

## EXAMPLE AS FIGURE

What we cannot reach by flying, we must reach limping.

-- closing epigraph in Freud, Beyond the Pleasure Principle<sup>1</sup>

While metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony are commonly taken to be "master tropes" or basic structures of language (Culler 1997, Jakobson 1987, White 1978), example is a hidden trope, a figure so fundamental to discourse it is rarely presented as figurative but rather is allowed to invisibly put forward evidence without attention being drawn to its own structures of operation. "For example," we say, and what follows is taken as given: a datum, impartial, candid, authentic. For example:

These four master tropes -- metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, irony -- are used by the historian Hayden White to analyse historical explanation or 'emplotment' as he calls it: they are the basic rhetorical structures by which we make sense of experience. The fundamental idea of rhetoric as a discipline, which comes out well in this fourfold example, is that there are basic structures of language which underlie and make possible the meanings produced in a wide variety of discourses. (Culler 73)

What our attention is drawn to here is the solidity of the four-fold example, its squareness, the staunchness of the disciplines in question, the provision of terms and their accessibility to definition, the brisk excavation of language, the relief of getting down to basics. Yet how basic can rhetorical structures be which themselves depend on an even more basic logic: the rhetoric of exemplarity? Like those deep-sea creatures rendered visible only by the food in their stomachs, the structure of example is transparent. It is so

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<sup>1</sup> *Was man nicht erfliegen kann, muss man erhincken. / Die Schrift sagt, es ist keine Sünde zu hinken* ("What we cannot reach by flying we must reach limping .... The book tells us it is no sin to limp"). A footnote gives the source of the quotation as "The last lines of 'Die beiden Gulden,' a version by Rückert of one of the Maqâmât of al-Hariri. Freud also quoted these lines in a letter to Fliess of Oct. 20, 1895" (Beyond the Pleasure Principle. Trans. and ed. James Strachey. New York: Norton, 1989).

authentic, so "secondary," its operation is invisible. We see only "the food in the stomach" -- gobbets of the "real world" -- not the stomach or the surrounding body.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> A memorable configuration of this occurs in Chapter 64 of *Moby Dick*, "Stubb's Supper," in which is described not only Stubb's supper but the supper of "thousands and thousands of sharks" who feast on the *Pequod's* first whale:

Peering over the edge you could just see them (as before you heard them) wallowing in the sullen, black waters, and turning over on their backs as they scooped out huge globular pieces of the whale of the bigness of a human head. This particular feat of the shark seems all but miraculous. How, at such an apparently unassailable surface, they contrive to gouge out such symmetrical mouthfuls, remains a part of the universal problem of all things. The mark they thus leave on the whale, may best be likened to the hollow made by a carpenter in countersinking for a screw. (319)

Example is like the mouthfuls of whale expertly extracted by the sharks. Or, this example of example, like all examples, evokes both useful and not so useful analogies. The sharks' mouthfuls are described as symmetrical, almost miraculously so. Example, on the other hand, even when authoritative, generally seems approximate. It may come from the real world a bit rough around the edges -- in the shape of a sample, a portion, a swatch. It may further have an aura of incompleteness: something finite selected by virtue of cultural primacy or convenience from something infinite. But the image presents compelling lines of thought which override this discordance. Like the sharks' mouthfuls, example is extracted from something: it is a real part of something real. Nothing seems more concrete than these gouged out spheres of whale "of the bigness of a human head" and yet for Melville, despite the diligence of his taxonomies, the whale is ultimately ineffable. To express this ineffability by every means at his disposal, and the full enjoyment of those means, is the purpose of *Moby Dick*.

This whale, ravaged and bloodied, is itself a swatch of the great whale, *Moby Dick*, who escapes comprehension, as does the whale generically. In the chapters leading up to "Stubb's Supper," Ishmael acknowledges every available description of the whale "in Paint; in Teeth; in Wood; in Sheet-Iron; in Stone; in Mountains; in Stars," but his premise is that the living whale can never be completely seen, and neither the young whale nor the broken carcass of a full-grown whale can convey its character. Nor can its skeleton indicate even the general shape of the whale, unlike "Jeremy Bentham's skeleton, which hangs for candelabra in the library of one of his executors" and which "correctly conveys the idea of the burly-browed utilitarian old gentleman, with all Jeremy's other leading personal characteristics" (289). The whale is nothing like Jeremy Bentham, nor any other creature:

Though elephants have stood for their full-lengths, the living Leviathan has never yet fairly floated himself for his portrait. The living whale, in his full majesty and significance, is only to be seen at sea in unfathomable waters; and afloat the vast bulk of him is out of sight, like a launched line-of-battle ship; and out of that

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element it is a thing eternally impossible for mortal man to hoist him bodily into the air, so as to preserve all his mighty swells and undulations. (288)

Therefore:

For all these reasons, then, any way you may look at it, you must needs conclude that the great Leviathan is that one creature in the world which must remain unpainted to the last. True, one portrait may hit the mark much nearer than another, but none can hit it with any very considerable degree of exactness. So there is no earthly way of finding out precisely what the whale really looks like. And the only mode in which you can derive even a tolerable idea of his living contour, is by going a whaling yourself; but by so doing, you run no small risk of being eternally stove and sunk by him. Wherefore, it seems to me you had best not be too fastidious in your curiosity touching this Leviathan. (289)

There is something abhorrent in the relish with which Stubb attacks his supper, not simply because the whale is unctuous but because he eats it by its own light: "That mortal man should feed upon the creature that feeds his lamp, and, like Stubb, eat him by his own light, as you may say; this seems so outlandish a thing that one must needs go a little into the history and philosophy of it" (325).

The degree to which metonymy, synecdoche, metaphor, and example are imbricated here is plain. The mouthfuls of whale stand in synecdochal relationship to the whale. The dead whale stands in metonymical relationship to Moby Dick who is a metaphor for ineffability. Examples, however, are not only synecdochal, as J. Hillis Miller points out:

... an exemplary example must repeat in miniature the structure of the whole.

This fractal miniaturizing obeys a quite different topological law than the one that governs synecdoche. Now the part is like the whole not by being a random segment of a homogeneous totality, everywhere like itself, but by repeating on a small scale the large-scale pattern of the whole. The exemplary part is now seen as at once a unique unrepeatable feature of a heterogeneous whole and a cunning exact repetition in small of the large. How can both synecdoche and fractal miniaturizing simultaneously govern the work of examples? (162-3)

Stubb, by ordering his supper cut from a very particular part of the whale, "his small" or "the tapering extremity of the body" makes a strong distinction between this trophy and delicacies which he defers for later enjoyment: the tips of the fins ("pickled"), the ends of the flukes ("soused"), cutlets ("for supper to-morrow night in the mid-watch") and whale-balls ("for breakfast"). He thus violates both synecdoche and "fractal miniaturizing," as indeed do the sharks, despite their indiscriminate approach and the symmetry of their mouthfuls. Both Stubb and the sharks are engaged in reproducing the whale in their own image and likeness: the whale-meat is only whale-meat until it becomes shark or Stubb. Stubb, in the words of the slave, Fleece, is "more of a shark than Massa Shark hisself" (324). And Stubb, whether metonymically, synecdochally or metaphorically, is connected to the reader of this book. We organize the world by cannibalizing it, just as Stubb eats the whale by its own light or the sailor etches an image of the whale in scrimshaw on its own tooth. As J. Hillis Miller says, "it may be that all examples are not just exemplary examples but examples of example" (163). Not only are

My aim here is to articulate the body, or a body, of example: to make example visible, to give it local habitation and a name. I do this in two ways, both of which exploit metaphor, a figure which I will argue stands in close relationship to example. Firstly, I define and articulate the logic and operation of example in relation to Western understandings of the workings of metaphor. By establishing analogies and distinctions between example and the much more flamboyant and 'accounted for' metaphor, I hope to draw out the self-effacing figure. Secondly, I employ the image-making capacities of metaphor to invoke visual and literary representations of example and its operations. Metaphor, in the Western tradition, has always had race, class, gender, and moral accountability, though its character has varied according to the times. Example too, deep in the unsaid, has "personality" by default: a sort of negative, an utter neutrality or tacitness which I challenge.

What might example look like if invested with human form? In proposing personification for example I explicitly employ a strategy which has been implicitly applied to tropes throughout the Western tradition.<sup>3</sup>

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examples always the best examples of examples, and metaphors the best metaphors of metaphor, but both metaphor and example can only be depicted in terms of themselves and each other. They make one another and are explained by their own light.

<sup>3</sup> An often cited example is Locke's inexorable "outing" of rhetoric as a floozy -- or rhetoric, figuration, and eloquence as a trio of bawds in Book III Chapter X of his Essay Concerning Human Understanding. Aristotle's figuring of the sign on the maternal body is an earlier example:

A sign may be taken in three ways, corresponding to the ways the middle term in the figures is taken: for it is taken either as in the first figure, or as in the middle, or as in the third. For instance, proving that a woman is pregnant because she has milk is from the first figure, for the middle term is having milk (let A stand for being pregnant, B having milk, C for a woman). But 'The wise are good, for Pittakos was 'good' is through the last figure. A stands for good, B stands for the wise, C stands for Pittakos. So it is true to predicate both A and B and C, except that people do not state the latter premise because they know it, though they do take the former. And 'She is pregnant because she is pale' is intended to be through the middle figure: for since paleness follows pregnant women and also follows this woman, people think it has been proved that she is pregnant. A stands for pale, B stands for being pregnant, C stands for woman" (Prior Analytics B27 70a).

It seems possible that Aristotle's understanding of the sign is predicated on, rather than illustrated by, his examples.

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The construction of idea through metaphor/example can be seen interestingly in William James fourth lecture, "The One and the Many," in Pragmatism, where gendered imagery is used to characterizes monism, pluralism, and pragmatism. James, in his introductory paragraphs concedes that though the ancient problem of the one and the many may not cause sleepless nights generally, he himself, "by long brooding over it," has come "to consider it the most central of all philosophic problems, central because so pregnant" (61). Philosophy, James says, "has often been defined as the quest or the vision of the world's unity" (62): unity traditionally has been viewed as more illustrious than variety, which is unsystematic and inferior. The monist is presented as callow youth or inflexible old man: "When a young man first conceives the notion that the whole world forms one great fact, with all its parts moving abreast, as it were, and interlocked, he feels as if he were enjoying a great insight, and looks superciliously on all who still fall short of this sublime conception" (62). The supercilious young monist eventually becomes the splenetic old celibate:

The temper of monists has been so vehement, as almost at times to be convulsive; and this way of holding a doctrine does not easily go with reasonable discussion and the drawing of distinctions. The theory of the Absolute, in particular, has had to be an article of faith, affirmed dogmatically and exclusively. The One and All, first in the order of being and knowing, logically necessary itself, and uniting all lesser things in the bonds of mutual necessity, how could it allow of any mitigation of its inner rigidity? The slightest suspicion of pluralism, the minutest wiggle of independence of any one of its parts from the control of the totality would ruin it. Absolute unity brooks no degrees, -- as well might you claim absolute purity for a glass of water because it contains but a single little cholera-germ. The independence, however infinitesimal, of a part, however small, would be to the Absolute as fatal as a cholera-germ. (73)

James is not sparing of his metaphors nor, right from his opening "symbol," or cluster of metaphor/examples relating to optics and the effect of a candle-flame as seen through a tumbler or water or "the flat wall of an aquarium" (61) to the glass of water/cholera-germ example above, is he shy about catachresis, though corporeal metaphors relating to vision and, as I am arguing here, sexuality, dominate. An interesting example of how metaphor complexes are generated is presented in his explanation of aesthetic union, in which a rope metaphor produces an example from embryology, by virtue, it would seem, of an association between rope and the umbilical cord:

It is easy to see the world's history pluralistically, as a rope of which each fibre tells a separate tale; but to conceive of each cross-section of the rope as an absolutely single fact, and to sum the whole longitudinal series into one being living an undivided life, is harder. We have indeed the analogy of embryology to help us. The microscopist makes a hundred flat cross-sections of a given embryo, and mentally unites them into one solid whole. But the great world's ingredients, so far as they are beings, seem, like the rope's fibres, to be discontinuous, cross-wise, and to cohere only in the longitudinal direction. Followed in that direction they are many. Even the embryologist, when he follows the development of his object, has to treat the history of each single organ in turn. Absolute aesthetic

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union is thus another barely abstract ideal. The world appears as something more epic than dramatic. (67)

We see the same movement from rope to umbilical attachment in Chapter 72 of Moby Dick, "The Monkey-rope," where the rope connecting Ishmael, who is on deck, to Queequeg, who is balancing on the slippery back of the whale drawn alongside, first produces a metaphor of marriage, quickly succeeded by pregnancy:

It was a humorously perilous business for both of us. For, before we proceed further, it must be said that the monkey-rope was fast at both ends; fast to Queequeg's broad canvas belt, and fast to my narrow leather one. So that for better or for worse, we two, for the time, were wedded; and should poor Queequeg sink to rise no more, then both usage and honor demanded, that instead of cutting the cord, it should drag me down in his wake. So, then, an elongated Siamese ligature united us. Queequeg was my own inseparable twin brother; nor could I any way get rid of the dangerous liabilities which the hempen bond entailed. (349)

That connecting ropes are indeed underwritten by the original connecting rope by which all humans are connected to and sustained by the female, is further suggested by Ishmael/Melville's characteristic extrapolation, which shares points of diction and concept with William James:

And yet still further pondering -- while I jerked him now and then from between the whale and the ship, which would threaten to jam him -- still further pondering, I say, I saw that this situation of mine was the precise situation of every mortal that breathes; only, in most cases, he, one way or other, has this Siamese connexion with a plurality of other mortals. If your banker breaks, you snap; if your apothecary by mistake sends you poison in your pills, you die. True, you may say that, by exceeding caution, you may possibly escape these and the multitudinous other evil chances of life. But handle Queequeg's monkey-rope heedfully as I would, sometimes he jerked it so, that I came very near sliding overboard. Nor could I possibly forget that, do what I would, I only had the management of one end of it. (349-350)

James presents the monist as a man "who has penetrated everything," who is jaded, who no longer has any interest in sex, and who consequently renounces what it is to be human:

He knows the reality of everything, the secret of everything. Where is there any more misery for him? What does he desire? He has traced the reality of everything unto the Lord, that centre, that Unity of everything, and that is Eternal Bliss, Eternal Knowledge, Eternal Existence. Neither death nor disease nor sorrow nor misery nor discontent is There ... In the Centre, the reality, there is no one to be mourned for, no one to be sorry for. He has penetrated everything, the Pure One, the Formless, the Bodiless, the Stainless. He the Knower, He the great Poet, the Self-Existent, he who is giving to everyone what he deserves. (70)

James acknowledges that unity need not be privileged as such; it is a cultural construct, though he does not use that term. He says that "If our intellect had been as much interested in disjunctive as it is in conjunctive relations, philosophy would have equally successfully celebrated the world's disunion" (65), but he does not speculate about the conditions for such a possibility.

The advantage of my approach is two-fold: personification of tropes is memorable, as Hobbes' inconstant tropes, Locke's engendering of eloquence (1690), Paul de Man's characterization of tropes as "smugglers" (1979), or Patricia Parker's "literary fat ladies" (1987) attest, and memorability, whatever brings example to mind or fixes it in consciousness, enables discourse. Furthermore, reenacting strategies of personification publicizes their prevalence, for better or for worse, and allows me to participate in and reveal a tradition. It is to be expected, therefore, that if I propose a body for example, this body will be female – or that this body is female and will be male.

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Countering the sterility of monism, pluralism is presented unthreateningly, not as irremediable manyness, but as a fertility which can be systemized:

Pluralism on the other hand has no need of this dogmatic rigoristic temper.

Provided you grant some separation among things, some tremor of independence, some free play of parts on one another, some real novelty or chance, however minute, she is amply satisfied, and will allow you any amount, however great, of real union. How much of union there may be is a question that she thinks can only be decided empirically. The amount may be enormous, colossal; but absolute monism is shattered if, along with all the union, there has to be granted the slightest modicum, the most incipient nascency, or the most residual trace, of a separation that is not 'overcome.' (73).

The pragmatist, therefore, would seem to approach pluralism as a suitor, to take advantage of her abundance and to husband her judiciously. But not so, pragmatism is also female:

Pragmatism, pending the final empirical ascertainment of just what the balance of union and disunion among things may be, must obviously range herself upon the pluralistic side. Some day, she admits, even total union, with one knower, one origin, and a universe consolidated in every conceivable way, may turn out to be the most acceptable of all hypotheses. Meanwhile the opposite hypothesis, of a world imperfectly unified still, and perhaps always to remain so, must be sincerely entertained. (73)

The relationship of the pragmatist -- the man who considers pregnancy to be central -- to pragmatism, remains to be clarified. The suggestion is that the pragmatist is less a suitor or husband or father or son than he is the feminized male, a possibility that is reinforced by James' borrowed and italicized term describing the tendency of pragmatism "to *unstiffen* all our theories" (73).

I take for my personification of example the figure of Martha in Bernardino Luini's painting "Martha and Mary Magdalene" (Figure 5). Williamson (1907) describes the painting as follows:

Two female figures, Martha being garbed in a religious habit, and beckoning with one hand to her companion, upon whose arm she rests her other hand, drawing her towards her. Mary is very richly dressed in silk and fine muslin with bands of costly embroidery on her robes. Her hair is cleverly arranged, and has pearl and gold ornaments upon it. She holds a sprig of jasmine, and turns toward the spectator, loth to relinquish her pleasures, but thoughtful as to their ultimate success. A pot of ointment stands by her side. This picture was originally in the Sciarra Colonna Palace in Rome, where it was seen by Morelli, and pronounced by him to be Luini's work rather than that of Leonardo. (112)

This is the Martha about whom Luke writes in the Gospel:

38 Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

39 And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

41 And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

42 But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her. (Luke 10)

The "Mary" who is paired with Martha is not Mary Magdalen, out of whom were cast seven devils (Mark 15.9), but one of the many "other" Marys of the Gospels, i.e., Mary the sister of Lazarus. Williamson's confusion is a common one, perhaps attributable to the greater rhetorical attraction of Mary Magdalen. He compounds the confusion by quoting a reference:





Figure 5

“Martha and Mary,” Bernardino Luini

Mrs. Jameson was the first to point out [the painting's] true significance. It clearly represents Mary Magdalene rebuked by her sister Martha for her vanity and luxury, and in every way bears out the details of the popular legend. "The attitude of the veiled figure," said Mrs. Jameson, "is distinctly that of remonstrance and rebuke, the other, decked and smiling, looks out of the picture, holding flowers in her hand, as yet unconvinced of her sister's arguments, and uncontroverted; the vase of ointment stands near her." To quote again the same author. "Martha was always the model of virtue and propriety, a little too addicted, perhaps to worldly cares; Mary, on the contrary, abandoned herself to luxurious pleasures, and was notorious for her dissolute life." Martha frequently rebuked her, and at last was successful and brought her to the feet of Christ. (90)

That the "true significance" of the painting and the clarity with which Mrs. Jameson defines it are both based on error has no relevance for "popular legend."

Though veiled, the identity of Martha is fixed. She is confined to the home, industrious, proper. Mary, by contrast, is just one of a profusion of Marys -- Mary the virgin mother of Christ, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of Cleophas (Acts 1.14), Mary the mother of John whose surname was Mark (Acts 12.12), and Mary the mother of James and Joses and the mother of Zebedee's children (Matt. 28.56). Mary is relentlessly mobile, and reprehensible, in a way that Martha is not. In a way, the three principal Marys of the Gospel draw out a grammar of modes for women: Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who is private and proper, Mary Magdalen who is public property, and Mary, the virgin mother of Christ and Mater Dolorosa, who threads her way impeccably between home and public forum.

But the two figures in Luini's painting are intertwined. Like example, the figure of Martha indicates, reminds, calls to attention, though remaining veiled herself. Like metaphor, the figure of Mary is associated with embellishment. She is full-figured and three-dimensional while Martha is not much more than a veil, a profile, and a strong arm. Mary has nothing good to do with her hands. Her empty right hand is full of potential for mischief. And yet her left hand, holding jasmine, seems to curve

protectively towards the almost covert left hand of Martha, which rests laxly on her forearm. Mary's breasts are exposed and she looks pregnant, while Martha looks like a nun. In the Gospel, it is Martha not Mary who meets rebuke, yet it is Mary, in "popular legend" who is in constant need of reproof.

But after all, this is most probably not a painting of Martha and Mary, most certainly not a painting of example and metaphor. Even Williamson is not consistent about the matter of title, calling the painting "Martha and Mary," "Martha and Mary Magdalene," and acknowledging that it has also been known as "Vanity and Modesty" (89). Williamson says that the painting was very probably intended as an altar-piece for the Augustinian church of Santa Marta, in which there are four frescoes by Luini. But then again these frescoes are also attributed to Lanini. And who is Luini anyway? He is little more than a collection of examples himself, as almost no biographical information relating to him survives.

Williamson attributes our lack of knowledge about him to the fact that Vasari had nothing to say about him, except in the form of two slight references to "Bernardino del Lupino" and "Bernardino di Lupino." We know only that he was born at Luino, sometime between 1465 and 1475, and died sometime after 1533. To a large extent, the identity of Luini, painter of hundreds of extant paintings, has been absorbed into the much larger identity of Leonardo da Vinci, painter of few. As Williamson says, "Pictures now known to be Bernardino's work were in all the great European galleries either attributed to Leonardo, or else pronounced to be copies of his works or ideas taken from them and executed by his 'pupil,' and in this way the importance of Luini's own original work was overshadowed" (6). Though Ruskin described Luini as "ten times greater than Leonardo" (qtd. in Williamson 11), the painter is effectively invisible. Williamson himself describes Da Vinci and Luini almost in terms of Mary and Martha, or example and metaphor:

The two men were always contrasts, Leonardo objective, Luini subjective: Leonardo the genius, the epicurean, dwelling at courts, living a luxurious life, the favourite of three monarchs, the man of science and the man of many and

diversified talents; Luini a man of limited talent, hardworking and industrious, having a large family and household cares, and therefore obliged to work hard; Leonardo a man of power, Luini of sympathy; Leonardo's friends among the great and rich, Luini's amongst "those who wept and those who prayed"; Leonardo doing few works with an extreme perfection of detail, Luini many, with his heart and soul; Leonardo above all a draughtsman, Luini a sympathetic poet, a sorrowful man, and yet able to comfort others. (12)

Williamson finds himself in his description of Luini, amply compensating for the absence of biographical detail and writing, perhaps, autobiography. But who, after all, is Williamson? Persistent researcher, gatherer of the only Luini catalogue raisonné available in English, author of one of most recent studies of Luini in English -- published in 1899. This painting comes to us like both metaphor and example, whale relic or gobbet, authorized by whatever "popular legend" it has managed to accumulate. The title of the painting, its attribution, even its whereabouts today<sup>4</sup> are like Luini "shrouded in mystery" (Williamson 3).

Yet it is powerfully suggestive in relation to example and metaphor, and their interrelationship. Like Martha and Mary, example and metaphor are intertwined and at some points overlap – in the parable, the icon, the exemplum. Just as the several Marys of the Gospels inch out a trajectory from private to public space, these "sisters" feed out a discourse based on analogy and difference. Like Martha and Mary, example and metaphor are all image. Both sets invest the ineffable with materiality and both are considered illustrations of the "real" or the "rule." Both are produced by "popular legend" -- they are assumptions. Both are products of selection, shades of distinction or light. Both produce meaning although they are invested with no authority. Example and metaphor, like Martha and Mary, travel in tandem, with example/Martha as the steady

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<sup>4</sup> Williamson located it, in 1899, in the collection of Baron Edmond de Rothschild, 41, Faubourg St. Honoré, Paris. I have not succeeded in tracing it nor is it attributed to Luini in any of scant twentieth century sources I have assembled.

servants of the law, the rule, the liturgy, the classroom, and metaphor/Mary as the flagrant bridges between the thing and its name, the within and without, almost as principles of mobility itself, with example as principle of number. Both sets are infinitely productive. They conduct their close argument through time to make culture as culture makes them. Like the whale in Moby Dick, these figures generate the light by which they are consumed.

What do we stand to gain by rendering (material) example material? Example is perhaps the last refuge of empiricism. Examples arrive into texts fresh from their journeys in the outside world -- the discipline, the tradition, common sense, experience. They are so candid, authentic, honest-to-god down-to-earth, it seems callow to question them, to ask: "What are your origins? What are your allegiances? Who are you travelling with? Who selected you? Who ordered you? What is the purpose of your visit?" Examples always have the solidity of citizens although they are invariably passing through. Or maybe it is the opposite: examples pose as tourists but are in fact solid citizens. They arrive quite casually to structure argument. Just as metaphor is as close as we come to the "literal," so is example as close as we come to the "rule." When I say examples are the last refuge of empiricism I mean that they assume the posture of particulars which illustrate or support a rule. But to study example is to acknowledge that there is no rule: the particular is all we have. And example, for all its blandness, is no more authentic than any other figure of speech. By presenting it as material, I aim to articulate its rhetoricality. The phrase "for example" is taken as the bridge between theory and practice. Whatever follows this phrase is couched, to some extent as an approximation, yet it is simultaneously invested with the authenticity of lived experience. Example is thus an easily-won authority. Its masquerade configures its own paradox: example is an approximation which appeals for toleration on the basis of its relationship to the rule, yet there is no rule outside example and no possibility of anything less approximate. Rather than example being the bridge between theory and practice across which march specimens of the real world and the words and deeds of famous men, it is a viaduct of intertextuality. Example production is a rhetorical activity which involves the construction rather than the illustration of rules or principles.

What we stand to gain, therefore, is manifold. Firstly, we may become better rhetoricians, more attentive to the selection and ordering of examples and more alert to

the art of packing<sup>5</sup> in our own arguments, and the arguments of others. Aristotle identifies the example and the enthymeme as the rhetorical counterparts to dialectical induction and syllogism: "Everyone who effects persuasion through proof does in fact use either enthymemes or examples: there is no other way" (*Rhetoric* Book I, Chapter 2, 1356b). Rhetoric, of course, is not only a *technē*, it is also *dynamis*, "a power of observing the available means of persuasion in the given case" (Hauser 177). As Derrida points out, "the choice of an example can neither be justified absolutely" (Harvey 248), nor is it ever arbitrary. The rhetor's own *Mutterwitz* or judgment, as much as is possible, regulates principle, audience, and culture. Example is one case in which attention to the symptom can cure the disease: a strategic or unusual choice or ordering of examples can institute change or as Alexander Gelley says, "Where the applicability of examples diverges significantly from an established normative base, they come to serve not as confirmation of a rule but as an instrument of testing, of possible revision" (12). In Aristotelian terms, selection and ordering of examples affords one the opportunity to be one's own *phronimos*, or teacher. Furthermore, while the example, in order to be credible, must be produced in accordance with the values of any given culture, a credible rhetor can invest a "new" example with value, thus instituting or "irritating" new narratives.

Secondly, by questioning the examples on which discourse is based, we invigorate our own disciplines. In pedagogy and literature, for example, the dependence of the "very constitution of the subject" (Gelley 13) on exemplarity is obvious. Pedagogy is exemplary by definition, not only in that its matter is constituted by examples but also in that its method is modelled on exemplarity: the best example, the idea of progress, the notion of the teacher as prior and exemplary. This constitutive exemplarity of pedagogy whereby both student and teacher are bound to inexorably "fall short" produces what David Lloyd describes as "the inexpungeable melancholy of the pedagogical scene" (263). Perhaps a frank appreciation of the materiality of example and exemplar, and an understanding of both as constituting rather than serving the rule, would go some way towards expunging this melancholy. One of the great freedoms offered by example, after all, is that invented examples, even for Aristotle, serve just as well as historical (*Rhetoric*, Bk. II, Ch. 20, 1393a, 1393b).

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<sup>5</sup>I borrow the phrase from Jeremy Bentham's *The Art of Packing*, a study of how juries may be selected in order to produce any desired verdict.

A literary canon or a "universalizing formalization" of examples is, in a sense, demanded by the ironic attitude which is, according to Lloyd, "the internalized modality of the institutional geography of the classroom" (275). The interminable story of the canon can be unpicked and redirected by the addition and exclusion of examples -- canon analysis is primarily a matter of example questioning. But again, as in the cases of rhetoric and pedagogy, selfconsciousness regarding example is not only a strategy for winning arguments, encouraging invention, or modifying the form of the canon, though it can achieve these ends. Example is fundamentally concerned with representation, and is thus a political and ethical issue:

What this meshing of the aesthetic and the political within the field of pedagogy implies is that any sustained attempt to rethink the nature and function of cultural education from a radical perspective must entail a simultaneous critique of the political culture of representation. In the absence of such a critique, radical pedagogy will continue to reproduce, at the "microscopic" level of its implicit practices, the processes of ideological interpellation that its explicit tendency seeks to disrupt. (Lloyd 276)

It may follow, then, that any critique at the level of example, microscopic and constitutive of all disciplines as it is, is a direct intervention in power/knowledge relations. What we stand to gain in the classroom by a re-representation of example as hazardous is the elation and responsibility of risk.

What is to be gained not simply in increasing self-consciousness in relation to example use but specifically in configuring example as a figure, in alignment with metaphor? Just as an alignment of fiction and historiography can display the common narrative structures of both genres (White 1978), or an alignment of psychoanalysis and traditional rhetoric can display their common tropological catalogues, and the degree to which the dreamer and the interpreter of dreams resembles the maker and interpreter of metaphors (Todorov 1982), so too does the alignment of example and metaphor facilitate the identification of common structures and workings. While example has avoided the

opprobrium dealt to metaphor, it has also to a very large extent escaped praise, understanding, speculation, or sustained investigation of any kind. Metaphor and example have common roots in Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy, but the trajectories of their tradition have been markedly different, in that attention to example, never considerable, possibly peaked in terms of the *exemplum* in the Middle Ages, while attention to metaphor, never waning for long, is currently peaking again, and constructing new discourses in new fields, e.g., cognitive science, cognitive linguistics, cognitive semantics, and communications.

To understand metaphor as "the figure for figurality" (Culler "The Turns of Metaphor" 199) is commonplace now; the degree to which discourse about metaphor is constituted by example is not. As a result, contemporary theory in cognitive linguistics, for example, is constituted to a very large extent by grossly sexist examples. Theorists employ and enjoy examples the anachronism of which inhibit their brave new world. If examples are understood as mere props, supports, illustrations or "wives" to the rule, then sexism, racism, classism, etc can be waved or waived or wived aside. If, on the other hand, examples are taken to constitute a discourse, and the theory, the rule, the canon, the law, the ideal, the patriarch, the Platonic Idea, the God, is merely the shape the conglomeration of examples takes -- that multiplicity which culture yields and totalizes -- then clearly the theory *is* the examples and shares the examples' stuff. Conventionally, in the Western tradition, theory is applied to the material; it is only minimally material itself. Even theories which argue against the mind-body split, in favor of the embodied mind, are frequently oblivious to and uninterested in the tension generated by their privileging of metaphor as the rule, and example as illustration.

As opposed to this conjugal model, I propose a genetic connection between example and metaphor, where they are folded into one another, like sisters, or mother and daughter. In consideration of the facts that metaphor is itself a figure of causation, and example is constitutive, and that attempts to analyze either produce a discombobulation or paralyzing *aposiopesis* the first "righting" gesture of which must be to reach for example and metaphor, example and metaphor being only definable in terms of example and



metaphor, I will defer the question of which comes first, and avoid presenting a hegemonic relationship from the outset. It seems inevitable that the initiative to develop theories of example as metaphor and metaphor as example must be taken although a consideration of example as figure or metaphor as example, or even of both "figures" in relation to each other is currently rare enough to make Hillis Miller's brisk account of Aristotle's enthymeme and example seem breathtakingly unique:

The example is a truncated form of inductive logic, the enthymeme, of deductive logic. Both in fact are tropes, figures of speech. Example is a synecdoche, part for whole and then applied to another part, with all the problems belonging to that trope, and the enthymeme is defined as an incomplete syllogism, that is, once more argument by similitude or trope, since the syllogism is a formally stated proportional metaphor. (*Theory Now and Then* 233)

Recent work on parable (Turner 1996), a form which can be construed as a convergence of example and metaphor (and the German word *Gleichnis* means both parable and metaphor)<sup>6</sup>, must stem from and direct attention to concordances between example and metaphor. The involvement of example with narrative from Aristotle's identification of the fable as one of the two forms of "invented" examples in the *Rhetoric* (Bk II, Ch. 20, 1393a, 1393b) to the medieval exemplum promises to highlight in turn the narrativity of metaphor which so far is usually represented as a traveling or transfer between domains, a blending, or like the first or historical variety of example as described by Aristotle, a matching of examples over time based on analogy.

The story of metaphor and example are both stories of analogy in negotiation with difference, with analogy in the role of ordering (male) principle and difference in the role of ever-proliferative (female) chaos. "Nature," as Montaigne says, "does not make things so much alike as difference makes them unlike. Nature has committed herself to make nothing separate that was not different" (qtd. in Lyons 92). This statement in itself provokes a dismantling of Aristotle's definition of metaphor, i.e. "Metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else; the transference being either from

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<sup>6</sup>See J. Hillis Miller's "*Gleichnis* in Nietzsche's *Also Sprach Zarathustra*," *Theory Now and Then*, 285.

genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or on grounds of analogy" (*Poetics* 1457b). In Montaigne's terms, genus and species are analogical fictions the purpose of which is to group and to order. Aristotle's definition of metaphor thus reveals itself as a nest of metaphors or, as Mark Turner (1987) puts it: "This supposed definition of metaphor is not a definition at all ... it is itself a metaphor, a basic metaphor, but only one of a very great number" (17). Metaphor, like nature in Montaigne's representation, proliferates. Categories produce (or reproduce) categories with a fertility which is creative (or loathsome), depending on cultural bias.

Example and metaphor are both generative figures. Example might be seen as reproductive. It operates by analogy: the extraction of like from like, in the sense of *dugma* or sample, as when "the dyer would attach to his ear (or put in his ear) a small sample of dyed cloth, so that people would know what his work was, just as the money changer would advertise himself with a coin and the carpenter with a splinter" (Boyarin 33). An example is a chip off the old block. Metaphor, on the other hand, might be seen as productive. It is catachretic, operating by means of a recognition and a refusal of analogy.

Aristotle privileges metaphor over all other figures "[M]uch the greatest asset is a capacity for metaphor. This alone cannot be acquired from another, and is a sign of natural gifts: because to use metaphor well is to discern similarities" (*Poetics* 1459a). If example is a type of cloning, metaphor is a blending. Example might therefore be termed reproductive and procreative -- "a principle of contamination, a law of impurity, a parasitical economy" (Derrida, "The Law of Genre" 206) while metaphor is productive and creative. A reversal of these terms is also tenable, should we wish to tell a different story: synecdoche is a chip off the old block, and exemplarity, as presented in section 32 of Kant's *Critique of Judgement*, is productive of taste.

I would like to look more closely at the distinctions between the terms *creation/procreation* and *production/reproduction*, as they are used in the West, particularly in relation to Christian tradition. *Creation* involves originality and is associated with the male principle: *Creation* is the act of God by which the world was created; and an original product of human invention or artistic imagination. *Creation* is

also the world and all the things in it. It is a category and a naming. It is a metaphor, involving the discernment of analogies, the construction of categories, and the application to them of names which are not, up to the point of naming, proper to them. Both God and Adam are the creators of metaphors.

The word *procreation*, as it happens, is not listed in the American Heritage College Dictionary (1997), presumably because it not considered an act as creation is. Nevertheless, it can be easily constructed from *procreate* and *procreative*, which are listed, and is actually contained within the definition of *procreate*. It stands in prefixal, or prefixive, relationship to *creation*, in that it both precedes and qualifies it. To *procreate* is to beget and conceive offspring, not ideas. The qualifying *pro* means *forward, through, in front of, first, early, chief, toward, against, near, at, around*: it implies an approach to or approximation of *creation*, or possibly a fuzzying, particularly in regard to cause-and-effect: does *procreation* precede or follow *creation*? Genesis arrives at the prefix or prefixion fairly late on the seventh day, after God had created Adam, planted Eden, made the trees of life and knowledge, named the four rivers Pison, Gihon, Hiddekal, and Euphrates, and brought "every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air" (2:19) to Adam to name. Only after this orgy of naming was the prefix of man, the woman, constructed from Adam's rib. This construction, which is both a qualification and container of man, is described by Adam, the metaphor-maker, very much in terms of example (Lat. *exemplum* <*eximere*, to take out: *ex-*, *ex-* + *emere*, to take): "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man" (2:23). God's creation of the world *ex nihilo* is first refined by his creation of Adam from the dust of the ground and divine breath, then further in his creation woman from the sleeping Adam's rib, and further again, after the fall, by the much bloodier though admittedly highly successful procreativity of Eve whose sorrow and conception God multiplied so that in sorrow she should bring forth children (3:

Example in itself is a type of fall -- "Examples do not fall into speech like leaves to the ground. Yet a 'fall' of a kind -- a link to circumstance, to a momentary revelation -- plays a part in their effectiveness in rhetoric and argumentation" (Gelley 1). Eve's

reaching for the apple is an original metaphor, the fall of the apple into her open hand the original *lapsus*, or example. Of Eve is made an example in a way that Mary is spared from the beginning when, in the Gospel of Matthew, Joseph is unwilling "to make her a public example" (Matthew 1.19). Mary, though full of fruit like Eve, is in transit from example to exemplar, unlike Eve. Mary is herself the metaphor or carrier: her issue is the Exemplar. Eve is not a creator, a namer, a category or metaphor maker. She is an example. Nevertheless genealogies stream from her name (Genesis 4).

What Eve does is not an act of creation; nor can it be comfortably said to be an act of procreation -- procreation not having strict tenure as an act, and Eve having been refused tenure as an actor. It is never quite clear whether procreation -- or conception -- refers to the being who "procreates" or "conceives" or the beings who are procreated or the being who is conceived. The problem is located in cultural refusals of the female as active agent. Conception, in particular, is ambiguous. The Catholic doctrine of Immaculate Conception, for example, does not refer to how Mary conceived Jesus but to how Anne conceived Mary. The conceived seems to inherit the action; the conceiver is transmuted into a conceptor or *conceptacle*. This distancing of actor from action may in turn produce the eventual distancing of physical from mental conception. *To conceive*, in English, is much more likely to refer to the idea and the male than it is to either the embryo or the idea and the female.

*Production* and *reproduction* can be gendered accordingly, *production* designating the "act or process of producing," the "creation of value or wealth by producing goods or services," and "a work of art or literature," a bringing forward or extension not unlike metaphor, and *reproduction*, doubly prefixed, *another* or *backward* bringing forward, the "process by which organisms generate others of the same kind" -- make copies, a copy, the province of the female. Reproduction, like the female body whose principal activity it is, is dependent and secondary. Production, on the other hand, is like the male body and its "glove," the male mind which "is in the first place not regarded as reproductive, as it is subject to the laws of association, but as productive and spontaneous" (Kant 77). For Marx, reproduction, insofar as it concerns the human bodies which women produce from their laboring bodies is outside the culture of

production, while reproduction, in so far as it concerns the objects men and women assemble on the line or factory floor, is the exemplar of production. Yet paradoxically it is industrial reproduction which is mechanized and duplicable, while human reproduction produces the unique edition, no pattern of which is identical to any other. The gender, class, economies, and political allegiances of these terms shift. During the Counter-Reformation, metaphor was an unabashed Catholic; for Locke metaphor was explicitly a floozy and implicitly an unpaid and unacknowledged servant or slave whom he could not manage without; for the Neo-Classical poets, metaphors spewed from hack writers like hideous offspring sprang from monstrous mothers or pamphlets churned from the printing press for the benefit of the ever more literate mob (Francus 94). Paradoxical and unstable, the terms *creation* and *procreation*, *production* and *reproduction*, *metaphor* and *example*, are embroiled in the steamiest possible way.

Epistemologically, the proliferative capacities of both metaphor and example offer the great advantage of a boundless production of categories. Categories produce knowledge and categories produce more categories. Multiplicity invites accident; an acceptance of multiplicity is an appreciation of accident. Most valuably, a proliferation of categories facilitates pause; the thinker can stop to consider a given context knowing that there is another context, and another, all of which have the capacity to recontextualize. In this sense, the greatest advantage to a proliferation of categories or a proliferation of the rule lies in the hospitality of multiplicity to accident, surprise, and the most fulsome and fertile doubt.

Proliferation need not be horrific -- *la terre se rend fertile plus elle est esmiée et profondément remuée* ("the earth is made more fertile the more it is crumbled and deeply plowed," Montaigne qtd. in Lyons 99), or as William James says, "A 'chaos,' once so named, has as much unity of discourse as a cosmos" (63). Rhetorical *divisio* and *dilatatio*, can generate text (Parker 1987) much as cell division and the dilation of the uterus can generate the human child: the question of a balance between fertility and control regulates both. Proliferation always involves the boundary: how much proliferation should be allowed before the reining in? Where does chaos stop and order or system begin? What is included/excluded when the line is drawn? And how is the boundary itself constituted

-- is it closer to chaos on one side and closer to order on the other? Can chaos seep through? Is there a point within the boundary where chaos and order meet and exchange fluids? Or, in Derrida's terms, "The trait that marks membership inevitably divides, the boundary of the set comes to form, by invagination, an internal pocket larger than the whole; and the outcome of this division and of this abounding remains as singular as it is limitless" ("The Law of Genre," 206). The boundary is a figure which, like the set, is modelled on cultural concepts of physical, especially bodily, experience. In other words, convention -- or the demands of a particular discipline -- dictates where and how one draws the line.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The human body has traditionally provided our basic concepts of set: as our understanding of the body has changed, so has our range of sets been developed and modified. For example, in ancient Greek society an understanding of the male body as dry, hard, and tightly bounded produced a corresponding notion of the category. The female body, wet, soft, and soggy, as it was perceived in relation to the male, corresponded to what was outside the category, or what was available to be bounded (Carson 1990). This second "unfinished" category provokes an extension of the concept of category -- fuzzy sets and Derrida's invagination are two examples of twentieth century developments on the project. Dualism offers, at the very least, states to be seized. In a way, what I am striving for here is an understanding of language as a woman-like thing, much as Nietzsche's investigator into truth "is basically seeking just the metamorphosis of the world into man; he is struggling to understand the world as a human-like thing and acquires at best a feeling of assimilation" (Nietzsche 251). The figures we use are derived from our own figures: that is how we figure. Or, to reverse the order: "To accept a theory of tropes is implicitly also to accept its epistemological or even physiological ground" (Miller, "Parabolic Exemplarity" 173).

Beyond dualism, new physiological boundaries or permeabilities yield new categories, e.g., Elizabeth Grosz's adaptation of the Möbius strip model to provide a guiding framework for, and organize the content of her book, Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism: The Möbius strip has the advantage of showing the inflection of mind into body and body into mind, the ways in which, through a kind of twisting or inversion, one side becomes another. This model also provides a way of problematizing and rethinking the relations between the inside and the outside of the subject, its psychical interior and its corporeal exterior, by showing not their fundamental identity or reducibility but the torsion of the one into the other, the passage, vector, or uncontrollable drift of the inside into the outside and the outside into the inside. (xii)

The composition of my essay bears questioning. Do the footnotes support and underwrite the main text or is the main text a superscript which articulates the footnotes? Which is the "body" of the essay? Which is primary, which secondary? Numbers mark the points where the footnotes and argument are hinged but other ebbs and flows which suffuse the text are less conspicuous. Do the citations support the argument or does the

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argument offer a framework for the citations? Do I have a point which the examples illustrate or am I casting out examples and hoping to guess their drift? Some, having in mind the concept of the One, would judge it ugly to breed such a disrupted, disruptive, and ruptured text. Others, honoring the firm and tight masculine boundary, would question the shameless osmosis of my dividing line. But are not the aesthetics of the female body bound to be perceived as a mess imposed on the text?

Footnotes confuse the page just as they confuse the question of authority. The long, hard road to establishing the historical footnote as a disciplinary credential met with much resistance on aesthetic grounds. Writers, as Anthony Grafton says in reference to sixteenth century historian Jacques-Auguste de Thou, wanted the "superstructure" of the narrative "to remain classical .... footnotes would spoil its crisp Greco-Roman colonnades and roofline" (141). Derrida, in "The Law of Genre," speaks of citation as a necessary "supplement of violence and pain," and in a way literature is a most horrific example of vivisection or, to adapt Russell Edson, "These aren't texts, these are post-mortem dissections." My text is clearly not integral, nor is it in any way regretful of integrity. I hope it is nourished by material which my sources offer in generous supply, down to their very marrow -- a breast-feeding, rather than a murderous or autopsic model. Which brings me to my next question -- how many feedings are enough? Does one feed on demand or by rule? How much is enough? Where does one draw the line?

We draw the line around analogy, or around "the equation of the dissimilar" (Nietzsche 249) by which concepts are produced. And how many analogies are enough? Will one compelling example do, or rummaging for it, how long must we rattle on? "We all have some ear for this monistic music" (71), as William James says, and -- "the world is One! -- the formula may become a sort of number-worship. 'Three' and 'seven' have, it is true, been reckoned sacred numbers; but abstractly taken, why is 'one' more excellent than 'forty-three,' or 'two million and ten'?" (62-3). One is perhaps the ideal number of examples but example is reluctant to travel alone. Two examples invariably give birth to a third. Three comes already equipped with a period -- the rule-of-three and concluding catch-phrase has structured our narratives since we first began to frame them. Three can still become one, awkwardly, as evidenced by the Trinity. Two can become one also, in dialectic's crude rhetoric of birth. It is the tendency of categories, sets, *exempli gratia*, and metaphors, to proliferate -- what governs their behavior once they slip singularity? What intuition, hint, convention, or rule tells us enough is enough?

Rhyme? Certainly rhyme helps -- it lends concordance and a note of happy completion. Rhythm? Yes -- "we mentally follow every sound that recurs regularly and, as it were, agree with it. Rhythm and rhyme thereby become partly an adhesive for our attention, since we follow the reading more willingly, and partly they give rise to a blind agreement with what is read, prior to all judgment; whereby the content takes on a certain emphatic power of conviction independent of all reasons" (Schopenhauer in Nietzsche 244). Where we draw the line is partly governed by aesthetics: what pleases our senses. The other part concerns what displeases our senses: tiredness, lack of time, lack of space, lack of materials of various kinds. Derrida applies both brakes in the example from "The Law of Genre" referred to above: "Here again, due to time limitations but also to more essential reasons concerning the structure of the text, I shall have to excerpt some abstract fragments. This will not occur without a supplement of violence and pain" (222).

The law has the comic and deadly serious task of determining the multifariousness of figures of experience and speculation, or examples. The law, by definition prescriptive, is in a constant state of inscription; it is the pattern woven from example. Example, as Lyons puts it, "is the point where law and experience meet" (93) and example's stock of imperfection is laundered by the law. And as even a single example, strategically placed, can disrupt the action of law, the process of exchange between example and the law, or the constitution of law by example, must necessarily be constant. This ramshackle nexus is maintained pragmatically:

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Where we draw the line is determined by taste and appetite, by aesthetics and cultural norms, by what satisfies our senses. Only with the greatest degree of sweat, hamfistedness, or cool lying, is the drawing of the line dictated by the rule it is intended to illustrate. The secondariness intended for example, like all secondariness, is a ruse. My secondary footnotes swell up and overflow, seeping into the primary text which attempts to march on regardless, and seeping into other chapters too, establishing levels. The footnotes sabotage the forward trajectory of my argument but their insistence on differentiation also compensates, to some extent, for my preoccupation thus far with assimilation -- with inside rather than outside, analogy rather than difference, noun rather than verb, *isness* rather than becoming, occupation rather than space, epistemology rather than ontology (as if epistemology contained ontology rather than simply being associated with it, as the voice is to the echo). Is it not the differentiations, the reverberations and modulations, which tempt and lead us on? Example is not metaphor, after all. Epistemology is not ontology. The categories are productive in that they articulate difference, however shadily. Or rather, examples are metaphors, and metaphors are examples. But examples are nevertheless not metaphors. The verb *to be*, like all verbs, has the capacity of tense, and time accommodates simultaneity.

Finally, to what end more categories? To what end more awareness regarding choice? Discrimination introduces doubt; that in itself is a good thing. The infinite fertility of categories takes the concrete out of example: we see the speaker or the writer offering treasured nuggets of experience, anecdotes, reminiscences, clichés, etc, and can receive them with tenderness. We defer constantly to ourselves when speaking or writing, and make our plea for acceptance: "in my opinion," "a concrete example would be," Spinoza's outrageous "Some one (if I rightly remember) has attempted to illustrate this by the example of two dogs ..." (215), and we hope, in this piecemeal way, less to support an argument than to establish intimacy. The gender of a text can be determined at a glance and readers, outside certain moments, are most interested in being shown bodies like their own.



All things hold together by some similarity; every example is lame, and the comparison that is drawn from experience is always faulty and imperfect; however, we fasten together our comparisons by some corner. This the laws serve, and thus adapt themselves to each of our affairs, by some round-about, forced, and biased interpretation. (Montaigne 819)

We tend to think of the law as regulating the case but the reverse is also true: the case regulates the law, yielding what Jean-Luc Nancy calls the accident at the heart of judgment (Gelley 11), an arrhythmia or condition which may be associated with joy or terror -- joy because it can trigger being into becoming, in Deleuze and Guattari's terms: "We can be thrown into a becoming by anything at all, by the most unexpected, most insignificant of things. You don't deviate from the majority unless there is a little detail that starts to swell and carries you off" (qtd. in Grosz 178); terror because there is no God.

The fiction that the law is fixed is only one of its many constitutive fictions (Barfield 66), others of which include the personification of the law itself, whether in relation to arms or ass, and the figure of the legislator whose first task is "to establish himself as the example of himself," to legitimate himself (Harvey 253). Jurisprudence, Barfield suggests is peculiarly "well adapted to throw light on the mind and its workings" (70), precisely attributable, perhaps, to the awkward fit between law and experience, a disjuncture which vexed though it may be is less puzzling than the relationship between language and reality. Any system serves this purpose effectively, provided that its reader is sufficiently expert, as is Barfield in relation to jurisprudence. All interpretations are finalist in that each discipline discovers what it has defined, or as in Todorov's critique of psycho-analysis, "sets a limit to the multiplication of meanings, a place where the references from one meaning to another come to a halt" (253). Every discipline, category, set, figure, and interpretation has its productive and stonewalling *mise en abyme*.

The practitioner or petitioner thus makes, in a move that is now familiar, not only a pragmatic but an ethical gain. It is not simply that when "no choice of an example is innocent" (Hillis Miller 162), selection and ordering become acts of responsibility, but that the very act of reaching out for an example becomes metaphoric, a leavening of analogy and difference in the interests of culture-in-the-making:

The rhetorical force of example is to impose on the audience or interlocutor an obligation to judge. Whether it be in argument or narrative, the rhetoric of example stages an instance of judgment, and the reader, in order to grasp the point at issue, must be capable of occupying, however provisionally, the seat of judgment. The reader does not simply occupy a post of reception, as in a communicative transmission, but is drawn into the process of weighing alternative arguments or cases. Yet the scandal of example, its logical fallibility, lies in the fact that this ethical summons -- the obligation to judge -- is predicated not on a law or rule -- thus at the level of the general or universal -- but on the instance in its particularity, an instance that cannot in itself suffice to justify the principle in question. Yet this situation is in no sense exceptional. As readers, as interpreters, we are continually and inescapably called upon to make judgments on insufficient grounds. (Gelley 14)

To lament this insufficiency of grounds is to lament the insubstantiality of the rule -- the rule the illusion of which example, above all, wishes to preserve. To adapt and invert Kant's metaphor, the rule is the training wheels of example: as we gather confidence in our vehicle, we find it is no longer necessary.

The question of "fit" is a stumbling point in thinking about example and principle. What makes a particular example fit or fitting? At what point does it latch on to the principle or rule? What models do we use to conceptualize example and principle? Generally speaking, principle seems to be imagined as monolithic and pervasive; example as multitudinous and illustrative. A gap is conceded between the two terms; hence the problem of fit. Principles, by definition, are difficult to grasp. The purpose of supplying examples and particulars, supposedly, is to allow us to lay hold of the principles. But how does this work? According to what principles are the examples selected and ordered? Obviously the principle which is being illustrated must in some way indicate and sketch itself from the very first selection of example. The example must therefore contain or reflect the principle even as it is in the very process of illustrating it. How is that possible?

Aristotle wrestles with this problem at the end of *Posterior Analytics* when he asks how principles become familiar to us. Demonstrations of principles are useless unless one first knows something of the principles. So do we therefore possess states of knowledge about principles, before demonstrations, without noticing them? He immediately rejects this possibility:

It is absurd to suppose that we possess such states; for then we should possess pieces of knowledge more exact than demonstrations without its being noticed. But if we get them without possessing them earlier, how could we come to acquire knowledge and to learn except from pre-existing knowledge? This is impossible, as I said in connection with demonstration. It is clear, then, both that we cannot possess these states and also that they cannot come about in us when we are ignorant and possess no state at all. We must therefore possess some sort of capacity -- but not one which will be more valuable than these states in respect of exactness. (B19, 99b)

Aristotle then identifies, in animals, a "connate discriminatory capacity, which is called perception," which can in turn produce memory and, in humans, experience, and from experience "comes a principle of skill or of understanding" (100a). States of knowledge of principles therefore arise from perception "as in a battle, when a rout has occurred, first one man makes a stand, then another does, and then another, until a position of strength is reached" (100a).<sup>8</sup> This example helps Aristotle to stumble forward, not only explaining but demonstrating his point:

Let us say again what we have just said but not said clearly. When one of the undifferentiated items makes a stand, there is a primitive universal in the soul; for although you perceive particulars, perception is of universals, -- e.g., of man, not of Callias the man. Next, a stand is made among these items, until something partless and universal makes a stand. E.g. such-and-such an animal makes a stand, until animal does; and with animal a stand is made in the same way.

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<sup>8</sup> Barnes emends 100a13 *archēn* to *alkēn* and translates it as "until a position of strength is reached." He rejects the position of other commentators who take *archēn* to be an Aristotelian pun, as *archē* also means first principle, and translate it as "until they come to a starting-point." The generation of the articulating example from a pun would be completely in line with my argument, i.e., Aristotle selected the example of the battle-rout-men making a stand because the word for the type of consolidation described also means first principle. This type of rhyming may or may not be deliberate.

Thus it is plain that we must get to know the primitives by induction; for this is the way in which perception instils universals. (100b)

It seems that the example of the battle and the rout has directly shaped the generalized account which immediately follows. I would say Aristotle was familiar with battles and routs and one man making a stand, and used those observations to generate the concept of induction. Aristotle himself might say that, on the contrary, the battle-rout-men making a stand example somehow itself made a stand, nudged forward in some way by some primitive knowledge of induction in the soul.

Much of the difficulty here seems to relate to the inside-outside conceptualization of the problem: how is what is outside us grasped or comprehended or intuited by what is inside us? How can the gap between particulars and universals be jumped? The orthodox view of Aristotle's conclusion, according to Barnes, is that induction is "notoriously" frail and "cannot by itself get us to the principles; there is a chasm which induction will not leap -- we must fly over it on the back of intuition. The principles, in short, are apprehended by induction plus intuition, or by 'intuitive induction'" (268). The universal exists outside us in set form and inside us in unset form. Particulars, those universal knobs designed for the human grasp, are the gelling agents -- or the bootstraps which means of which we pull ourselves up: "By such increments Aristotle believes we move toward the moment where we have a flash of insight -- a noetic experience -- wherein the universal is grasped" (Hauser 175).

Linda Martín Alcoff dispenses with any correspondence model of epistemology: "one cannot step outside, as it were, to 'check' the correspondence between a proposition and a bit of objective reality; the concept of correspondence is itself notoriously elusive of explication" (56). The notoriety and scandal of example stems from a suspicion of the weakness of the joint between particular and principle. Paul de Man states the position clearly:

But can any example ever truly fit a general proposition? Is not its particularity, to which it owes the illusion of its intelligibility, necessarily a betrayal of the general truth it is supposed to support and convey? From the experience of reading abstract philosophical texts, we all know the relief one feels when the argument is interrupted by what we call a "concrete" example. Yet at that very moment, when we think at last that we understand, we are further from comprehension than ever; all we have done is substitute idle talk for serious discourse. Instead of inscribing the particular in the general, which is the purpose of any cognition, one has reversed the process and replaced the understanding of a proposition by the perception of a particular, forgetting that the possibility of such a transaction is precisely the burden of the proposition in the first place. (276)

What is this *cri de coeur* but nostalgia for training wheels? De Man's disappointment with the particular is misplaced. The general is inscribed in the particular. The laws which bind us are composed of such particulars -- the drink in the club, the nod and the wink -- and the communicative *aha* comes with the pleasurable recognition of the shared detail, not with the acknowledgement of the rule: *That man is just like me* rather than *What he says is true*. The proffering of examples is a public exchange of the type *I'll show you mine if you show me yours*. Examples identify speaker and audience, or writer and reader, as the *same*, in which case there is applause, or *different*, in which case there is silence or abuse. The scandal of example lies not in the shortcomings of its fit but in that it establishes the rule. It is not a matter of the shoddy and imperfect nature of example's fit to the rule, or principle, or universal, or truth, but that the rule, or principle, or universal, or truth takes its measure from the examples used. The chasm, abyss, or gap between the particular and the universal is more of a landfill, smoothed and smudged by endorsement, the handshake, camaraderie, avuncularity, the fertile compost of tone. Truth, as Hilary Putnam says, is "primarily a matter of fit: fit to what is referred to in one way or another, or to other renderings, or to modes and manners of organization" (qtd. in Alcoff 71). Forgetfulness, rather than memory, is what enables concepts of the universal or the true, as Nietzsche says, but rather than being dismayed at the constitution of truth as "a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, anthropomorphisms" (250), we can rejoice in these little bits, these lambent and quicksilver examples, which we select and handle every day, consolidating or reshaping the rule and broadcasting our own fit.

The breakdown of the rule into constitutive examples allows minor players into the game. In one way, the task of interpretation is simply deflected onto the individual; one fashions one's own "memory," to adapt Montaigne's coming-to-terms with kidney stones:

For lack of a natural memory I make one of paper, and as some new symptom occurs in my disease, I write it down. Whence it comes that at the present moment, when I have passed through virtually every sort of experience, if some grave stroke threatens me, by glancing through these little notes, disconnected like Sibyl's leaves, I never fail to find grounds for comfort in some favorable prognostic from my past experience. (837-8)

In this case, the governing intelligence is that which has assembled the materials. But fragmentation invites multiple reconstitutions or interpretations, each marked by its own narrative line. We are storytellers as well as interpreters of stories. If I argue for finding the universal in the particular it is not from a Neo-Platonic impulse but because we all have access to the particular and if it is perceived as quick and active, then so may be our handling of it. The particular becomes charged and dynamic in a way that is not possible when materiality is maintained at the expense of cordoning off ineffability in the shape of a Cartesian God. "If women have no God," says Irigaray, "they are unable either to communicate or commune with one another. They need, we need, an infinite if they are to share a little" (62). Part of my impulse to splinter is to make fertile, and to fan a creation myth into everyday anecdote -- not "that we should beget children insensibly with our fingers and heels, but rather, with due respect, that we should also beget them voluptuously with our fingers and heels" (Montaigne 855).

The ethical reward of this reconstitution of the rule is in the acknowledgment and acceptance that one does not have to be exemplary in order to make an example of. In fact, there is a basic contradiction between example and exemplarity, at the level of audience. Example is conceptualized as being multiple, loosely bound to the law,

substitutable, often only in multiplicity approximating or indicating the boundaries of the law. Who can regulate example but the exemplar? The exemplary man, traditionally, is in the position to judge and to legislate. Only the man has the necessary legitimacy or authority, and only the exemplary man is ethically justified: The man, as an example, must be the example of examples: he must be right in order to right, he must be judged fit to judge, or fit to fit -- he must himself fit, with a true man can fit, although it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that a properly outfitted female might, in the right circumstances, prove an adequate fit.

In order for an example to function as an exemplar, or an exemplar to function as an example, a change in audience must be achieved. Ethics, in so far as it involves exemplarity, is a matter of audience. The truth of an example is the degree to which it can be made fit the values of its culture. A "new" example can be truthful if its employer is sufficiently powerful to construct an audience for it. There is nothing inexorable about example. There is no fixed number to be used. The rule-of-three may have aesthetic appeal in our discourse but it is not a closed system; it does not have finality. In order to change the rule, we change the examples. To study example is to study culture:

In the fabric of discourse and debate, example, like citation, has no autonomous standing. Whatever is designated as example functions as a nexus of converging articulations. Where are these to be sought? Is it a vector back to a source, a whole from which the example derives? Or is it a vector forward -- to an addressee, an agency for whom the example has been prepared? Finally, what of the status or standing of the example: what makes the example exemplify, gives it the capacity to stand for, to represent and exhibit, some other entity? (Gelley 2)

Gelley's questions relate to his own presentation of the "two strands" of exemplarity exemplified by Plato's sense of the paradigm as cognitive, "an archetype deriving from a transcendent source" (Gelley 1), and Aristotle's alternative presentation of example as pragmatic: "the instance serves as vector pointing to a principle or conclusion" (Gelley 1). The two models, not surprisingly, produce a nest of questions to substantiate Gelley's inquiry: "Is the example merely one -- a singular, a fruit of circumstance -- or *the One* -- a paradigm, a paragon?" (2). If the example is synecdochal, in what way does it

stand for the whole? What whole? Is example a vector back to a source or a vector forward to an addressee? If example works as an illustration, from what source does it draw its power -- "from what it's part of, or is there a power in the part itself, in the part as part?" (2). Where is the source of the example, the whole, to be found? "How is it constituted?" (2). Example seems to make the whole as it speaks -- "it is oriented to the recovery of a lost whole or the discovery of a new one" (3): "But how will we know it when we see it? Can we ever expect to see the whole since we have been shown only a part?" (3). Gelley's questions, produced as they are from the logic of two sets, whether Plato's part from whole or Aristotle's part from part, lead us directly up to the boundaries, in a sense gnawing at them, like Derrida, but needing their sustenance:

Perhaps, though, the function of example is precisely to divert us from the two limiting terms -- the whole *from which* and the whole *toward which* -- and disclose an *in between*, an opening for picturing, for illustrative realization. We come here to another puzzle regarding example: is it, semiotically, sample or illustration? Does it work by way of synecdoche (part for whole) or analogy (similitude)? While one might wish to draw firm boundaries, in practice the difference is hard to pin down. (Gelley 3)

It is along this question of boundaries which discourse about examples has played, and stalled, in modern times. Kant brings us to the point where example constitutes the subject: examples spin "at the point where the limits of conceptual exposition are reached" (Gelley 13). Rather than examples illustrating a rule, we come to conceptualize them as multiple, fertile, lambent -- Wittgenstein's "You give him examples, - but he has to guess their drift" (qtd. in Gelley 13), which does not seem to me at all the "obligation to judge" (14) into which Gelley translates it. Careful selection -- almost literalization -- of terms seems crucial to our study, yet it has obvious pitfalls. Gelley begins his exploration of example by using an etymological "heuristic," i.e., example means sample, "a part taken out of some whole: *eximere*" (2). But it does not seem to me that this "way to get started" (327) is ever shed: the part/whole dilemma dominates his discussion, even at the expense of overlooking Aristotle's emphasis on part/part. Our



obligation is to pick our heuristics imaginatively as they will indeed determine our arguments, regardless of our disclaimers. In other words, "We call a person "honest." We ask, "Why did he act so honestly today?" Our answer usually goes: "Because of his honesty." Or, "If I define the mammal and then after examining a camel declare, "See, a mammal," a truth is brought to light, but it is of limited value" (Nietzsche 249, 251). My task is how to remain in Wittgenstein's "guess their drift" without either fossilizing the phrase, eliding it into the far more culturally acceptable "obligation to judge," or applying to it yet another finalist hermeneutics. That's a tantalizing ethical and epistemological challenge: to shape oneself in the examples one applies. How do we write our fragments?

The debates endemic to all discussion of figurative language are simmering now in discussions of example: What is literal? What is figurative? Is there an objective reality? Is all language figurative? Is reality figurative? Is figurative language bad or good, pedagogical or ornamental? Does figurative language make or illustrate meaning? Is there any outside to figuration? The sooner we can unequivocally -- or equivocally -- recognize example as figurative, the sooner we can refine our questions to avoid repetition, foster shades of difference, and encourage example and metaphor to put manners on one another.

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## APPENDIX

## THE CHILDBIRTH METAPHOR IN POPULAR DISCOURSE

In popular discourse, however, the childbirth metaphor is currently thriving. A keyword search (Cornell University Libraries 12.4.00) to identify its use in titles of books published in 2000 emphatically demonstrates this point. For example, while a very small number of titles use the word "birth," in reference to the subject of childbirth, e.g., Breastfeeding book: everything you need to know about nursing your child from birth through weaning (Sears 2000), and Pregnancy, birth and the early months: the thinking woman's guide (Feinbloom 2000), and a small number of titles use the word as a marker of the human life cycle, e.g., Securing the future: investing in children from birth to college (Danziger and Waldfoegel 2000), and From birth to death: a consumer's guide to population studies (Petersen 2000), the vast majority of examples engage with metaphorical rather than physiological birth, e.g., Birth of a God: the Dalai Lama (videorecording), Fall of an empire, the birth of a nation: national identities in Russia (Chulos 2000); Comet Science: the study of remnants from the birth of the solar system (Crovisier and Encrenaz 2000), Making security social: disability, insurance, and the birth of the social entitlement state in Germany (Eghigian 2000), Rites of Spring: the Great War and the birth of the modern age (Eksteins 2000), Anna Held and the birth of Ziegfeld's Broadway (Golden 2000), Victorian scientist and engineer: Fleeming Jenkin and the birth of electrical engineering (Cookson and Hempstead 2000), History of everyday things: the birth of consumption in France 1600-1800 (Roche 2000), Birth of Internet marketing communications (Steinbock 2000), Pangs of the Messiah: the troubled birth of the Jewish state (Sicker 2000), and Joseph Heller's Birth of Israel, 1945-1949: Ben-Gurion and his critics (2000). In accordance with literary convention, many of these titles use a colon to separate the more from the less metaphorical, e.g., Birth marks: the tragedy of primogeniture in Pierre Corneille, Thomas Corneille, and Jean Racine (Goodkin 2000). This separation speaks both to the instability of birth as a subject, reflected in such titles as Pregnancy, birth and the early months: the thinking woman's guide (Feinbloom 2000) which suggests that through thought sense can be made of these processes, and The Girl who gave birth to rabbits: a true medical mystery (Pickover 2000), which suggests the opposite. Not only is the subject of birth undercooked, not to say raw, but birth metaphors themselves exhibit an uncontrollable tendency to breed catachresis and tautology, e.g., Partisanship and the birth of America's second party, 1796-1800; stop the wheels of government (Dawson 2000), The invention of Dionysius: an essay on The Birth of Tragedy (Porter 2000), Politics of long division: the birth of the second party system in Ohio, 1818-1828 (Ratcliffe 2000), and Missing Spanish creoles: recovering the birth of plantation contact languages (McWhorter 2000), which can be unpacked as "Missing Spanish people of mixed birth: rebirthing the birth of plantation

contact languages," and undoubtedly "plantation," "contact," and "languages" can be further pressured to yield their complement of birth metaphor. Predictably, birth is perhaps most exhaustively defined negatively, e.g., Encyclopedia of birth control (Rengel 2000). And although it falls outside the parameters of the year 2000, I would like to point to one example of the subject being rescued by the sheer metaphoricity of poetry: Toi Derricotte's Natural Birth, which was republished in 1999.

One can conclude that the word "birth" is primarily a metaphor for invention, rather than a reference to a physical human event. One might expect the word "childbirth" to be more specific in its reference to the physiological event, and such is indeed the case, with a corresponding shriveling of examples. For example, although a relevance keyword search using the word "birth" yields 7330 titles, a similar search using the word "childbirth" yields only 448 examples. Only four books published in 2000, according to the Cornell library holdings, use this term: Julie Tharp and Susan MacCallum-Whitcomb's This giving birth: pregnancy and childbirth in American women's writing (2000), Tove Holmqvist's The Hospital is a Uterus: Western discourses of childbirth in late modernity (2000), After the baby: making sense of marriage after childbirth (Nordin 2000), and Mothering the new mother: women's feelings and needs after childbirth: a support and resource guide (Placksin 2000). That two of these four book address childbirth as a discourse indicates the substantial contribution which cultural or literary studies of birth can make to the construction of birth as a subject. This commitment informs my own work.

As subjects, rebirth and childbirth have many features in common. Both manifest a certain degree of specificity: childbirth largely in terms of handbooks, guidebooks, resource guides, birth control and certification, particularly in relation to Congressional hearings in the U.S., and population control in the economically poor societies, e.g.,

Family planning and practice: Africa (1999), EC/UNFPA initiative for reproductive health in Asia (1999), Reasons for discontinuing and not intending to use contraception in India (Mishra 1999), and Limitation des naissances dans la société romaine (Salmon 1999); and rebirth in terms of Buddhism. Like childbirth, however, rebirth has high potential for metaphorical application, e.g., Rebirth: a political history of Europe since World War II (Black et al 2000), Raskolnikov's rebirth: psychology and the understanding of good and evil (Dilman 2000), If it ain't got that swing: the rebirth of grown-up culture (Judge 2000), and Donald Kuspit's Rebirth of painting in the late twentieth century (2000). In conclusion, the subjects of rebirth and childbirth in western academic culture, as represented by Cornell University Libraries' indices, manifest parallel structures and composition. That they both function on almost equally small scales deserves note, given the universality of childbirth in human experience, though not culture, and the specificity of the doctrine of rebirth.

There is a huge Western subject area relating to rebirth, however, i.e., "The" Renaissance. A keyword search using the word "renaissance" yields 9870 examples, which is more than the number of examples for birth, childbirth, and rebirth combined. Cornell University Libraries hold 6374 works using the word "Renaissance" or "renaissance" in their titles, 150 of them published in 2000. Sometimes "renaissance" is used to designate a time period, as in Alchemy of light: geometry and optics in late Renaissance alchemical illustration (Szulakowska 2000), Art, memory, and family in Renaissance Florence (Ciappelli

and Rubin 2000), or Understanding art: a reference guide to painting, sculpture, and architecture in the Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque periods (Sharpe Reference 2000); and sometimes to denote genre, as in Global interests: Renaissance art between East and West (Jardine and Brotton 2000), and Putting history to the question: power, politics, and society in English Renaissance drama (Neill 2000). In these contexts, "renaissance" is capitalized, not to say monumentalized, and seems almost to be a place, in the same way that Kant or the Bible can be treated as places in discourse and argument. This capitalized renaissance, e.g., The Renaissance: a short history (Johnson 2000) is the original renaissance, the fourteenth to sixteenth century Italian one, "marking the transition from medieval to modern times" (American Heritage College Dictionary), i.e., a phenomenon much more fluid and arbitrary than its monolithic establishment in discourse suggests.

That the term is so solidly established, however, gives rise to a differentiation which would not otherwise be possible, e.g., Encyclopedia of Italian Renaissance and Mannerist Art (Turner 2000), Perspectives on the Renaissance medal (Scher 2000), and Confraternities and the visual arts in Renaissance Italy: ritual, spectacle, image (Wisch and Ahl 2000). It can even be used as a venue in which to investigate interests which would, in less stable discursive contexts, be considered inadmissible or minor, e.g., Women in renaissance and early modern Europe (Meek 2000). Not only is the term so solid that it has almost become a place and can be intensively differentiated, it also has generated abundant transfers, and its own metaphorical network. In other words, it is a subject. Transfers such as American renaissance in New England (Mott 2000), Boston renaissance: race, space, and economic change in an American metropolis (Bluestone and Stevenson 2000), American voices of the Chicago renaissance (Woolley 2000) Black Orpheus: music in African American fiction from the Harlem renaissance to Toni Morrison (Simawe 2000), Chicano renaissance: contemporary cultural trends (Maciel et al 2000), I remain alive: the Sioux literary renaissance (Heflin 2000), Ruthless democracy: a multicultural interpretation of the American renaissance (Powell 2000), and Distant voices still heard: contemporary readings of French renaissance literature (O'Brien and Quainton 2000), borrow subjectivity from The Real Renaissance, and are not capable of equivalent differentiation or elaboration. For example, a book title such as Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe (Anglo 2000) is comprehensible, while Martial arts of the Chicano Renaissance may not be.

Furthermore, The Real Renaissance lends form to concepts which do not share its key markers of identification with a period and place but which do manifest the characteristic of invention, e.g., Cyberschools: an education renaissance (Jones 2000), and Strategic renaissance: new thinking and innovative tools to create great corporate strategies — using insights from history and science (Dudik 2000). It is also stable enough to generate backformations, e.g., The early palaeologan renaissance, 1261-c. 1360 (Fryde 2000), and to itself adopt the position of a back-formation: Renaissance computer: knowledge technology in the first age of print (Rhodes and Sawday 2000). The birth metaphor system generated by this birth metaphor-become-subject exhibits the same tendency towards tautology which we noted earlier, e.g., Mystics after modernism: discovering the seeds of new science in the Renaissance (Steiner 2000), and Brunelleschi's dome: how a Renaissance genius reinvented

architecture (King 2000), in which "discovering," "seeds," "new," "genius," and "reinvented" seem almost synonymous glosses on "Renaissance."

The Renaissance, moreover, has repaid the debt to motherhood represented by the loose and sketchy borrowing that is its name by producing its own subject of motherhood, most notably in the luscious tradition of Madonna and Child paintings, which in turn provide a template for Mother and Child paintings several centuries later, most notably in Europe in the mid to late nineteenth century, or as Jane Silverman Van Buren puts it: "Da Vinci chisels out the flesh-and-blood mother and child from the context of religious iconography" (130). Similarly, medieval English prayers and lyrics marked out a space for motherhood now occupied by the childbirth poem. Subjects do not always expand out of subjects; sometimes they shrink. For example, the Renaissance self-consciousness in relation to the "I," reflected in such titles as Fashioning identities in Renaissance art (Rogers 2000), Representations of the self from the Renaissance to Romanticism (Coleman et al 2000), Painter's reflection: self-portraiture in Renaissance Venice: 1458-1625 (Brown 2000), so prohibitive of women's authorship and authority, must needs shrink so that it no longer casts a long and cold shadow as in the obliterating "I" of Virginia's Woolf's A Room of One's Own (173-4), but becomes tiny and charged, as in Ntozake Shange's uncapitalized "i."

The point in examining childbirth metaphors used in contemporary book titles, or popular discourse, or our own conversation, pedagogy, or writing, is to construct the self-consciousness necessary for a term to become distinctive, stable, "elevated" to an index, and thus, a referent to a subject area. Childbirth is not a subject area in my field of literary theory and cultural studies. It is rarely listed in indices. In Elaine Scarry's The Body in Pain (1985), the closest analogy is "Childbearing," a term which behaves, in Scarry's index, exactly as outlined above, i.e., it refers to what happens elsewhere (far away, or in the past), and what has been codified: "Childbearing: in China, 110; in Old Testament, 185-198; 199-200, 240; in U.S. law, 112." Even Jane Gallop's Thinking Through the Body (1988), the cover of which presents a magnificent photograph of Gallop's child presenting or edging from Gallop's vagina into the gloved hand of a medical attendant, offers nothing, in the index, between "Cassatt, Mary, 164-65" and "Chodorow, Nancy, 88." The index to Elizabeth Grosz's Volatile Bodies, published more recently (1994), offers body parts — "breasts," "flesh," "fluids," "vagina" — and sites — "amputation," "invagination," "clitoridectomy" — but gives no place to "this giving birth, this glistening verb" (Olds 45), which may, nevertheless, perhaps be constructed by patchwork, or by the suggestion offered by negative space, just Grosz's argument inches toward "a corporeal feminism" by means of studying non-feminists, Nietzsche, Foucault, Freud, etc., or "abortion" and "birth control" articulate childbirth. In the context of exemplarity, I argue that ethics may well be the construction of a good index, with all the problematics that "good" entails. The inclusion of a term in an index substantiates the development of a subject in a discourse community. Why is "renaissance," or more properly "Renaissance" the most outstandingly successful of the four terms I have discussed in relation to birth? Because it has an established community and can make fertile linkages and expansions: we can play publicly with it. "Childbirth," by contrast, has been sequestered until recently and has produced little culture or community insofar as those terms are defined by acknowledged sharing.



## VITA

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