

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHREYER HONORS COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

UNTANGLING EROS FROM LOGOS

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Spring 2010

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for a baccalaureate degree
in English
with honors in English

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ABSTRACT

My honors thesis project, *Untangling Eros from Logos*, began with the objective of determining whether sexuality could be divorced from language from the standpoint of Jacques Derrida and his understanding of deconstruction. The most relevant thinkers on the topics of language or linguistics and sexuality or gender and, in some cases, on an integration of both topics are incorporated into Section I to aid in analysis of the question at hand. These include J.L. Austin's *How to do Things with Words*, Georges Bataille's *Story of the Eye* and *Visions of Excess*, Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*, Hélène Cixous' *The Newly Born Woman*, Jacques Derrida's *Acts of Literature, Limited, Inc.*, *The Post Card*, and *Writing and Difference*, Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*, Niall Lucy's *A Derrida Dictionary*, and John Searle's article, "Reiterating Differences: A Reply to Derrida." Section I concludes that eros is wholly entrapped by logos, and thus Section II is an effort to provide a more hopeful potential world when faced with this condition. While sexuality and language are inextricable, the main focus should be their own agency as performative entities. To give the inquiry of the project a less abstract feel, Section III works with Austin's theory of performative utterance and Butler's theory of performative gender in the context of British author Angela Carter's *The Passion of New Eve*. This novel arises from the tradition of magical realism, constructing a multiplicity of fictive worlds ideal for observation of modes of sexual experience. The paper also points to a need for sexuality to be examined as its own entity beyond the limitations of language, particularly a phallogentric discourse, and concludes with a challenge to exercise performativity as a way of owning one's individual erotic existence.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I offer my sincerest gratitude to

my thesis supervisor, Aldon Nielsen, for kind words and clear criticism
my parents, Dan and Marge Murphy, for financial support and a break
from imagined worlds

Dan, for constant patience

Daniel, for necessary discord

Kristan and Zach, for intellectual stimulation

the Undergraduate Summer Discovery Grant committee, for funding and
time

Untangling Eros from Logos

I. Interweaving Theory: Gender, Linguistics, and Queerness

Can we divorce sexuality from language? Though the question seems to be a relatively lucid one—answerable on a theoretical but also pragmatic level—solutions like “yes and no” or “circumstantially” continually surface. Determining whether we can extract seduction or eroticism from each mode of communication renders itself unnecessary when we consider the impetus for asking such a question: the search for truth. In the Western world, sexuality has weaved itself in and out of our rhetoric—in ways both subtle and blatant—as representative of veracity in speech and writing. Prior to the Victorian era of repression and censorship, sex was spoken of candidly—not out of need to discover some sort of meaning within it, but rather because it simply was happening and its occurrence did not require a clandestinity.

According to Michel Foucault, authorities of the nineteenth century’s bourgeoisie society found sexuality to be a marker of truth even while omitting any discourse on the topic. This truth was teased out of the era’s silenced citizen by means of confession, whether in accordance with Catholic dogma or with jurisdictional proceedings (19). In this way, the notion of genuineness or of an essence of the indisputably real became conflated with a sense of guilt and a need for cleansing oneself, expurgating oneself of the harsh reality desire presents. As we move toward a contemporary understanding of what sexuality signifies—or should signify—to the masses, the focus of the topic shifts to a call for liberation from a sustained sexual repression. Corresponding to a backlash against censorship of text and a renewed embrace of free speech, the scope of discourse has broadened within the past century to include what Foucault calls “a whole network of

varying, specific, and coercive transpositions” intended to foment conversation about every aspect of sexuality (34). The discussion of erotics can no longer to be kept under wraps in a public capacity if anything fruitful is to be extracted from it. The term “fruitful” is used here to refer to a development of collective understandings about what sexuality is and how it will be treated that function advantageously for society as a whole. Since the power relationship between eros and language dictates the ability to render the former a positive force in contemporary culture, use of the utmost circumspection in writing or speaking about sexuality is key at this point in the dialogue. In a time when sex segregation is being installed anew in some American elementary schools, when topics deemed obscene and thus inappropriate for primetime media placement are instead shuttled to late night comedy shows, a set of standards for the treatment of sexuality in our logos grows increasingly vital.

In an effort to advance the somewhat desultory discussion of how we comprehend sexuality now, both in terms of pleasure and identity, it is in this case most efficient to look backwards in time and first question what we understand to be meaning itself in scholarly discourse. Although the viewpoint no longer dominates literary and linguistic study, deconstruction provides one type of framework with the ability to truly liberate sexuality. While bourgeoisie-style repression perpetuated by a negation of outright sexuality is a thing of the past, freedom to *communicate* about sexuality does not translate into freedom to *exhibit* sexuality. There exists a need to determine to what extent sexuality’s relationship with language can be quantified—if at all—and how social thought concerning sexuality must be constructed to allow for a more solid platform on which the erotic can stand. While on the surface it may seem counterproductive to use a

term as vague as “deconstruction” to get at the concreteness within sexuality or language, the application of this approach in the beginning stages of analysis will serve to destabilize our current conceptions of eros and logos. When we remove our established frames of reference, we will be left to deal only with the thing itself.

Derridean deconstruction focuses on the need for “deconstructing, dislocating, displacing, disarticulating, disjoining, putting ‘out of joint’ the authority of the ‘is,’” as explained in *“The Time is Out of Joint”* (Lucy, 12). Deconstruction for Derrida, the theorist who first adapted the term to a rhetorical application, is the only way to cede language the power to communicate. This mode of thought is based on a belief that nothing is metaphysical in and of itself; rather, the way the use of rhetoric fluctuates throughout history brings language alive and gives it being. At the same time, rhetoric becomes regimented to a point at which its being is no longer substantial in its ability to convey (*Limited*, 21). Deconstruction as a movement, then, is a reaction to structuralism (*Writing*, 4). Structuralism, a movement of the twentieth century spearheaded by Ferdinand de Saussure, focused on the formal properties of language rather than its “meaningful” content. Displacement and reversal of form within a text, for instance, release its words and sentences from an interdependency rooted in a systematic approach to writing (5). Deconstruction, therefore, is not a claim that there exists no meaning within language—as is often misinterpreted—but rather a resistance to modes of arrangement and classification of language that cloud its signifying power.

After its first employment as a tool for literary critique in the late 1960s, deconstruction was disseminated into a variety of fields with disparate comprehensions of its implications, even beyond the reach of academia. As a result of the term’s esoteric

nature, deconstruction has come to be understood by the public just as it appears: to destroy or break down something that has been constructed (Faulconer, 1). The consideration of the word's more general meaning is of perhaps more significance in an examination of sexuality, since the secondary but more widespread meaning demonstrates the inevitability of systematization that the primary meaning is desperately attempting to overturn. If we, however, attempt to meld or simply accept the ideas behind both interpretations behind deconstruction and apply them to a discussion of the truth of sexuality, we will be able to more easily tear down—or simply displace—the categories and acknowledgements that are shrouding this truth. The lesson of deconstruction, though, seems to imply in some ways that there is no truth to unshroud at all. For Derrida, meaning does not exist outside of context, yet a context does not exist that allows for “saturation” (Lucy, 203). Essentially, his theory points to an impossibility of any text due to a multiplicity of viable interpretations.

George Bataille's 1928 novella entitled *Story of the Eye* constitutes an ideal literary work to which we can apply the perspective of deconstruction. As the primary rationale for selection of this fiction, Bataille's theory of base materialism, a negative response to mainstream materialism's lure, heavily influenced Derrida's analysis of foundations and the stability among them. The story begins with the line, “I grew up very much alone, and as far back as I recall I was frightened of anything sexual.” The rest of the novella is a sort of subversive coming-of-age story developing from this statement, which elaborates on the juvenile sexual exploits of the narrator and his friends while threading a sense of irrepressible fear of one's own sexuality throughout the story's plotlines. The various plotlines, however, tend to lack diversity in the actual events of each chapter. Instead,

each new incident generally involves an attempt by two or more characters to restrain their overwhelming sexual desires, followed by the climax of this restraint which inevitably ends in a rampant orgy. Even the two female characters, Simone and Marcelle, dress in the same thigh-high silk stockings and collared pinafores. The only modification to this formulaic structure is setting, place, and time—the context of the sex. For example, the first observation of the narrator's sexual relations with Simone takes place on the second page of the novella on a cliff in a thunderstorm. This also serves as the first time the other primary character, Marcelle, is introduced to the story and subsequently rid of her “purest and most affecting” immaculacy by the crazed eroticism of the other two (*Story*, 5).

Midway through the story, Marcelle hangs herself as an indirect result of her horror and guilt at her own sexual deviance. The narrator and Simone mourn her death by copulating at the scene of the suicide in remembrance of their beloved acquaintance. The two then escape to Spain, accompanied by a travel companion named Sir Edmund, who appears to be employed only for assistance in the teenagers' more laborious and outlandish sexual acts. Sir Edmund is then required to collect human and animal eyes, as well as a wax mannequin replicating Marcelle. Even while in Spain, there is little description of the imagery of their new surroundings; in lieu of details about the taking place in a bull fight are details about masturbation in the stands of a bull fight. Passages such as, “Indeed, we virtually never stopped having sex. We avoided orgasms and went sightseeing,” are demonstrative of the raw carnality absorbing all rhetoric in this section of the story (*Story*, 30).

The first inquiry a reader likely has after finishing this novella reflects a desire to

know what the point of such a piece is. It seems to be devoid of any true storyline and instead reads more like a biological description of how sex functions during puberty. Little character development is involved and the conclusion, in which the narrator, Simone, and Sir Edmund set off on a yacht toward “new adventures with a crew of Negroes,” merely indicates that the teenager’s lives will continue just as they have, with no growth except a longer delineation of sexual history (40). At first, it appears that an attempt to deconstruct this text will only end in failure—there is nothing worthwhile enough to displace. The novella obliges a will to glorify eroticism and is simply one of the first texts during the Modern era to do so in that blatant mode Bataille has chosen. Its substance derives from experimentalism and originality.

Yet in an interview found in *Acts of Literature*, Derrida speaks of his efforts to “render both *accessible* and *inaccessible*” the literary pieces with which he is working (*Acts*, 35 [author’s italics]). The accessible meaning of Bataille’s *Story of the Eye* illustrates that sexuality exists, cannot be denied, and must be spoken about—a clear reaction to the nineteenth century’s appeal to silencing of eroticism. To deconstruct the text, the inaccessible meaning of the text must be brought forth, the meaning that clashes with the accepted and perhaps intended implications that are taught to university students and discussed by scholars of the discipline. In Part II of the novella, Bataille dictates coincidences he has discovered within the text, primarily parallels to his own life, but offers little insight into his deeper intentions in composing the *Story of the Eye*, stating only, “I began writing with no precise goal, animated chiefly by a desire to forget, at least for the time being, the things I can be or do personally” (*Story*, 41).

If the accepted meaning of the novella is simply to toy with a breach of assumed

cultural limitations on perversity, then decontextualizing the work would involve extracting the story from a circumstance in which these cultural limitations exist.

Although, according to Derrida, this endeavor will leave the skeleton of a literary work without meaning, it is required for the purposes of recontextualizing *Story of the Eye* to be more applicable to another situation or to contemporary culture. An additional concern remains—the tenets of deconstruction state that this and any text has already destabilized and, in essence, deconstructed itself, seemingly rendering the job of deconstruction futile. Drawing attention to these instabilities, however, will set a stage for the way the text can be used apart from its established meaning.

First, perhaps the most startling scene of the novella features Simone having sex with a priest while simultaneously suffocating him to his death as he prays aloud a final plea for martyrdom. This incident seems to clearly use the priest as a symbol of the smothering of sexuality that was sustained at the time the work was published. Bataille uses his own agency channeled through Simone to violently terminate the repression and champion sexual liberation in all its forms. In spite of this tactic, the message of *laissez-faire* that is evoked remains wholly reliant on the presence of the priest to be effective. The liberation requires the repression to push against; otherwise, the liberation would not be possible. In the same way, the narrator presents the church, the prison, his parents, and any other controlling force as signifiers of normalcy. He sets up a binary between these forces and sexuality, which must then function as the force that transcends control. This assumption about sexuality is broken down when we realize that the sexuality of the primary characters, even the wanton and apparently heartless Simone, is still controlled by those repressive forces against which the characters are reacting so violently. For

example, the figure of Marcelle, the blonde, innocent friend who is almost always dressed in white and must be implored—or often begged—by her friends to partake in their sexual exploits, dictates much of the sexual freedom of the other two characters. When she is held in a sanatorium in the chapter entitled “A Sunspot,” the narrator and Simone find that they are no longer interested in the other children or themselves. They are inadequately eroticized without the impetus of Marcelle’s naïveté and fear of her own sexuality in order to complete theirs. This again shows the reliance of an unrestrained sexuality on the context of a subordinated sexuality. The “normal” of the repressive forces and their rejection of the erotic is in fact just a segment of the “deviance” the children represent.

A brief deconstruction of some elements of Bataille’s *Story of the Eye* show how hegemony may not reflect what is actually normal at all. Often, the social categories that present themselves to us as real show themselves to in fact be nonsensical under scrutiny. How, then, can we determine what is real in terms of sexuality? If we were to attempt to deconstruct the role sexuality plays in contemporary Western society, it might mirror the deconstruction of Bataille’s text to some extent. That is to say, although the characters in *Story of the Eye* are blatantly hyperbolic, they act as a portrait of the brand of sexuality that was craved during the early twentieth century by those who saw themselves as repressed—raw, blatant, detailed, unadulterated in its adulteration.

By the second half of the twentieth century, this brand of sexuality had presented itself in the foreground as a revolution, though the notion of free love and “speaking of it *ad infinitum*” fell out of favor when it no longer had a separate category to react against (Foucault, 35). Writing again of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,

Foucault determines that “‘sex’ was described as being caught between a law of reality (economic necessity being its most abrupt and immediate form) and an economy of pleasure which was always attempting to circumvent that law” (154). A cycle of different and often contradictory truths within sexuality becomes ostensible. Thus, to move forward and determine the truth of sexuality today, the binary between the hegemonic conception and its reactionary conception must be sought out, then deconstructed.

Bataille states that when most accurately defined, the job of the dictionary is to provide the tasks of the words it defines, rather than their meanings, inscribed in his *Visions of Excess* (31). When extorting the entity of eroticism from language and, subsequently, the truth from the eroticism, it must first be determined what the task of language is. In discussing the erotic life of flowers in the same volume, Bataille asserts that this visible display of sex “doubtless cannot be adequately expressed by language; it is, however, useless to ignore (as is generally done) this inexpressible *real presence* and to reject as puerile absurdities certain attempts at symbolic interpretation” (10 [author’s italics]). If the duty of language is not to properly *express* that which it describes—or perhaps simply fail us in this task—but instead to show its actual doing, then language must be a doing in and of itself.

From a linguistic standpoint, this statement is essentially a reiteration of J.L. Austin’s theory of performative utterance, of statements which are neither true nor untrue but can be unhappy, as in the case of six infelicities (Austin, 25). These performative utterances transcend the boundaries of description held within language; instead, a statement such as, “I give and bequeath my watch to my brother,” actually does the thing it orates, rather than simply telling of it (Austin, 5). The very act of speaking—or writing—becomes a

part of the doing of language. While Derrida expresses several objections to the nuances of some of Austin's theory, he, too, asserts on several accounts that language functions beyond the level of an economy of signs. For example, in his book of theoretical prose, *The Post Card*, he says the following to an anonymous recipient of one of the work's many "envois," or letters that are arguably intended to have been sent:

You give me words, you deliver them, dispensed one by one, my own, while turning them toward yourself and addressing them to yourself—and I have never loved them so, the most common ones become quite rare, nor so loved to lose them either, to destroy them by forgetting at the very instant when you receive them, and this instant would precede almost everything, my *envoi*, myself, so that they take place only once. One single time, you see how crazy this is for a word? Or for any trait at all? (*The Post Card*, 12)

The synthesis of this passage seems to expose the author's sense of awe at the simultaneous power and impotence of the word. A word is the object of unequivocal love but also stands apart as a something that "takes place." Though the language can be forgotten and thus destroyed, for a moment or perhaps forever, it is an occurrence. It occurs of its own agency. It is written but also writes itself.

From a less impassioned vantage point, Derrida states outright in *Acts of Language* that the notion of something grasped outside-the-text, beyond the limits of the literary text at hand, is impossible. That is to say, in the constructed world of a novel or even a nonfiction writing—an op-ed in the *New York Times*, for instance—the language in the piece is the only active body, as the deeds enacted by the bodies of the characters are unable to be understood in the same way once they are detached from the discourse found in the specific text. In the situation of a text, the language is the doer and performs all tasks. Here, the task of language is to execute tasks.

If we accept that language is active of its own accord, a living substance—or perhaps

a living system of substances—how do we reconcile the sexuality that is found within a text? While sex is decidedly a physical action, it is also a way of communicating, not just with the other as a separate individual but with oneself and with the general populace as a way of establishing identity. According to Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*, sex in hegemonic discourse appears as a substance just as language does, though the substance of sexuality is controlled by the performativity of language (25-26). Language creates two categories of sex, male and female, in the nomenclatures of—among other distinctive pronouns—"he" and "she" or "man" and "woman," a phallogocentric discourse that becomes problematic in its production of two sexes, thereby making impossible something that literally embodies both sexes or neither sex.

As a particularly uncommon but very relevant example, we find Herculine Barbin, a hermaphrodite whose journals Foucault claims to have discovered and has since published. Whether genuine or contrived, Herculine is what Butler labels a "sexual impossibility of an identity" (32). Language cannot, in its current dictional confines, document Herculine's life properly as it would any other person's. Since the agency of language has impeded itself in this way, by its own power, s/he has no choice but to be marked by h/er anatomical sexuality. This anatomical sexuality is, in turn, performing as a defiance of categories determined by language, placing Herculine in a "happy limbo of non-identity" (Foucault, *Herculine*: xiii). Whether this limbo is freeing or repressive, the fact stands that the performatives of language and sexuality have worked together to dictate Herculine's circumstances as a person lacking identity in the context of mid-nineteenth century France. Although doctors first designated h/er as a female, they were unable to overturn the agency of language and its hold, at this time, over the agency of

sexuality, and later in her life after an affair and a physical examination, Herculine was redefined, with much uncertainty, as a male.

As another example of language and sexuality situated as performing substances that cannot exist individually, feminist theorist Hélène Cixous describes the writing of women as an offering of their whole selves. The language embodies the woman, and the woman embodies the language. The pleasure of a woman is inscribed into the text they produce, and this pleasure can never be recovered to her because it is then melded with the prose (87). Sexuality in language necessarily is the truth in language because all language is truth. All language is actively performing, and we are inextricably linked to the performance, or we are left with the mute remains of a completely unstructured and, thus, unlivable life. While deconstruction shows us the fallibility of this structure, it also demonstrates to us the reliance our current economy of signs has on some semblance of a structure.

A final deconstruction helps to illustrate the sex's dependency on language. The terms used to frame this thesis, eros and logos, represent the basic notions of the established structures we share and abide by today. The word eros appeared in 1386 as meaning most generally "love" (Kraemer, E). In the schema of the ancient Greek understanding of love, though, eros referred more specifically to sexual love, in opposition to three other distinctions of love, meaning peer respect, hierarchical respect, and fondness or affection (Harper, E1). In this way, eros set itself apart by necessitating the body of the other. Logos became part of dialogue just over two centuries later in Greek culture in 1587 (Harper, L). Quickly evolving into a signifier of discourse about reason, the term was first used to indicate a simple "picking out" or selection of words (L). In the context of

ancient Greece, eros required the existence of another physical body in order to be made sense of. Within this context, eroticization could not be understood in any other way. As time went on, though, the logic of the term crumbled upon itself, as it did not allow room for sexuality that was existent—the eroticization of oneself. Deconstruction—a displacement of the context of the term—demonstrated a need for said context to be expanded to encompass a new context, to signify a new meaning that was equally as fallible and would require augmentation. Logos functioned as the act of selecting one's own communication and soon came to be based on the context of Aristotle's philosophy of knowledge in terms of reason (Gier, 1). While in ancient Greece, reason appeared as the only path to true knowledge, later philosophies demonstrated the incongruencies within this framework. At the same time, the freedom of eroticization was controlled by this logos, by the selection of words and those who selected the words, by the comprehension of what reason was and how it applied to one's sexual life.

“The fabulous economy of a very simple little sentence, perfectly intelligible and normal in its grammar, spontaneously *deconstructs* the oppositional logic that relies on an untouchable distinction between the performative and the constative and so many other related distinctions,” writes Derrida of the way in which syntax destabilizes its own efficacy while at the same time requiring this inefficacy to be sensical (*Acts*, 326). Deconstruction provides for Derrida a way of examining literary texts without analysis or any type of pressure on the text itself. It is simply an attitude taken toward the text that demonstrates the reliance of meaning on context and the simultaneous inaccessibility of a stable, consummate meaning in any work. When the approach is applied to the entire notion of sexuality, we find that eroticism as an entity, while performative, cannot stand

alone on its own two embodied feet.

Language, even while presenting an illusion that it is created, in fact creates itself. It can be deconstructed, but this deconstruction of the entity of language only demonstrates that even if the notion of performativity in language—the performative utterance—is considered valid at this point in scholarly inquiry, this very notion of language’s agency will not hold up under further scrutiny. Anything can be deconstructed but not destroyed. The performativity of sex, however, cannot be extracted from language. It is encased within the word, within syntax, within “he” and “she” until language deconstructs to a point that room is made for a sexuality that can be freed from sexual impossibilities. Then, perhaps sexuality will be able to function outside of its verbal context; though from a deconstructive vantage point, sexuality will never be able to reach its full potential, within or without a text.

II. The Potency of Performativity

This section of the essay marks a shift away from Derrida's theory of deconstruction toward a further synthesis of performativity, in both J.L. Austin's utterances and Judith Butler's appropriation of the concept for her project with gender. Deconstruction has fallen out of favor in scholarship since its vogue in the late twentieth century, yet performativity, a theory introduced formally at about the same time as deconstruction, continues to be of interest in a variety of disciplines. While many scholars argue that Derrida's lack of clarity in his texts on deconstruction is to blame for the brevity of interest in his theory and sustained interest in performative utterances, I would like to explore more thoroughly the merit of performativity. Though Derrida claims that truth cannot be uncovered in language, the idea of a performative utterance indicates that one can at least get closer to the real buried in the logos.

The notion that sexuality is sequestered within language, locked behind the bars of a manmade diction without chance of escape, is utterly bleak. Mankind, who also cannot operate free of logos' defining system of structure, is rendered somewhat powerless. In an equation by which language controls the effect of sexuality and also the effect of human activity, mankind is made submissive to its own tool of communication. This presents a wholly existential dilemma wherein the words and sentences entrapping sexuality cannot create a fulfilling meaning for their users; rather, it is essential that the users find another way to experience sexuality that instills power into their own hands. In this part of the essay, I argue that theories of the performativity of language, credited to J.L. Austin, and the performativity of gender, credited to Judith Butler, can be understood as a way of reclaiming the potency logos has within its grasp. By acting out our words or

a chosen construal of sex, we can shape, to some extent, the actuality of a sexual existence. While this project has little to say on philosophical perspectives on free will, performativity can and must at least increase the potentiality involved in each individual's apprehension and eventual enacting of sex—in both identity and erotic engagement.

In J.L. Austin's *How to Do Things with Words*, the philosopher goes beyond simply defining the performative utterance. The text, situated as a series of recorded lectures, fittingly then explains how they might be used "happily" or properly to effect a new state of being. Preliminarily he says, "In ordinary cases, for example running, it is the fact that he is running which makes the statement that he is running *true* ... Whereas in our case it is the happiness of the performative 'I apologize' which makes it the fact that I am apologizing" (47). In this short passage, Austin encapsulates his theory of performative utterance, its relationship with sincerity, and the necessity of its happiness in order to put something into action. As described in Section I of this essay, a performative utterance is a phrase that, in being spoken, *does* something rather than simply saying something. In his words, "The uttering of the sentence is, or is a part of, the doing of an action, which again would not *normally* be described as, or as 'just,' saying something" (Austin, 5, [author's italics]). These utterances cannot be proven true or false, but they can be unhappy, putting them into a category Austin calls "infelicities." The very fact of their inability to serve as truths or falsities excludes them from common statements and places them into their own classification, growing nearer in status to an act. The happiness of a performative utterance does, however, require a legitimacy of preexisting terms, such as consensus between two wedded parties when they declare, "I do." Sincerity is also

necessary for a happy utterance. Using Austin's prior example, a person's feelings must be remorseful when saying, "I apologize;" otherwise, a fresh state of forgiveness cannot be enacted. While a performative utterance by definition cannot be true, its status of sincerity does denote, for me, a veracity of emotion on the part of the utterer and the receiver. We can assume, then, that truth dwells not within word or action but within sentiment. Sentiment is certainly a far more nebulous entity to grasp, but at least we can now acknowledge that truth has a dwelling place within one aspect of language.

Throughout the subsequent lectures, Austin provides numerous step-by-step proofs for the truths a performative utterance can or cannot indicate, but all rely on the happiness of its conditions, and most point ultimately to authenticity of expression. For the philosopher's purposes, this theory can be used to determine how words might be used to put across a sensation or induce a certain condition most effectively—the use of the word "good" in an educational setting, for example (163). Later attacks on Austin's theory debate the truth-evaluability of performative utterances versus constative utterances, which makes difficult any application of them at all that might be practicable. The project at hand, however, is less concerned with practical applications of utterances, however, and more concerned with extricating the truth housed in language, particularly the manifestation of eros in language and whether sexuality can evade the manipulation of logos. Here, we turn to Judith Butler.

The only contemporary theorist of those employed in this essay, Butler's work with performativity is pressing in that it concerns the well-being of sexuality in society and the health with which one can state or display his/her gender in a public manner. Butler's *Gender Trouble*, addressed to a particular brand of feminism that assumes a female-ness

in accordance with essentialist philosophy, takes up the concept of a performative utterance indirectly. To reiterate, a person induces a new state of being via speech using a performative utterance. In Butler's theory of performative gender, a person creates his/her state or condition of being via his/her body using a socially constructed gender. That is to say, one is not born into male-ness or female-ness but instead follows a code of actions to model what male-ness or female-ness should look like. In *Gender Trouble*, Butler writes, "In this sense, *gender* is not a noun, but neither is it a set of free-floating attributes ... Hence, within the inherited discourse of the metaphysics of a substance, gender proves to be performative—that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing" (Butler, 34 [author's italics]).

III. Performative Gender and Utterance in *The Passion of New Eve*

What follows is an application of Judith Butler's performative gender theory to Angela Carter's novel, *The Passion of New Eve*. This novel has been selected for analysis as a part of this project for two reasons. First, its stage of magical realism allows for abstract theory to come to fruition in concrete ways that it could not otherwise. For example, a character in Carter's text is forcibly changed from one gender to another by the Mother of all women, a scenario that functions only as symbolism in "real life"—even trite symbolism, at that—but illustrates the very plausible results of a world in which gender is accepted as performance when acted out for readers. Second, performative utterances are key to the success of Carter's plot, but the absence of any logos at all is equally important. In *The Passion of New Eve*, we find a balance between the two that cannot be ignored when analyzing the power of language to manipulate other forces.

The third reason *The Passion of New Eve* was selected for exegesis may at first seem trite. Angela Carter's prose has often been praised for sustaining both ornate and gritty qualities side-by-side. In this text in particular, the characters' physical traits, mannerisms, personalities, thoughts, and emotions are so heavily fleshed out that they almost entirely dominate the action of the plot itself. While this might appear to be useless for a text celebrating performance, Carter is the ideal choice of author whose words induce action, rather than the action occurring of its own accord. In the scene featuring Evelyn's physical transformation into female Eve, for example, Evelyn is first instructed that a change in appearance will change the essence—his essence of manhood into an essence of womanhood. Mother, the woman who has hatched this plan to convert unsuspecting males into unabashed females, calls the procedure psycho-surgery (68).

Evelyn hears the speeches of black-and-white movie heroines, is made to repeat the chants of the feminist militia by whom he is kept, and is physically augmented very little until the actual moment of castration. In this passage, the walk to the operating table, the theatrics surrounding the surgery, the sensations of Evelyn, and the dialogue of Mother are clearly articulated, yet the actual removal of his genitalia with a knife occupies little more than two sentences of Carter's description. Though this can be due in part to the fact that Evelyn promptly blacks out in reaction to the cut, Carter also makes a point with her selective narration to demonstrate the overwhelming power of logos to dictate situations that seem as though they could be more aptly handled materially.

The title of *The Passion of New Eve* is misleading. For lead character Evelyn, later to be called Eve, the events in novel are less about shaping the form of his eros and more about control. The first part of the text portrays a less-than-well-mannered English lad who finds himself in the throes of a rampagous 1970s New York City dominated by anti-patriarchal and anti-Caucasian sentiments. His reaction? Evelyn promptly procures a seemingly helpless exotic dancer, Leilah, to ravage and discards her after a botched abortion ends in her sustained illness.

In a novel whose main characters are comprised of—among others—a man named Evelyn who is violently forced to become a woman against his will, a drag-queen movie star who upkeeps the guise of representing the prototypical femme, and a hyper-sexualized stripper who, as it turns out, is not a real person at all but rather an imaginative entity, the endeavor to find a well-established premise or explicit message in the text becomes a bit convoluted. The plot takes us on an apparently nonsensical journey through the life of said man-turned-woman as he encounters countless numbers of people who

can only be described as very, very strange. If we can trace any clearly discernible thread throughout the text aside from the matter of control, a dissection of the notion of gender and what this term signifies is lying beneath the consciousness of each character in each surrealistic scenario.

I posit that from this dissection we can derive substantial defense for the argument that gender, as opposed to innate sexuality, is wholly constructed by the individual and further molded by society. Carter works with the changeability of the body—especially in a violent manner—to supplement this position. Moving from Butler’s *Gender Theory* to her later and perhaps more transparent article, “Bodies that Matter,” this work will provide a lens through which Carter’s piece of literature can be seen to exemplify the nonexistence of intrinsic gender categories.

By working in the domain of magical realism, Carter creates for the reader a new, imaginative world in which we can watch what our actuality would be like if the concept of inherent gender had not been presented and fostered since birth. This concept of inborn gender, though varied across different cultures, is so taken for granted in the Western contemporary and unimagined world that we can find evidence of it buried in our very vocabulary. Removed from scholarship, the utterance of the word “gender” in colloquial language is interchanged with the word “sex” without question. Both are predominantly understood to have biological connotations. However, when we examine the etymology of the term “gender,” we find that its fourteenth century Old French origins simply mean “kind” or “sort,” without regard to genetic distinction (Harper, 1). Butler defines gender with the following scenario:

For if I were to argue that genders are performative, that could mean that I thought that one woke in the morning, perused the closet or some more open space for the gender of choice, donned that gender for the day, and then restored the garment to its place at night. Such a willful and instrumental subject, one who decides *on* its gender, is clearly not its gender from the start and fails to realize that its existence is already decided *by* gender. (Butler, 3)

In this schema of performative gender, we can see that influences like media portrayal, individual upbringing, and historical context help to shape a gender—male or female—that each person selects and subsequently grows into and augments, whether consciously or subconsciously, throughout his or her lifetime to fit a constructed category. Certainly, this is a simplification of Butler’s theory, but it suffices for the purposes of this project. Even the terms “him” or “her,” “she” or “he,” allow a person to replicate the expectations of a certain category, rather than a world in which “she” and “he” do not exist; thus, there is no male or female nurturance to accept and act according to. For example, a young girl raised to play with Bratz dolls might regard the long, multi-colored hair, excessive eye makeup, scantily-cladness, poutiness of the mouth, etc. of said dolls and assume, because she herself is also referred to as “girl,” that she, too, should adhere to these visual guidelines. On the other hand, a young male child could typify performative gender if he decided to also play with Bratz dolls, then mimicked their presentation in his own life, discounting his appellation of “male.”

In *The Passion of New Eve*, Carter’s characters act according to this model of performative gender laid out by Butler, going so far as to physically adorn and sometimes surgically adapt their bodies to the gender which they have chosen, thus creating a sort of performative sex. Tristessa, Evelyn’s youthful fantasy whose life goal is to enact a perfect exposé of the delicate, excessively meek and tragic woman, is an unadulterated

illustration of this dissatisfaction with one innate sex and reworking of self to counteract the effects of such sex:

Out of the vestigial garment sprang the rude, red-purple insignia of maleness, the secret core of Tristessa's sorrow, the source of her enigma, of her shame. His wailing echoed round the gallery of glass as his body arched as if he were attempting to hide herself within himself, to swallow his cock within her thighs; and when I saw how much that Mother would say he had become a woman because he abhorred his most female part—that is, his instrument of mediation between himself and the other. (Carter, 128)

The imagery here is such that we can safely assume Tristessa is not only hiding, but is thoroughly ashamed of, her biologically male sex. The sequined thong she is wearing before she is stripped nude in this scene exposes her performative gender perhaps even more explicitly than the action of her violently disrobing. The violence which is enacted by the submissive female clone-ish characters angered by the feminine mask Tristessa wears depicts the negative societal response to a gender that is enacted by choice rather than one over that is apparently innate. The instance of choice in gender politics permits an outsider's seemingly more justified critique of a person's gender and his or her respective exhibition of gender because of this control. A possible solution to this negative reaction found in *The Passion of New Eve* is suggested by the novel itself—the creation of a world in which the notion that gender is simply something one is born with does not exist, making the enacting of a gender someone has selected for him or herself more acceptable. Dressing oneself without conforming to the social construct of a categorized gender—the masculine, tough, dominant male versus the passive, pretty, delicate woman—would no longer be deviant and, thus, would no longer warrant or beg a brutal response.

While throughout the novel, almost every character Carter has drawn up somehow

selects his or her gender, the protagonist stands out. Even after Eve has been compelled to receive a new sex, she struggles to embrace an accompanying gender, stating, “I know nothing. I am a tabula erasa, a blank sheet of paper, an unhatched egg. I have not yet become a woman, although I possess a woman’s shape. Not a woman, no; both more and less than a real woman” (Carter, 83). In terms of sex versus gender, Butler says,

Thus, ‘sex’ is a regulatory ideal whose materialization is compelled, and this materialization takes place (or fails to take place) through certain highly regulated practices. In other words, ‘sex’ is an ideal construct which is forcibly materialized through time. (Butler, 4)

While this could be considered the flaw in Carter’s schema—the one character adverse and thus free from a world of performative gender—we can also view Eve’s feelings as corroboration of Butler’s theory of performative gender. Even after the male Evelyn makes the sex-based transformation into female Eve, he makes the *choice* to adhere to a male construction, perhaps because he both prefers this gender and because he did *not* make the choice to revolutionize his sexual identity. He was content with the womanizing, fantasizing male he had created and indulged in his entire life.

This novel has compiled a complete and utter mash-up of genders to complicate the notion of performative gender. For example, Evelyn has sexual intercourse with Leilah, both a female and a symbol of Evelyn’s typically “male” lustful desires, but later, as Eve, has sex with Tristessa, a male performing as a woman. In this way, Carter completely confuses the notion of gender, perhaps in an attempt to show that sexual impulses are separate from the gender one has chosen. This also serves to further discredit the notion of a gender that is not selected by the individual in that a constructed gender does not adhere to preset standards for sexual attraction to another specific gender because each gender is exclusive. Perhaps rather than complicating the notion of performative gender

by conflating each different version, Carter actually simplifies gender by asserting that each person is born, just as is seen in the rebirth of Eve, with a clean slate. Everyone is empty and the same. Subsequently, we each progress through life complicating our own gender. In this way, *The Passion of New Eve* might be considered a “willed transformation” utopian novel, meaning that a fresh way of life in the feminist sanctuary-turned-laboratory called Beulah has been developed by its inhabitants as a reformation of the preexistent New York we have all accepted in which Evelyn initially dwells, a new paradise created through human effort (Williams, 1).

The benefits of this model might still seem impossibly intangible, yet they exist and are imminently reachable. *The Passion of New Eve* functions on the preemptive basis that gender is entirely made and not inherent, in accordance with Judith Butler’s theory of performative gender and materiality of the body. One very grave downside is made apparent in the novel: “Tristessa had no function in this world except as an idea of himself; no ontological status, only an iconographic one” (Carter, 129). On the other hand, with this model comes an increased quantity of options, a world of more expansive choice. As a result of increased choice comes the potential for a world more liberated than one in which we are given our identities and can make little of them ourselves. Certainly, a heaviness is intrinsic in the notion of performative gender, but this heaviness is simply the weight of responsibility.

If performative gender were accepted among all societies, this heaviness would be significantly reduced as a world would then be constructed in a way that would be more conducive to creating and perfecting gender, a world that would be more artistic and inventive by nature. It follows that if the world we are constructing were more inventive,

it would then be more productive, fulfilling an ultimate collective human goal. The novel, a manifestation of several of these constructed worlds, can certainly be seen to have a happy ending with Lillith's "high, ringing, triumphant" song (Carter, 190). On the final page, Eve states that "the vengeance of the sex is love" (Carter, 191). Perhaps by seeking revenge on our innate sex by reworking it with gender, we are injecting love, coupled with our personal affections, desires, and tastes, into our very identities. This love is the definitive benefit to a model of performative gender.

What this love is, however, remains as vague as gender performativity is in its proper form. Now I'd like to move from an explication of performative gender in the text to the way performatives intersect with control and manipulation, particularly in treatment of words. Carter, in her literary crafting, sets up a space in which all characters feel or attempt to feel boundless; yet in the end, all are trapped by mind, body, land boundaries, or even just running out of petroleum. The nature of a physical text is bound—sealed on two sides by covers and glue that lock the characters inside without chance for escape except through the imagination of others, not their creator. As the most blatant witness of the effects of compulsory compliance, Evelyn is drawn toward a streetwalker in the middle of the night. He encounters a streetlight: "then the sign exhorted me: WALK" (22). The sign acts as a contract between itself and Evelyn. He will obey its authority, and the sign not only permits but effectively creates a new situation. In this situation, Evelyn can briskly cross the street to follow his mysterious unknown lover with enough time to win the wild goose chase and achieve copulation with a stranger. Had the sign read "DON'T WALK" and had the street been filled with the rush of Queens traffic, Evelyn would not have been free to pursue his desire for the unnatural stranger.

The stranger, “a visitor in her own flesh” as described by Evelyn, does not even attempt to liberate herself when, after getting to know each other intimately, her new lover begins binding her to the bed during the daytime (27). As a poverty-stricken seventeen-year-old girl, Leilah is comfortable with the idea of nothingness, a nothingness that translates into lethargy as she spends her days eating hard candy and having sex. She performs the gender she cedes to and understands in relation to Evelyn’s domineering thirst for her carnal provisions and nothing else. He calls her a “born victim,” a state it seems she has not considered departing (28). When she dresses for her evening work, however, “now she was her own mistress” (29). In the making up of a new and even more girlish, more submissive prescribed identity, Leilah discovers herself, her confidence; she is the maker of herself. This self prefers to be ogled and slept with regularly, an indication that playing to one’s gender can, in fact, increase rather than detract from eros. Or so it seems, yet in the very moment when Leilah outfits herself in exquisite crotchless panties and rainbow hair powders, she wishes to be watched but not touched. When Evelyn can no longer restrain himself and tries to steal a kiss from the newly lacquered lady, she screams and angrily claws at her attacker in punishment. In the trajectory of Carter’s plotline involving Evelyn and Leilah’s romance, then, it is implied that performing is effective in making an ideal self, perhaps, but not a genuine self that one can maintain and endure in comfort. Eros in this situation is brought about from the act of performing, but only in the voyeur role of the performance. This is a point that will be examined in full later in the essay.

After exploring the beginnings of the character development, it is now necessary to determine how these same characters have evolved and whether they might be able to

escape the control of words and rhetoric. As stated before, Evelyn does not truly become the woman his new biological sex represents until he sleeps with Tristessa, a man who is perpetually performing as a woman. In this scene, Eve does not sleep with the Tristessa he has always adored, an icon of female tragedy and meekness. Instead, trapped in the desert and overcome with thirst-induced delirium on many levels, the two are moved to copulate with the selves they currently *embody*. Neither self is more real in a distinct gender. Eve says, “He, she—neither will do for you, Tristessa, the fabulous beast, magnificent, immaculate, composed of light . . . You produced your own symbolism with the diligence of a computer” (143). For Eve as a newly born woman, gender divides are no longer an issue, but construction of character remains to be an aphrodisiac. At this point in the novel, Tristessa is shown to be biologically male, encompassing both male-ness and female-ness. When Evelyn was a child, he could not tolerate photos of Tristessa that were less than feminine, but now as a biological woman, he embraces the act and also the fact. By this, I mean that both Tristessa and Eve are made of what is culturally masculine and what is culturally feminine and, when they are known to each other in entirety, eros emerges. Eros, then, develops from the awareness of what I call here the fact (biological status or other unchosen circumstance) and an accompanying awareness of the illusion (performance of gender or other chosen circumstance). As Eve describes the copulation, he states that the physical body has the power to undo what the world has made (148). After this literal climax of clarity, Tristessa is killed by a pre-pubescent Christian militia, indicating that this eros we might call “real” or “true” cannot sustain itself in a contemporary Western society when publicly exposed. The world is promptly made up again. In this scenario once more, voyeurism has a curious consequence that will

later be explicated.

While still anticipating orgasm, Eve imagines a series of rooms that “would dematerialise under the stress of those fleshly impressions that require another language, not speech, a notation far less imprecise than speech to log them” (149). Still, even on the precipice of understanding some sort of actuality, language bounds her and she cannot harness her desire as completely as she wishes. Holistic satisfaction evades her. At the very conclusion of the novel, Eve has once again been made prey to all that is Leilah. This time, however, it is not her sex that has caged him, but rather her intellect. Renamed Lillith, she leaves him on a beach with a drunken elderly woman in a bikini, knowing he cannot walk or swim the distance to civilization. Just before Lillith leaves her, Eve reasons that because she did not want the past male self back, Lillith has decided that Eve is fit for banishment. She considers an attempt at escape, but does not pursue it until she is left for a bit with the woman at the beach. In trying to steal her boat so that she can sail into the ocean oblivion, she is made the victim of a rhetorical trick by the woman, who Eve now discovers is blind. “Why are you taking my boat away, Eve?” she says. “It’s not a boat, it’s a coffin” (189). Just as Eve was planning to sail away to find rebirth, the woman teaches her that sailing away will bring her only to death, a death the woman is optimistic for. As Eve sets sail, she hears the woman’s song as a signifier, a performative utterance indicating that she will soon die (190). The final, page-long chapter of *The Passion of New Eve* bears a sentiment of hope for newness, freedom, and change. Eve has embraced her new female sex *and* female gender, renouncing the man she once played.

The power of the rhetorical to change the material is demonstrated when Mother speaks the words, “You will be a new Eve, not Evelyn! And the Virgin Mary, too. Be

glad!” and “Don’t be afraid, I’m rendering you the most fortunate affliction,” in succession before using her knife for the main event of the evening (70). Following this, Evelyn confesses that his fear has been exhausted and he now feels placid in his own helplessness. In this scenario, Evelyn has acquiesced himself to the words he hears from Mother, and she speaks them with genuine glee and hope for the future of the man who is soon to morph into a woman before her eyes. Austin might deem this utterance as one spoken in complete felicity, thus bestowing it with the power to put something into action that was not present before; in this case, Evelyn is made calm by the words spoken to him, both because they are intended to calm and because they create in him an understanding that he has no other choice but to be calm and accept his consequences. Though not a performative utterance in the sense that Mother said, “Be calm,” and Evelyn was made calm, this might instead be thought of as an indirect performative utterance. It has a liberating capacity that constative utterances do not, as it could induce a feeling or state instead of simply describing a feeling or state.

The knife in this scene of castration seems to function as a prop of performativity in the process of transgendering Eve(lyn), as the knife itself performs the sex switch. In fact, the knife actually demonstrates the validity of a theory of performative gender. After Eve has recovered from the surgery, his first reaction is as follows: “But when I looked in the mirror, I saw Eve, I did not see myself. I saw a young woman who, though she was I, I could in no way acknowledge as myself, for this one was only a lyrical abstraction of femininity to me, a tinted arrangement of lines” (74). Here, our protagonist provides an affective description of the divide between biological sex and socially constructed gender. Eve’s newly curvaceous figure and thick blonde hair fit the norms of all that is

deemed ideally female by Western culture, and they are now a part of her inasmuch as they represent her physical make-up. This corpus is one that she will never be able to escape fully, as the sexuality of her body is molded by a language of social constructions. Biologically, she is woman, yet the ability to reshape her own future sexual experience lies in manipulation of these same social constructions. Socially, then, Eve remains a man for rest of the text until the final chapters, when he chooses to *mentally* embody those characteristics that accompany a collective conception of femininity. Before this turn in the novel, however, Eve confesses, “I don’t find myself at all,” meaning that the masculinity he still senses is not present in his current corporeal form (75).

Further evidence of personal control of one’s sexual form can be found in the section of the text during which Eve is kidnapped by Zero, the alpha male who commands a small desert commune of women. Said women are twinned in appearance and personality by their dictatorial leader with matching Dutch boy haircuts, denim overalls that serve as a uniform of sorts, and communication via a made-up language of nonsensical syntax. Eve lives as the eighth and most attractive of Zero’s “wives” for several months, making a conscious effort to mimic the petty banter and jealous cattiness of the other wives so as to pass as a girl. This imitation successfully convinces the other women by whom he is surrounded, yet the other man in his proximity seems to sense an exaggeration of femaleness, particularly during intercourse. “Each time, a renewed defloration, as if his violence perpetually refreshed my virginity. And *more than my body, some other yet equally essential part of my being was ravaged by him* for, when he mounted me ... I felt myself to be, not myself but he” (101 [emphasis mine]). In Eve’s description of her first series of carnal encounters as a biological woman with a biological man, reference is

made to the destruction of his *essential* masculinity in forcibly succumbing to another man. This aspect of his sexual experience is not voluntary, yet it must be acted out according to Eve's female biological sex in order to maintain the gender script he is writing into existence during his time at the commune to avoid unnecessary punishment for exposure. Performing as a female further reinforces his ownership of the gender he deems his essence, that of the masculinity he has identified with since his childhood spent worshipping Tristessa, the idyllic woman. In a particularly telling passage, Zero thoroughly inspects Eve's body for signs of the male sex he seems to be hiding. Eve has the anatomy of a woman as idyllic as his once-precious Tristessa without a single less-than-delicate feature, and, in turn, Zero is enraged by this biological impossibility of the perfect woman. The only concealment, though, is controlled by the power of Eve's mind, and in this way, it is the freeing aspect of socially constructed manhood. Since gender is performative, Eve has the capacity to turn this manhood he has appropriated on and off at will, thus giving him some license over his sexual experience.

A perplexing aspect of the passages at Zero's commune is the relative contentedness of the other wives in performing as simple and servile females. These wives speak to each other and their master in a language of animalistic grunts and squeals that is not intended for comprehension among one another, though Zero claims that he alone can understand what is being said. The very instance of this language is a performative utterance, in that its vocalization marks, or rather puts into action, the subjected status of the wives. Here, Zero also exemplifies the queer effect voyeurism has. If he can comprehend the language the wives speak, but they cannot, in theory, comprehend his or each other's syntax, Zero takes on the peeping Tom role in this polygamous scenario. The

wives can sense this, and they consequently display very different sexual tendencies when they are aware of Zero's watching eyes versus when they are not. For Zero in the bedroom, they typify the heteronormative sexed woman who is satisfied only by the rough intercourse a dominant male can offer. Yet in reality, this intercourse is not gratifying in every respect, and when the first seven wives are deprived of coitus with Zero, their hands wander to each other's genitalia. Were Zero aware of this betrayal of sexual norms, however, the wives would be less inclined to probe each other's sexual curiosity in the narrative the reader is presented with. Throughout *The Passion of New Eve*, Carter posits worlds in which voyeurism incites fear of eros but also enhances enjoyment of eros, thus leaving the reader with the quandary of an unresolved tension between these potentialities.

Beyond this, the nonsensical language forces distance between the women, as it voids any chance of their potential for emotional bond via shared conversation. Eve says of this difficulty, "So he regulated our understanding of him and also our understanding of ourselves in relation to him" (97). In technical terms, the made-up language constitutes an utterance in perfect felicity for all but Eve, since it is mutually autonomous. The carnal intimacy between the first seven wives and Zero, then, parallels the structure of dominance set up by walls of logos within the commune.

To examine the effect of the converse, silence plays an equally if not more necessary role in the text at hand. For words to be effective, there must be silence to offset it, but the effect of this silence is more difficult to extricate. At the end of Eve's journey, he—who has now determined himself to be a she—finds herself in an utter literal but also ontological silence. She says, "The rocks between which I am pressed as between pages

of a gigantic book seem to me to be composed of silence; I am pressed between the leaves of a book of silence. This book has been emphatically closed” (181). Here, silence for Eve is crushingly empty. It has no aptitude for creation. It is, however, comprised entirely of space to do so. Silence, then, is the opportunity for creation, whereas logos constitutes the creation imposed on this space. Eve fears silence here because she is not prepared to create. In fact, she discusses her inability to conceive the meaning of progression, or the making of a self beyond the one currently present. Silence proves itself to have pliability of purpose for the correspondingly pliable character of Eve(lyn) in *The Passion of New Eve*, however. The Eve who is freshly coping with a changed body finds silence to be a creation in itself, saying, “But, where I remembered my cock, was nothing. Only a void, an insistent absence, like a noisy silence” (75). Silence in this section of the text functions *like* logos in that it carries the weight of remembered signifiers and, thus, carries the weight of that which has previously been signified. It is not the signified in and of itself; rather, it is a representation of the signified. Since silence has power symmetric to that of language, I will consider it as a part of the larger structure of logos.

Fittingly, *The Passion of New Eve* comes to a finale with the maxim, “We start from our conclusions” (191). The conclusion of this project, an effort to ascertain the enigmatic relationship between eros and logos, also presents a circumstance of beginning. After determining that sex of both erotic and biological nature is locked within a box that is the structure of human language, the problem of absurdity arose. For mankind, it is a psychological obstacle to confront a limiting structure surrounding an element of life as pleasurable but also fundamental and compulsory as eros. J.L. Austin’s theory of

performative utterances anticipated Judith Butler's theory of performative gender, both serving as implements for making sense of a communicative system that cages each individual's sexual practice. Performativity in dual formation endows men, women, and all those in-between the socially constructed gender categories with some opportunity to manage one's own sexuality, though this power is still not infinite. Nevertheless, it remains an opportunity for beginning. This project as a whole allows for the foundation of, on one hand, a deeper grasp of the utter confinement of mankind. On the other hand, it allows for the foundation of an absolute freedom to build within these confines a new erotic contingency. As Eve begs of the ocean to bear her to the place of birth in her final pages, we can be reborn as new sexual beings. Performativity, the theory taken up here, represents only one of an inestimable number of formulas that will become platforms for innovation in sexual experience—but only if the challenge of this prospect is accepted.

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- Contributed sections of a subsequent journal article about the validity of directed self-placement writing assessment in collaboration with doctoral students and Dr. Ann Gere
- Presented a summation of the project at the CIC-SROP conference with a research roundtable and a poster presentation

The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA

Undergraduate Summer Discovery Grant Researcher

May 2009 – August 2009

- Examined thoroughly ten texts on themes of deconstruction and the history of sexuality
- Composed a fifteen-page article addressing the question, “Can sexuality can be divorced from language?”

The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA

Faculty Research Assistant

Oct. 2008 – Dec. 2008

Transcribed French excerpts of Pierre Loti’s *Madame Chrysanthème*

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA

Teaching Assistant

Aug. 2009 – Dec. 2009

Graded assignments and conducted office hours for “Philosophy of Love and Sex,” an undergraduate course

PSU KnowHow, University Park, PA

Writing, Speech, and ESL Tutor

February 2009 – present

Taught community members and collegiate students methods of proficient English writing and speaking

University Learning Center, University Park, PA

French Tutor

February 2007 – present

Instructed students in basic levels of French and aids in more thorough learning of the language

WRITING EXPERIENCE

Town&Gown Magazine, State College, PA

Editorial Intern

Aug. 2008 – Dec. 2008

Interviewed for, researched, and penned feature articles for this Golden Quill Award-winning publication

Chic Today Magazine, London, UK

Daily News Contributor, Journalistic Intern

June 2008 – August 2008

Composed lifestyle articles that appeal to an international audience for the web-based magazine

ALT Magazine

Associate Editor, Treasurer

Sept. 2007 – May 2008

Wrote and edited articles on contemporary pop culture which receive little coverage in other media

PUBLICATIONS

Academic

Council Chronicle

- “An Administrator’s Guide to Writing Instruction” (accessible [here](#)) November 2009

Non-Academic

Town&Gown Magazine

- “Metropolitan Opera HD series at State Theatre” January 2009
- “Glass ceiling: ‘Status of Women’ report shows improvement at PSU” January 2009
- “Palmer, Barbara, '08 Angel of Change honoree” December 2008
- “Cellular devices, latest” November 2008

Chic Today Magazine

- “Get Ready for the Ra Ra Riot” July 2008
- “Go Homemade or Go Home” July 2008
- “Alex + Chloe Rock” June 2008

ALT Magazine

- “Join the Club!” May 2008
- “Money Talks” December 2007
- “Rag and Bone” May 2007

MEMBERSHIPS

The Undergraduate Philosophy Club, **President**, Fall 2009-present

Students Organizing the Multiple Arts (SOMA), **President**, 2008

No Refund Theatre, **Actress, Assistant Director**, Spring 2008-present