single monarch is not inherent to Al-Farabi's ideal state:

> When one single man who fulfills all these conditions cannot be found but there are two, one of whom is a philosopher and the other fulfills . . . . But when all these six qualities exist in separately in different men . . . , and when these men are all in agreement, they should all together be the excellent sovereigns.[34]

These comments constitute another disruption of the *body politic*—after all, a body with six hearts is hardly conceivable. The implications of Al-Farabi's two-folded use of the *body politic* and its framing of the state as an absolute monarchy are therefore sort of cushioned through his subsequent remarks. Al-Farabi seems to be aware of the drawbacks of his metaphor and addresses them quite directly, although he does not explicitly relate them to his *body politic.*

Hence altogether, Al-Farabi seems critically aware of the problematic nature of his metaphor and at the same time makes it a cornerstone of the conceptualization of his political project. He uses the metaphor in a very suggestive, two-step manner, but at the same time warns us to not take it too literally. Like so many of Al-Farabi's deliberations, this ostensibly contradictory state of affairs leaves the interpreter puzzled. It certainly defeats a reading of the *body politic* as a simple reference to the Quran or an allusion to Plato, who pioneered the *body politic* in his *Republic.* A reading that understands the *body politic* simply as a means of

[32] El Fekkak, *Cosmic Justice in al-Farabi's Virtuous City,* 3.
[33] Germann, "Al-Farabi's Philosophy of Society and Religion."
[34] Walzer and Al-Farabi, *Perfect State,* 253

legitimizing a certain political order would also be inadequate. Moreover, it is highly unlikely that Al-Farabi uses the *body politic* completely unaware and nonreflective, like a "dead" metaphor. To better understand Al-Farabi's *body politic*, one has resort to Al-Farabi's own writings on metaphor.

The *Body Politic* in Four Dimensions

We obtain a much more sophisticated understanding of the intricacies of Al-Farabi's use of the *body politic* when we consider the four dimensions of metaphor previously extracted from Al-Farabi's own theory of metaphor: (1) poetic metaphors, (2) metaphors as "transferred terms", (3) metaphors as concealment and (4) metaphors as didactic tools.

The first notion of a "poetic metaphor" helps us to understand what Al-Farabi does not understand the *body politic* to be. He would certainly understand his work to be a philosophical treatise and not a piece of poetry. The *body politic* is then, in turn, no historical metaphor and not an ornamental device.

It much rather resembles the second Farabian notion of *Al-ism al-manqul*, of metaphor as a means to explore and conceptualize something "generally . . . unknown and therefore . . . unnamed"[35]. In citing the *body politic* metaphor, Al-Farabi deliberatively uses the human body, a rather well-known terrain, to lay out something beyond the scope of his imagination, an ideal society. He does this consciously, as I have shown, and is at the same time quite aware of the metaphor's pitfalls and limitations. Al-Farabi realized that metaphor, while always to be critically reflected, is a fundamental feature of thought and of nearly indefinite creative potential. Critical reflection, like Al-Farabi's elaborations on the natural and the voluntary, however, do not preclude the abusive interpretation of his works and the many dangerous political implications unleashed by a literal apprehension of the *body politic*. Had his successors treated metaphor with the same kind of caution as Al-Farabi, there might have possibly been less atrocities justified through it.

Thirdly, the notion of metaphor as concealment points to another important aspect of the *body politic*. In the context of Al-Farabi's time the *body politic* was a metaphor not only inherited from the ancient Greeks, but also popular imagery from the Quran. This dual heritage of the metaphor benefits Al-Farabi's cause of producing political philosophy in a society shaped to a

[35] Al-Farabi and Zimmermann, C*ommentary and short treatise on Aristotle's De interpretatione,* 227.

large extent by religion. To what extent the *body politic* counts as a hinge between exoteric and esoteric readings of the *Perfect State* requires further investigation, but it is certainly an aspect to be considered.

Fourthly, the idea of metaphor as a didactic tool helps us to understand that Al-Farabi does not only use it as an instrument through which to enhance his understanding and imagination of an abstract ideal society, as discussed under (2). He also intentionally uses it as a way to communicate and explain his ideas, to possibly enable the reader to reproduce his thought experiments. And finally, it also helps us to shed light on the unresolved dichotomy of "body-as-kingdom" and "state-as-body". While the latter—the actual *body politic*—is to be read in mainly as a transferred term, the former more can be understood primarily as a didactic tool in explaining the human body. Such reading would explain the complicated relationship of the two metaphors and their intricacies.

Conclusion

We may therefore conclude that a multi-faceted approach is indispensable in theorizing Al-Farabi's use of the *body politic* in *Perfect State* and that his own theory of metaphor is instructive in producing such account. In this paper, I was able to identify four conceptions of metaphor in Al-Farabi's work, three of which may be applied to the *body politic* in *Perfect State:* metaphors as "transferred terms", metaphors as concealment and metaphors as didactic tools. As this inquiry has shown, the *body politic* is correspondingly used by Al-Farabi as a scientific tool in the conceptualizing of an "ideal society", as well as possibly as a hybrid exoteric Quranic reference and esoteric allusion to Plato, and as a tool of explanation at the same time. It is not simply the justification of a certain political order, an aspect on which other discussions have focused.

I have also attempted to re-introduce Al-Farabi as a scholar of metaphor, a subject which has not yet received much attention in the discussion of his work. Further investigations could examine his influence on other medieval thinkers in that matter. Additional research could also expand on the role other conceptual metaphors play in Al-Farabi's work, some of which I have identified in the first chapter of this paper.

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Lives That (Don't) Matter: The Construction of Abjection in the Public Consciousness

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Abstract

In this paper, I construct an ontological basis for the construction of an abject figure and explain the operation of this construction in the public sphere. In working with the concepts of social theorists, such as Judith Butler, I create an understanding of abjection as a way of framing certain lives so they are seen as "abject figures," the framing of which is built with the use of feminist film theory, critical theory, and philosophy of race as ways of reading texts to determine the visual planes on which abjection becomes a concept in the physical and metaphysical worlds and how this concept then becomes fixed on certain forms, thereby creating, abject figures.

In her diagnosis of the ease with which war is waged on those whose lives are not first recognized as having precarity, Judith Butler proposes that the epistemic value of framing lives in a conceivably recognizable way as ontological since, "we cannot refer to this 'being' outside of the operations of power, and we must make more precise the specific mechanisms of power through which life is produced."[1] The value of her project is in demarcating the ways in which structures of power frame others in order to decontextualize the necessity of their life, thereby eliminating grievability by limiting recognition. In light of her project and from the influences of critical theory, I am creating a substantive conceptual method that achieves the opposite—that demarcates ontological limits in order to understand the ways that systems of power produce abject "others" and how this construction then operates in the public consciousness.

While Butler's emphasis is on how the conditions of war are dependent on the production of politically saturated frames, my emphasis is much broader and applies to the production of abject "subjects"[2] via similar political frames. The way that these structures

[1] Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?*, 1.

[2] I am using "subject" here very loosely because, by definition, abjection and the abject are not subjects nor are they necessarily objects. This use will be clarified further during the presentation of the premises of my argument.

operate on the public is less about the formulation of an abject "subject" and instead about the conditions of abjection that form a theoretical archetype that serves as the criteria for an "other." In grounding my analysis in Butler's bodily ontology, I will use her terms, along with a combination of methods from thinkers in the fields of colonial and visual analyses, to develop a methodology for the conditions of abjection that lead to the construction of unrecognizable lives in the public consciousness and the visuality that then upholds the various manifestations of this construction. [3]

I will begin my argument by outlining Julia Kristeva's definition of abjection from *The Powers of Horror*. I will then use current examples of subjects whose identities are entangled with the recognition (or not) of their lives as illustrations of the ways in which the construction of abjection operates and how the conditions are manifested in certain visual interpretations and misrepresentations about these lives. Finally, I will discuss the implications of this conception and the broader scope of an abject ontology. These conditions are disjunctive, so one or all of them need be met in order to be considered a provision of the construction of an "abject subject," but since this project is conceptual the more conditions that are met, the more definitive the construction and the more precise its workings. In discussing the ways in which these conditions operate socially, I am providing an analysis of abjection as a focal point for public discourse, and as such, as a way of organizing society[4] by producing dichotomous relations between the masses and that which is "radically excluded."[5] The abject, then, is a focal point for public discourse precisely because it is something that exists in negation to an "I."

[3] "The public" is separate from "a public," and I am using "the public" here as Michael Warner does in *Publics and Counterpublics*, in which he defines it as "a social totality," or "a sense of the people in general" (413).
[4] In the ways in which Michael Warner says that publics are organized in *Publics and Counterpublics*
[5] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, 1.

The conditions for the construction of abjection are not necessarily what abjection is,[6] but what constitutes the reactions to and avoidance of the abject. In the case described, abjection is:

I. Ineluctable or unable to be avoided—it presents itself to us and is ever present, even if not wholly recognizable.
II. Simultaneously hypervisible and invisible—it hides and is hidden while remaining blatantly obvious, if not glaringly present.
III. Hypersexualized—in embodying the aspects of fear and death and the limits that we are disgusted by—it becomes a spectacle of misplaced affect.
IV. Reproduced and reproducible—so as to accompany a wide array of "subjects" and be used as a "weapon for authority."[7]

As previously stated, if these conditions are met then it can be asserted that abjection organizes the public opposite its relation to the stable fully-autonomous subject. The ways in which the abject is produced, presented, and performed are all features of its role in maintaining our status in the world as rational beings who belong in the broad system of institutions, social structures, and relations that constitute the workings of modern life.

Kristeva's account of the abject is something that, "draws [us] toward the place where meaning collapses"[8] and exists in opposition to an "I," or a fully autonomous self. As a result of this she notes the reactions to abjection—horror, disgust, repulsion—are the visceral reality of it is as something that, "notifies us of the limits of the human universe."[9] She describes abjection as,

> . . . what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite. The traitor, the liar, the criminal with a good conscience, the shameless rapist, the killer who claims he is a savior. . . . Any crime, because it draws attention to the fragility of the law, is abject . . .[10]

It is abjection that allows for the stable subsistence of the identity of a fully autonomous self, but the engagement with the abject causes a breakdown of meaning due to the blurring of the

[6] The form of the abject is a complex psychological concept that I am utilizing in specific political planes to attempt to make sense of the framing of particular lives—it exists outside of my definition as a specific concept, the elucidation of which would only serve to blur the objective of my project.
[7] Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look: A Counterhistory of Visuality*, xiii.
[8] Kristeva, *The Powers of Horror*, 1.
[9] Ibid., 10.
[10] Ibid., 11.

lines between object and self. As a result, the abject is situated outside of the boundaries of the symbolic[11]—things that are representable, translatable, or give some indication of our causal relationship to the world—and is problematic to our grasp on reality due to the ways in which it

> confronts us, on the one hand, with those fragile states where man strays on the territories of animal. Thus, by way of abjection, primitive societies have marked out a precise area of their culture in order to remove it from the threatening world of animals or animalism, which were imagined as representatives of sex and murder.[12]

The "marking out" of this area of culture is where the conditions for abjection begin to take shape and where my argument for its construction begins.

The first, and overarching, condition of abjection is that it is ineluctable, or unavoidable, but not wholly recognizable. This is based on Nicholas Mirzoeff's use of "ineluctable" from *Right To Look: A Counterhistory of Visuality*, which he uses to interpret the modalities of colonial visualities. He describes visuality as, "not, then, the visible, but it is twice ineluctable, unavoidable, inevitable."[13] Mirzoeff's ineluctability is tied to visuality and, consequently, to Kristeva's abjection. He defines visuality as,

> an early nineteenth-century term, meaning the visualization of history. This practice must be imaginary, rather than perceptual, because what is being visualized is too substantial for any one person to see and is created from information, images, and ideas. This ability to assemble a visualization manifests the authority of the visualizer.[14]

He claims that this type of visuality is metaphysical and borders on a concern with "the 'veil' between life and death," and as such is intertwined with power and perception, especially that of the imaginary.[15] Further, he claims that this take on visuality is, "not the visible, or even the social fact of the visible, as many of us had long assumed."[16] This visuality is metaphysical, and is the connection to abjection as an unavoidable aspect of reality. Kristeva's identification of the abject is as something that "disturbs identity, system, order," while remaining

[11] This is the "symbolic-imaginary-real" relationship of Jacques Lacan that situates us within the systems of perception and dialogue that produce subjectivity. The abject is closest to the real within this order. Jacques Lacan, "Symbol and Language," *The Language of the Self*.
[12] Ibid., 12-13.
[13] Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look*, xiii.
[14] Ibid., 474.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.

"ambiguous."[17] The nature of this ambiguity stems from the relationship between the necessity of it as something that is required in order to establish "my" position in the symbolic social order, but as something that, when directly confronted with, causes a collapse of meaning that assures me only of myself as something not-abject. The ability of the abject to mark a boundary of existence, experience, and representation is a feature of its ineluctability; however, it is the fact that the marking of this boundary is done outside the workings of the social order that contributes to the unrecognizability of the abject itself.

This relationship is best illustrated by Sara Ahmed's recognition of the stranger from her book, *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality,* where she compares the experience of "meeting" a stranger with the recognition that they are someone, "whom we have already recognised in the very moment in which they are 'seen' or 'faced' as a stranger."[18] She continues,

> The figure of the stranger is far from simply being strange; it is a figure that is painfully familiar in that very strange(r)ness. The stranger comes to be faced as a form of recognition: we recognise somebody as a stranger, rather than simply failing to recognise them.[19]

The figure of the stranger, at once unrecognizable, and simultaneously recognized by this fact, is in the same metaphysical position as the abject. The relationship between the stranger and he or she who recognizes them as such is similar to that of the abject and he or she who confronts the boundary marked by it. The form of the stranger is that of someone "whom we have not yet encountered," *and* "one whom we have already encountered."[20] The stranger is a figure whose existence is shaped by the fact of their unrecognizability, both as a body and as a familiar entity. Ahmed goes on to note of this figure,

> Strangers are not simply those who are not known in this dwelling, but those who are, in their very proximity, already recognised as not belonging, as being out of place. Such a recognition of those who are out of place allows both the demarcation and enforcement of the boundaries of 'this place', as where 'we' dwell . . . . The recognisability of strangers is determinate in the social

[17] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror,* 11.
[18] Ahmed, *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality*, 21.
[19] Ibid., 22.
[20] Ibid.

> demarcation of spaces of belonging: the stranger is 'known again' as that which has already contaminated such spaces as a threat to both property and person . . . .[21]

In the same way the stranger is produced by the fact of his unrecognizability, his construction determines the boundaries of society and marks the beginning of "we" in the public space as "belonging" and everything that exists "elsewhere or outside" the realm of belonging. The figure of the stranger is necessary to the construction of public spaces as familiar and stable in the representable world, while posing a threat to the very notions of stability and familiarity. Though the figure is not wholly representable, the construction of it is fully realized as "figurable," or "having already taken shape."[22] The stranger and the abject both configure a limit in the public sphere that serves to set a boundary for the real only to be expelled by the same public it produces.

The second condition for abjection is that it is simultaneously hypervisible and invisible. This has to do both with the reality of the spectacle of it and the private constructions of its invisible "presence." This is similar to Ahmed's stranger-strangeness relation primarily because the invisibility and hypervisibility relationship of the abject is due in large part to the boundary it sets between familiarity and all else outside the borders of representation. The invisibility/hypervisibility relation though visual[23] is primarily emblematic of the ways in which the reality of abjection is compromised before the construction is composed due to the fact that these aspects of its conception lead one to believe abjection is a "thing," (with full physical form as an object or subject), but once again these are misrepresentations of abjection as they do not reach the pith of abjection as a metaphysical entity outside the realm of immediately reproducible or recognizable representations. The visual element of abjection here is about the relation of the repulsion or expulsion of a thing (that is not a thing) that is not "I" and the ways in which this expulsion or repelling is hidden or made into a spectacle (of hiddenness).

Darieck Scott illustrates this in the form of the black abject subject in *Extravagant Abjection: Blackness, Power, and Sexuality in the African American Literary Imagination*, where he investigates the obtrusive ways that power works to constrain subjects within systems

[21] Ibid., 22-23
[22] Ibid., 22.
[23] In the sense of the word that stems from the relationship between looking and power, as well as encompasses the ways in which things that are seen can also hide or be hidden.

that force assimilation by demanding adherence to the very language that acts as an expression of the state that oppresses them. Scott, drawing on Franz Fanon, acknowledges that blackness is abject due to the ways it operates in Western culture. He posits,

> blackness functions in western cultures as a repository for fears about sexuality and death—fears, in other words, about the difficulty of maintaining the boundaries of the (white male) ego…As such, blackness is an invention that accomplishes the domination of those who bear it as an identity because blackness is constituted by a history of abjection, and *is* itself a form of abjection.[24]

The operation of blackness in the West is a mode of being that is acknowledged as a vessel for abjection and, consequently, the responses to the fear that arises from and encounters it. The visuality of this is best illustrated by the ways in which black bodies are arranged in both the public and private sector. The media spectacle of criminality is overwhelmingly colored by black bodies, as the black body in pain is a visual trope that garners mass attention in part due to the ways in which the visceral fear of death works to challenge normativity and subsistence. The media presentation of these bodies is the spectacle of hypervisibility and the ways in which this spectacle is played out is constitutive of a broader ideology between "we" (fully autonomous subjects) and everything that is not "we" (abject). Moreover, this spectacle then gives way to the invisibility of abjection, most recognizable in the incarceration system and the ways in which black bodies are hidden in the private sector from the public view, where they receive little public acknowledgement aside from when they are subject to looking and control. The incarceration of black abject subjects resorts to their expulsion from public society—the place of "belonging" and "we." Scott analyzes this frame of subjectivity further and proposes,

> This is the space, the place, and the being of the abject: a subjectivity that does not or cannot claim its subjecthood (much less its agency), an "I" without clear demarcation or referent, that does not or cannot speak as "I" except, perhaps, after the fact. Blackness, in one of its modes—and, following Fanon's formulations, the very mode through which blackness comes into being in the world—takes us to and describes that abjection.[25]

The layer of criminality that constitutes abjection is what makes it hypervisible, but the extent to which that criminality is a feature of abjection or is produced by the abject is what hides the

[24] Scott, *Extravagant Abjection: Blackness, Power, and Sexuality in the African American Literary Imagination*, 4-5.
[25] Scott, *Extravagant Abjection*, 257.

criminal, and in some instances, the crime. The figure of "the criminal" and "the abject black subject" are conflated and the entanglement of the two comes to resemble an unclaimed subjectivity, a life not fully realized.

The third condition of abjection is that it is hypersexualized. In embodying the aspects of fear and death and the limits that we are disgusted by, the abject becomes, in many ways, tantalizing. This does not imply the presence of desire or the desirability of the abject, but rather that the abject is subjected to sexualization which ties back into the violence of the response to death or the corpse. The relationship of fear and death to sexuality is not new, and in fact Kristeva mentions that the exclusion of the taboo or the sexual "coincides with the sacred since it sets it up."[26] She mentions too that the exclusion of these things is a response to initiate, "various means of purifying the abject—the various catharses."[27] The sexualization of the abject is best illustrated by what Barbara Creed calls, "the monstrous-feminine."[28] Creed, in her essay *Horror and the Monstrous-Feminine: An Imaginary Abjection*, compares the world of horror movies to act of confronting abjection because the workings of the horror genre are often centered around a non-human or non-living entity that encroaches upon the border of organized public space.

In addition to drawing from Kristeva's notion of abjection, Creed asserts that the function of abjection in horror operates to threaten the audience's understanding of the "border"[29] that lies between them and the thing on screen. She says, "Although the specific nature of the border changes from film to film, the function of the monstrous remains the same—to bring about an encounter between the symbolic order and that which threatens its stability."[30] Creed's analysis of film suggests that the use of abjection in horror is particularly inclined to representations of women, femininity, or menstruation as a threat to this border, but even more so a threat to the border of patriarchal society.[31] The conflation of women's blood with that of other animals, namely those considered "dirty" is a common theme and

[26] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror,* 17.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Creed, "Horror and the Monstrous-Feminine: An Imaginary Abjection," 44–71.
[29] Creed, "Horror," 49.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Since intersectionality is an analysis meant to cover the various ways in which political and personal planes are intertwined, a proper analysis of abjection must include an analysis of both its operations within the constructs of gender and race.

plays on the idea of femininity as abject. She says, after analyzing the 1976 adaptation of Stephen King's *Carrie,*

> Here, the mother speaks for the symbolic, identifying with an order which has defined women's sexuality as the source of all evil and menstruation as the sign of sin. Woman's body is slashed and mutilated, not only to signify her own castrated state, but also the possibility of castration for the male. In the guise of a 'madman' he enacts on her body the one act he most fears for himself, transforming her entire body into a bleeding wound.[32]

The obsession with the obliteration of the woman's body out of the fear of castration is what signifies the abjection of womanhood in the horror genre. Creed identifies within the slasher genre a primordial castration anxiety that attempts to expel from itself the possibility of transformation, or femininity, by inflicting violence on that which threatens to undo the stability of patriarchal society. In order to prevent the crossing-over of the familiar and belonging (man and patriarchal society) to the realm of disgust, and unfamiliarity (women, castration) the only method of recourse is expulsion—and in this case, destruction. Creed argues that the primary function of the horror film is to purify the abject through "a 'descent into the foundations of the symbolic construct.'"[33] Though a full analysis of Creed's essay is out of the scope of this project, she nonetheless highlights an important aspect of the construction of femininity as abject, that female sexuality acts as a threat to the patriarchal order, the only response to which is the hypersexual destruction of it.

The fourth, and final, condition of abjection is that it is reproduced and reproducible, so as to encompass an array of subjects. Because so much of abjection has to do with looking, or being seen and unable to speak for oneself, there is always an imbalance of power with reference to how the abject is being arranged, viewed, and demarcated in the public consciousness. The production and reproduction of this form of abjection includes, but is not limited to, various interpretations of "others" as foreign and observable. With these conditions come the provisions of control, dictation, and interpretation—all of which imply having some form of power in the ways in which the abject is arranged, formed, and presented. Edward Said in his book, *Orientalism*, illustrates this condition in his criticism of the Western conception of the East. He says, "The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its

[32] Ibid., 52.
[33] Ibid., 53.

cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the other."[34] This formula for control via production of a narrative is one of the formative conditions of abjection and is the very behavior that Said vituperates. He continues to lambast the formulaic way in which the West imagines, reimagines, and thereby produces and controls the East by observing,

> Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.[35]

By presenting the Orient as "that place, space, and time" that exists outside of the boundaries of representable life and apart from the public sphere, Western narratives insinuate that "we" (the West) belong and exist in opposition to *that* (the East).

Finally, Said contends that without seeing the Orient as a discourse—that the West participates in the production and distribution of meaning about—one cannot possibly understand the,

> . . . enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage—and even produce—the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period... This is not to say that Orientalism unilaterally determines what can be said about the Orient, but that it is the—whole network of interests inevitably brought to bear on (and therefore always involved) any occasion when that peculiar entity "the Orient" is in question.[36]

Said claims that this production comes from the ways in which the West sets itself apart from the Orient, "as a sort of surrogate an even underground self."[37] The means by which the West produces, exerts control over, and wields authority on the East is a direct product of the reproducibility or the continual reproduction of an "other," similar to that of the abject. The reproduction of this "other" and the setting off of the West from the East as colonial foil is the result of the production and expulsion of an abject subject. The East is produced through

[34] Said, *Orientalism*, 9.
[35] Ibid., 11.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid., 12.

studies, institutions, authorities, and is simultaneously rejected by the very institutions that produced and continue to produce it so as to affirm their place in the social order as "not that."

In arguing for these conditions for abjection and demonstrating their modes of operation with correlating illustrations, it should not be misconstrued that each of the illustrations is specific to the condition expressed because publics are self-creating and self-organized, and how these formulations function in public frequently take on variable forms. Instead, the most important aspects of this construct are in the discourse that surrounds the things to which it is applied. Kristeva's abjection is "[…]what disturbs identity, system, order" and "[…]what does not respect borders, positions, rules,"[38] and as such is most present when it is identified as operating on an abject "subject" that is able to be conceptualized, but not imagined as a subject who possesses personhood, autonomy, or the capacity for self-representation. This subject does not belong in the public space, or the space of human interaction and symbolic order, and their positioning as abject means, first and foremost, that they exist outside the normal boundaries of society and are able to be controlled or produced by those within the public. The confrontation with the abject, though terror inducing, is necessary for the affirmation of the positioning of the subject within the social order and as not-abject.

The conditions for abjection are, disjunctively, that abjection is ineluctable—it presents itself to us and is ever present, even if not wholly recognizable—as is the case with Sara Ahmed's stranger. Abjection is simultaneously hypervisible and invisible—it hides and is hidden while remaining blatantly obvious, if not glaringly present—as is the case with Scott's abject black subject. Abjection too is hypersexualized—in embodying the aspects of fear and death that we are disgusted by—it becomes a spectacle of misplaced affect. This condition is an underlying feature of abjection that presents itself within any number of the other conditions and is the one that operates best in the public sphere because it is often overlooked, as is the case with the monstrous-feminine. Finally, abjection is reproduced and reproducible—so as to accompany a wide array of "subjects" and be used as a weapon for authority. The means of this weapon are primarily control, which conditions the abject to numerous facets of authority and renders it malleable to the purposes of those who are reproducing it—as is the case with the production of the East.

[38] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 9.

These conditions are what allow for the abject to organize a public into "the public"—the sphere of normativity and all that is human and familiar within the symbolic order—and "the outside" and all that lies outside this boundary; the unrecognizable, non-human world. The public constructs understandings of lives on the fringes of society based on certain productions of unqualified life or lives that, when applied to some, serve the purpose of stabilizing the identity of the masses and reemphasizing the subsistence of the social order in which these abject subjects are not recognized. Seeing the monstrous-feminine or a stranger is not necessarily seeing abjection, but the ways in which we are structured to see these things is seeing the application of the conditions. The broader scope of this argument is that not all actions share a moral equivalency, but dehumanizing subjects by construing their existence as abject is a way to delegitimize any harm done to them. This allows for an immeasurable amount of harm to befall those whose existences are understood as characterized by these premises. The failure on behalf of those within the social order to recognize the plight of the stranger, the black body, and women speaks to a larger problem with the ways in which these figures are constructed in the social imagination.

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Marx was right!