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The Challenge of Depicting Divinity:
Stefano da Putignano's *Trinity*

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Abstract:

Stefano da Putignano's *Trinity* (1520) depicts Jesus on the cross placed between the legs of an enthroned God the Father with the dove of the Holy Spirit connecting the two. Located in the small southern Italian city of Turi, this painted stone statue is one of the earliest examples of a human-sized statue of God the Father. It is unique in its medium and method but also fits into a larger discourse from this period on representing the ineffable.

The Hebrew Bible claims that the worship of any idol, whether "in heaven above, or earth beneath" is strictly forbidden (Exodus, 20:2-6). From the very beginning of the Christian faith, the destruction of idols and denouncement of idolatry was a symbol of Christian triumph over Paganism. The Renaissance marked a significant change in devotional practices. The discourse of artists and intellectuals expanded the way humans conceived of and interacted with embodied divinity.

Through significant visual comparison, this project fits Stefano's *Trinity* into the iconographic tradition of representing God and the Trinity and incorporates that into a larger discussion on idolatry and the role of devotional images in the Italian Renaissance. It outlines the changing discourse around images both in artistic and religious contexts. Analyzing the *Trinity,* it questions how an artist can capture the unknowable qualities of God and how His embodiment in stone changes not only the way we see but interact with the statue. Through an exploration of idolatry, this project serves as a case study on the limits of representing the bodily divine in the Renaissance.

The Challenge of Depicting Divinity: Stefano da Putignano's *Trinity*

> "A log 'is cut, is hewn, is planed," and is still no god. A stone 'is sculptured, and is polished by some abandoned man' and sill is no god. A sculpture 'is set up, and even yet it is not a god.' But, 'lo, it is adorned, it is consecrated, it is prayed to – then at length it is a god, when man has chosen it to be so, and for the purpose has dedicated it."[1]

Minucius Felix, a third-century Christian apologist, here considers how an image becomes worshipped as a god. What nuances might be uncovered when the image depicts Christianity's God the Father? In 1520, southern Italian sculptor Stefano da Putignano created one of the first painted stone sculptures in the round of the Christian Holy Trinity (Fig. 1). The statue depicts Jesus on the cross placed between the legs of an enthroned God the Father with the dove of the Holy Spirit connecting the two. Stefano created this work during a period of change in the Christian faith when the church struggled with the acceptability of worshiping images, something long forbidden but also continually practiced since the triumph of Christianity over Paganism. Throughout the Early Modern period, significant shifts in devotional practices occurred. Artists and intellectuals explored what it meant to be human and how their newfound human agency impacted their relationship with the divine. Developing humanist ideals challenged artists and became the impetus for innovations in depicting divinity. Analyzing Stefano's *Trinity* questions how an artist can capture the ineffable qualities of God and the Trinity.

The *Trinity* is one of the earliest large-scale sculptures of the subject in the round and is polychromed to appear as if alive. It provides an early case study of developments in the sculptural language of divine figures in the Renaissance. This statue is distinctive in its medium and method but also fits into a larger discourse from this period on representing the unknowable. Building on a centuries-long debate over the relationship

[1] Minucius Felix*, Octavius*, S 23, in *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1869), quoted in Jonathan Sheehan, "Introduction: Thinking about Idols in Early Modern Europe," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 67, no. 4 (2006): 561.

between man and God, and a contemporary debate over the role of the artist, Stefano realizes the *Trinity* using a new visual language.

Figure 1. Stefano da Putignano, *Trinity*, 1520, Chiesa Matrice, Turi. (Photo: Una D'Elia), http://hdl.handle.net/1974/29175.

Idolatry in the Renaissance

From the foundation of the Christian faith, the destruction of idols and idolatry symbolized Christian triumph over Paganism. They drew support for this belief from the Hebrew Bible, which says: "I am the Lord your God…; you shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God" (Exodus, 20:2-6). It was forbidden in the Christian faith to worship or create idols of any kind. There was a continuing debate over the acceptability of images and their function as idols. For example, sixth-century Pope Gregory I defended the use of images by arguing for their educational usefulness. He even emphasized their inspirational value

claiming "that from the sight of the event portrayed they should catch the ardor of compunction and bow down in adoration of the One Almighty Holy Trinity."[2] Gregory supported an acceptable use of images without directly opposing interpretations of the Bible that explicitly forbade image worship. Definitions of idols thus far, from Minucius and Exodus, have focused on idols as statues, such as those common in Pagan antiquity. Very few, if any, statues of the Trinity exist from the period of Pope Gregory, which seems to suggest the acceptability of representing the Trinity through painting rather than sculpture.

By the late Medieval period, the debate on the proper use of religious imagery developed into two clearly defined sides. Thirteenth-century bishop Durandus wrote, "we Christians worship not images nor account them to be gods, not put any hope of salvation in them: for that were idolatry."[3] He was part of a section of Christianity that was extremely anti-image with a strictly biblical definition of idolatry, a group that would persist through the Renaissance. During the same period, however, Thomas Aquinas provided further definitions and distinctions of imagery considered idolatrous. He took the theory that different levels of devotion were due to different divine figures and extended that to the use of images in devotional practice. He writes that "no reverence is shown to Christ's image, as a thing – for instance, carved or painted wood: because reverence is not due save to a rational creature. It follows, therefore, that reverence should be shown to it, in so far only as it is an image. Consequently, the same reverence should be shown to Christ's image as to Christ Himself."[4] Aquinas argues that the reverence is not directed at the image itself but at the image as a referent and that the devotee's level of reverence should match the figure which the image represents, despite the indistinguishable materials. This idea of object as referent builds on Gregory I's idea of religious inspiration but adds levels of devotion to match the represented figure. Consequently, an image of the Trinity is due more reverence than an image of a saint

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[2] J.-P. Migne, ed. *Patrologiae Cursus Completus ... Series Latina*, LXXVII, col. 1129, quoted in William R. Jones, "Art and Christian Piety: Iconoclasm in Medieval Europe," in *The Image and the Word: Confrontations in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, ed. Joseph Gutmann (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1977) 79.

[3] Durandus, quoted in Michael Camille, *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-making in Medieval Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 206.

[4] Thomas Aquinas, *Suma Theologica*, quoted in Camille, *The Gothic Idol,* 207.

because it represents God the Father and Jesus Christ. Despite being made of wood, this more nuanced view on the use of images accorded with changing period attitudes on the value of art and its power to serve rather than work against the church.

Increased debates on idolatry in the Renaissance highlight the issue's importance during the period. Stefano's *Trinity* was created amidst this tension and within a politically and emotionally charged discourse on the proper use of images. Dominican friar Girolamo Savonarola was publicly extremely anti-image and denounced the use of images, declaring Florentine churches filled with idols. In a sermon, he claims that artists were creating idols modelled after recognizable community members and consequently not giving figures their due level of worship.[5] While seemingly anti-image, Savonarola has an undercurrent of Thomism in his thoughts regarding reverence due to the subject, not the idol, or in this case, the model. Others, such as artist Lorenzo Ghiberti, fought explicitly for the acceptance of images. In an often-quoted section of his *Commentari*, Ghiberti says that "Idolatry was most stringently persecuted so that all the statues and pictures, noble, and of antique and perfect venerability as they were, were destroyed ...In order to abolish every ancient custom of idolatry ... Thus ended the art of sculpture and painting and all the knowledge and skill that had been achieved in it."[6] The increasing production of images, combined with the widening religious discourse on images, was representative of changing societal values on the arts. The Renaissance marked a shift in Christian views on Idols, and the creation of images as support for the increasingly divergent arguments became more complex to balance Christian sensibility with increasing artistic innovation.

According to early definitions, idolatry comprises two acts: the creation of images and the worship of images. The use of images as part of a devotional practice was initially accepted for prayers of intercession. Saints were used as intercessors through which devotees directed their prayers.[7] This form of devotion was often enacted using a relic of

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5 Girolamo Savonarola, quoted in Alexander Nagel, *The Controversy of Renaissance Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011) 14.

6 Lorenzo Ghiberti, Commentari, quoted in Tilmann Buddensieg, "Gregory the Great, the Destroyer of Pagan Idols. The history of a Medieval Ledgend concering the Decline of Ancient Art and Literature," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 28 (1965) 44.

7 Robert Maniura, "Persuading the Absent Saint: Image and Performance in Marian Devotion," *Critical Inquiry* 35, no. 3 (Spring 2009): 652.

the saint. Renaissance and imagery scholar Hans Belting argues that the statuary developed in the ninth century resembled these reliquaries in their figural appearance and decoration with 'gold foil and precious stones.'[8] While this theory explains the increase in devotional statuary and even polychrome, the bodies of the Virgin Mary and the Holy Trinity left no remains. Therefore, it is impossible to pray to their relics in the hope of intercession. However, if God is omnipotent, He presumably does not need to intercede through a statuary representation of Himself. Yet, statues exist.

Touch is often an essential part of devotional practice. However, it is charged with biblical tension. Jesus, on the cross, says to Mary Magdalene, "Noli me tangere, nondum enim ascendi ad Patrem meum" "touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father" (John 20:17 – Vulg. & AV). There is a forbidden nature to touching the divine. Yet, there is also a sense of realism through touch when later in the chapter, it says: "'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe'" (John 20:25). Thomas refuses to believe in the resurrection, not without seeing the living Christ but without touching the wounds in his hands and side. Instead of seeing is believing, touching is believing. What does it mean to be able to touch the *Trinity*? Does the tactile aspect of the statue make it more realistic or the devotion it insights more powerful?

Touch is a powerful form of worship and a continuation of touching reliquaries. Without primary relics of Jesus, most devotional touch accompanied the re-enactment of scenes from the life of Christ. Geraldine A. Johnson argues that "the physical handling and veneration of these sculptures suggests that many painted and sculpted depictions of the Deposition and Lamentation…should perhaps be understood not only as an imagined representation of long-ago biblical events but also ever-present reminders of very real contemporary rituals of touch and devotion."[9] However, depictions of God and the Trinity have no narrative moment, unlike the established touch relationship between devotees and Jesus. Nevertheless, Stefano da Putignano's *Trinity* shows wear on God's

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[8] Hans Belting, "Statues, Vessels, and Signs: Medieval Images and Relics in the West," in *Likeness and Presence: A history of the Image before the Era of Art*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994) 299.

[9] Geraldine A. Johnson, "A taxonomy of touch: tactile encounters in Renaissance Italy," in *Sculpture and Touch*, ed. Peter Dent (Ashgate, 2014), 95.

feet from worship through touch (Fig. 2). This statue presents a form of devotion through touch not grounded in the legitimacy of intercession nor the education of historical biblical moments. Without this basis, the statue could have been viewed as idolatrous but was not, signifying the shift in the discourse on images during the Renaissance.

Figure 2. Stefano da Putignano, *Trinity* (Feet Detail), 1520, Chiesa Matrice, Turi. (Photo: Una D'Elia) http://hdl.handle.net/1974/29175.

How to Represent the Trinity

> Since you saw no form when the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the fire, take care and watch yourselves closely, so that you do not act corruptly by making an idol for yourselves, in the form of any figure—the likeness of male or female.[10]

How can artists depict the trinity if no one knows what God looks like? He appears in the Bible as clouds or the burning bush, and when he does appear in Genesis as three men, there is no description of their appearance. Artists depicting God had no texts or standard visual guides on which to base their creations. The other issue facing artists is the symbolism of creating God, the creator of all things. The very first line of the Hebrew

[10] (Deuteronomy 4:15-16)

Bible says that "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). How can an artist create The Creator? That would require knowing and understanding the central myth of the Judeo-Christian faith. These difficulties posed a significant problem for Renaissance artists wanting to depict scenes with God the Father.

Beyond the challenges of depicting God, the Trinity is a complicated doctrine to represent. God is three separate beings of one substance. Building, presumably, off the writings of Augustine, the anonymously authored Athanasian Creed codified Christian doctrine on the Trinity. It states that "the Catholic Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost…So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God…"[11] While they are of one substance, the Trinity is of three separate degrees, each deserving its own level of worship. The Creed continues: "But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal. So that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped." [12] Artists had to find or develop an iconography that captures and communicates these complexities, transforming the unknowable and indescribable into a universally understood visual language.

There was no standard iconography of God or the Trinity as artists developed new ways of representing divine subject matter. Medieval manuscripts illustrate how some artists used three identical figures (Fig. 3) to highlight the 'co-equal' aspect of the Trinity. This representation accords with the Hebrew Bible, which says that the Lord appeared to Abraham as three men standing by the oaks of Mamre (Genesis 18:1-2). However, this early description of the Trinity left an opening for later Christian interpretation. Third-century Christian author Tertullian, who first used the term *Trinitas*, describes it as "three, however, not in condition, but in degree; not in substance, but in form; not in power, but in aspect; yet of one substance, and of one condition, and of one power, inasmuch as He is one God, from whom these degrees and forms and

[11] Athanasian Creed, in *The Internet Medieval Sourcebook*, ed. Paul Halsall (Fordham University Center for Medieval Studies) https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/quicumque.asp.
[12] Athanasian Creed, in *The Internet Medieval Sourcebook*, ed. Halsall.

aspects are reckoned."[13] To reckon with these multiplicities, some artists presented the Trinity as a single figure with three heads (Fig. 4), thus signifying the tri-portion understanding of the Trinity instead of the tri-person. These representations placed more importance on the material unity of the Trinity and changed alongside developing theological writings.

Figure 3. The Trinity in an Initial B, Master of the Codex Rossiano, 1387, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/461298.

Figure 4. Missal (MS M.937 fol. 264r) Italy, Milan, ca. 1413, Illuminated Manuscript, The Morgan Library & Museum, http://ica.themorgan.org/manuscript/page/22/160046.

An evaluation of prints from the Renaissance shows that artists were still wrestling with how to visualize the complexities of the Trinity. Three-headed figures from the Renaissance are rare, but there was still disagreement on how best to represent the relationship as separate but connected using individual figures. The most complex aspect was the depiction of God the Father and Jesus's bodies and how to signify their physical

[13] Tertullian, *Praxeas*, trans. Peter Holmes in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 3. Ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885) Ch 2, 20-23.

and spiritual connection. There are, however, some standardized aspects of the composition that developed during the Renaissance. The Trinity alone usually depicts a symbolic rather than narrative moment, which means that Jesus is shown on the cross as a symbol of Christ, rather than a moment from the life of Christ on the cross. God is often shown holding Jesus on the cross while the Holy Spirit is represented by a dove, though its placement varies. The most well-known example of this is the *Holy Trinity* by Masaccio. This format, however, was not universally adopted by artists, and the variety of Trinity depictions shows how contentious yet important the subject matter was during the Renaissance.

Sculpting the Trinity

All the comparative examples of the Trinity in this essay thus far have been illuminated manuscripts, prints, and paintings, but Stefano da Putignano's *Trinity* is one of the earliest stone sculptures of the Trinity of this size in the round. Stefano faced the challenge of balancing the humanity of Jesus on the cross and the divinity of God holding the cross. This duality complicates the tension between the realism or material presence and the ineffability or immateriality of the subject matter and medium.

There is an evident influence of period prints and painting on the structure and use of space in Stefano's *Trinity*. As established, a standard structure was God holding Jesus on the cross and a dove. The arrangement of God, however, was not standard. Some artists depicted God seated as in the statue, while others showed him untethered from the mortal realm. In many examples, the space around God is ambiguous, making it unclear if God is enthroned or floating. This ambiguity maintains a sense of mystery, supporting his divinity compared to other figures in the scene. For example, in Albrecht Dürer's *Trinity* print (Fig. 5), the positioning of God's body is lost behind the collapsing body of Jesus and the swirling material, such that he could be sitting or standing. The scene also has some spatial ambiguity; it looks as if the ball Jesus's foot is resting on the ground, yet the clouds suggest they are suspended in the air. However, in the painted version of the scene by Dürer, Jesus remains on the cross floating in the sky with God's seated knees visible on either side of his torso. Other depictions show only the upper bodies of God and Jesus, necessary for identifying them icnographically, such as Castagno's Trinity (1453). God's head and arms are visible enough to hold the cross, and

Jesus's arms on the cross and wound in the torso are shown, while their lower bodies dematerialize into wisps of colour. The workshop of Tintoretto produced a painting of the Trinity (1590) that keeps Christ's body intact while dematerializing the lower body of God. Only showing their upper bodies means the Trinity must be floating, disconnected from the earthly plane. Overall, paintings from the Renaissance show more variety, depicting God standing, flying or seated, while prints show him almost exclusively enthroned.

Figure 5. Albrecht Dürer, *The Holy Trinity*, 1511, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/343135.

When depicted sitting, God's body and the throne have a more physical presence in the viewer's space. However, this arrangement of God impacts the relative size of Jesus and his positioning on the cross. In some representations, such as Sandro Botticelli's *Holy Trinity* (1491–1493), God is the same size as Jesus. In these images, God must be in the air to accommodate the height of the cross and the body of Jesus. While spatially necessary, floating also places them in a divine space and depicts the immateriality of flight. However, representing God as the same size as human Jesus diminishes the

ineffable quality of the divine by comparing it to the humanity of Jesus' body. Many of the prints from this period show God enthroned and grounded in human space, with a consequently smaller Jesus to fit in the actual material space of the scene. Stefano de Putignano's statue, by its very nature, as a statue is confined by natural space, so Jesus must fit between God's arms and the floor where his feet and the cross rest. Stefano's placement of the cross is different from most of the other Trinity images; the base of the cross is behind the toes of God's feet (Fig. 2). The cross is closer to the body of God than most of the prints or paintings of the Trinity from this period. As a result, Stefano makes the relatively smaller Jesus look nestled between God's legs. This positioning and the closeness of the cross creates a realistic use of space where it looks as if God could be holding the cross.

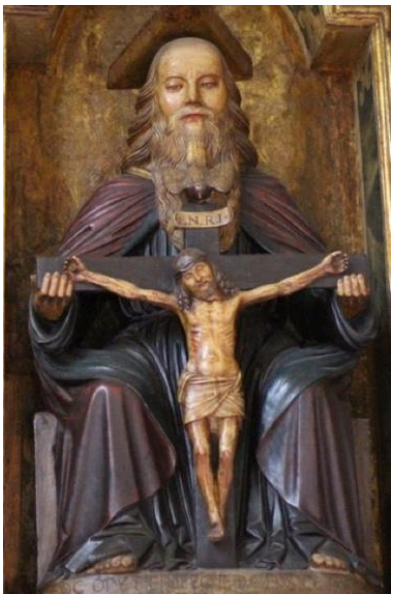


Figure 6. Stefano da Putignano, *Trinity* (Detail), 1520, Chiesa Matrice, Turi. (Photo: Una D'Elia) http://hdl.handle.net/1974/29175.

Beyond the body positioning of the figures, the divide between divine and human in Stefano's *Trinity* (Fig. 6) is illustrated through the differing use of symmetry in the figures. God is almost perfectly symmetrical. His beard and hair fall evenly over each side of his face and shoulders. The robes flow equally around each arm and between His legs,

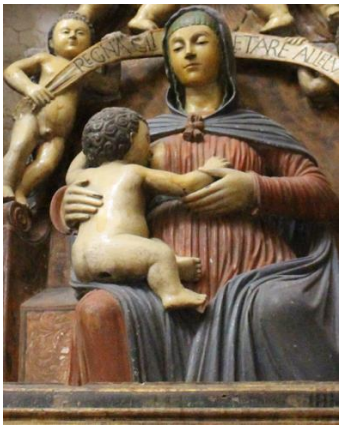
which are perfectly parallel with joints at 90-degree angles. However, Christ's arrangement and body proportions are comparatively asymmetrical. While his body lines up with the vertical board of the cross, his arms are unevenly nailed to the crossbar. His arms are also different lengths, with the left one longer than the right, resulting in the left hand being nailed closer to the end of the cross board. Christ's head lolls to his right, emphasizing his death and consequently his humanity. His loincloth is wrapped, crossing itself in uneven folds with the end of the cloth hanging out at the right hip. Christ's feet also cross, one on top of the other, to be nailed to the cross. His asymmetry contrasts the arrangement of God the Father and connects perfect symmetry with divinity and imperfection with humanity, building another visual language of depicting divinity in the Renaissance.

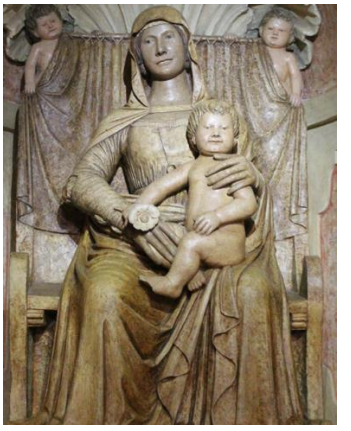


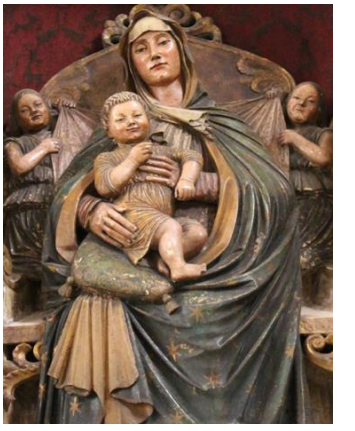
Left: Figure 7. Stefano da Putignano, *St. Anthony of Padua*, 1518, Sant'Antonio, Martina Franca, (Photo: Una D'Elia) http://hdl.handle.net/1974/29164. Middle: Figure 8. Stefano da Putignano, *St. Francis,* 1514-15, Santa Caterina d'Alessandria, Galatina, (Photo: Una D'Elia) http://hdl.handle.net/1974/29088. Right: Figure 9. Stefano da Putignano, *St. Stephen,* 1518, Sant'Antonio, Martina Franca (Photo: Una D'Elia) http://hdl.handle.net/1974/29165.

Another source of inspiration for the iconography of the Trinity is Stefano da Putignano's other polychrome sculptures of religious figures. The *Trinity's* position is not standard for all of Stefano's divine figures, as almost all of his male saints are standing

(Fig. 7-9). However, the arrangement of Stefano's *Trinity* is very similar to that of his Madonnas (Fig. 10-12). Madonnas are traditionally identifiable by their red garment and blue mantle. Stefano maintained this convention in his painted statues of the *Virgin and Child* (Fig. 10). God the Father's clothes in the *Trinity* are probably an inverse of this red and blue combination. His robe is blue, and his cloak is probably red over silver that has tarnished and now appears purple-red. The seated position of God and Mary are almost identical. Her knees are parallel and have the same 90-degree angles as God. The mantle flows in the same path as God's robes over her shoulders, under her arms, and between her legs. The tie on Mary's robe defines her body under the mantle and is similar to the one used on God. The *Trinity's* arrangement in space is also reminiscent of Stefano's Madonnas. Jesus sits between the knees of an enthroned God instead of on the lap of an enthroned Virgin. Perhaps artists saw the Madonna, as opposed to other male saints, as a more comparable source of inspiration when developing a representation of the Trinity.







Left: Figure 10. Stefano da Putignano, *Madonna and Child* 1500, Chiesa Matrice, Putignano, (Photo: Una D'Elia) http://hdl.handle.net/1974/29081. Middle: Figure 11. Stefano da Putignano, *Madonna and Child Enthroned*, 1505, Chiesa Matrice, Noci (Photo: Una D'Elia) http://hdl.handle.net/1974/29139. Right: Figure 12. Stefano da Putignano, *Madonna di Terrarossa*, 1510, Chiesa Matrice, Turi (Photo: Una D'Elia) http://hdl.handle.net/1974/29166.

Creating the Body of God

God has no physical being; within the Christian Faith, His existence is immaterial, with Jesus as His only embodiment. Scripture says that, "For in him [Christ] the whole

fullness of deity dwells bodily" (Col. 2:9). How, then, can the artist conceive of the immaterial body of God? In Stefano da Putignano's *Trinity,* God's body is mostly lost in the bulk of His clothes. The curve of his shoulders is visible, but all definition of his arms is lost under the cloak. His hands stick out of the sleeves to hold the cross, obscuring most of his body. However, the tie around the waist of the robe gives some definition of a body beneath the clothes. The robes drape over His knees and give shape to the lower half of His body. There is tension in how Stefano has depicted God's body, striking a balance between hiding the ineffably divine being and defining the humanity of the physical body of God.

God's exposed but sandaled feet protrude from the bottom of His robes. Feet are the ultimate indication of humanity. God is omnipresent and therefore does not need to walk anywhere. Sandals also served to protect the vulnerability of human feet. God is not mortal and has no need for feet to transport him, let alone protection for those feet. Prints of the Trinity have mixed use of feet; some show God with feet, while others exclude the feet altogether. The use of feet was not standardized in the iconography of the Trinity. However, most of Stefano da Putignano's male religious figures have feet with sandals (Fig, 7,8,13). This is a significant aspect of Stefano's *Trinity,* as the physical presence of the stone statue meant that viewers could touch the statue. Wear on God's toes indicate they were touched by visitors to the church, probably as part of prayer and devotion. It is possible that God's feet initially looked like the feet of Stefano's other male religious figures, such as *St. Peter* (Fig. 14).

As established, touch is a devotional practice that supports prayer and intercession. It also fits into a larger Renaissance debate on the superior artistic method, painting or sculpture. Humanist Benedetto Varchi said that– "[Vision] often deceives…[while] the most reliable sense is touch…[W]hen we see something, and we are doubtful about it,…we use touch to verify it. Everyone thus knows that touching a statue confirms everything the eye sees…therefore sculptors say that their art is truthful and painting is [not]."[14] The statue of the Trinity has a greater material presence and realness, as opposed to painting. The reality contributes to this tension between human and divine.

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[14] Paola Barocchi, ed., *Scritti d'arte del cinquecento: Pittura e scultura*, (Milan and Naples: Riccardo Ricciardi editore, 1971), quoted in Johnson, "A taxonomy of touch," 92.

Like his feet, God's Hands have a physicality in Stefano da Putignano's *Trinity*. His hands reach under the cross and firmly grip the wood. This arrangement contrasts other depictions of the Trinity, where God's hands do not seem real enough to be supporting the cross. For example, in Antonio di Donnino Mazzieri, *Altarpiece with the Holy Trinity* (1485), His hands are barely visible, only the tips of narrow figures seemingly supporting the large cross. Stefano's, in contrast, has a real presence, like how one would hold up a cross, creating a more realistic and human presence than other representations.

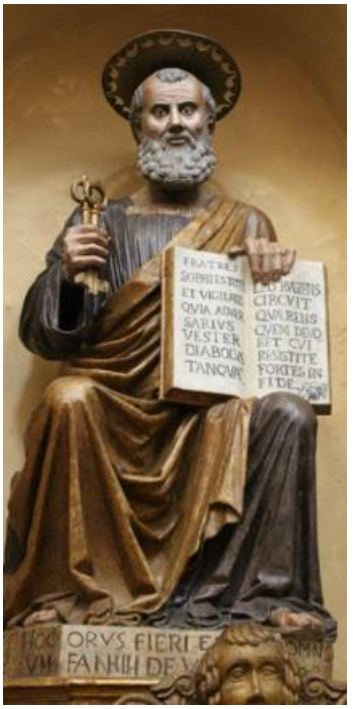

Figure 13. Stefano da Putignano*, St. Peter* 1502, Chiesa Matrice, Putignano (Photo: Una D'Elia) http://hdl.handle.net/1974/29184.

Figure 14. Stefano da Putignano, *St. Peter* (Feet Detail) 1502, Chiesa Matrice, Putignano (Photo: Una D'Elia) http://hdl.handle.net/1974/29184.

Materiality and Physical Presence

The materiality of Stefano's *Trinity* supports the statue's false realism and physical presence and further complicates the ways of depicting divinity. These effects are created in part by the polychrome details of the statue. For example, Figure 15 shows the red colouring of His lips and the blush of His cheeks, which seem to animate the sculpture. Roberta Panzanelli suggests that the most powerful uses of colour in sculpture contribute to an "awe-inspiring likeness… [and] can present a simulacrum – neither ghostlike nor 'trapped' behind the window of a canvas – of a suffering man or mournful mother that inspired religious veneration."[15] The artist then becomes the creator of The Creator by bringing God to life. The use of gold creates both the physical and symbolic materiality of the statue. The grooves in His hair and beard are accentuated with gold, while the dove and halo appear solid gold. This use of gold to signify the divine is not new in Stefano's depiction of the Trinity. Golden rays or halos around the figures were common in Trinity paintings, such as Antonio di Donnino Mazzieri's altarpiece and Agnolo Gaddi's *Trinity* (Fig. 16). The two-dimensional rays in the paintings are replaced in three-dimensional statuary with a gold-painted niche and gold details throughout the composition. While signifying the figures' divinity, gold is also a precious physical material of the human realm. It draws attention to the presence of the *Trinity* in the viewer's space as real gold they could reach out and touch.

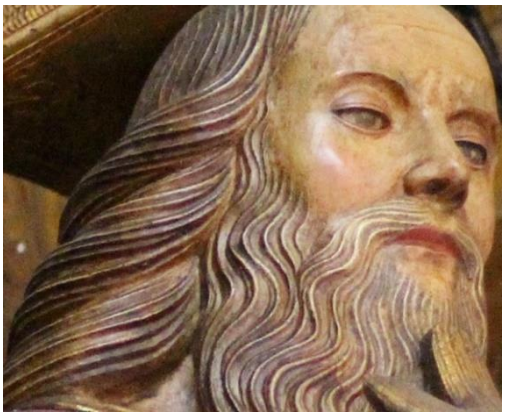

Figure 15. Stefano da Putignano, *Trinity* (Beard Detail), 1520, Chiesa Matrice, Turi. (Photo: Una D'Elia) http://hdl.handle.net/1974/29175.

[15] Roberta Panzanelli, "Beyond the Pale: Polychromy and Western Art," in *The Color of Life: Polychromy in Sculpture from Antiquity to the Present*, ed. Roberta Panzanelli, (Los Angeles, CA: J. Paul Getty Museum and the Getty Research Institute, 2008) 2.

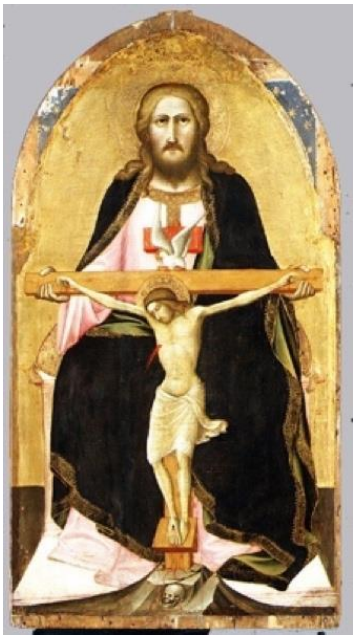

Figure 16. Agnolo Gaddi, *The Trinity*, 1390-96, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/436428.

Different aspects of the statue, beyond the use of gold, also use its materiality to draw attention to its physical presence. Alexander Nagel argues that statuary can go beyond painting in its ability to represent the body, saying that "especially when the figure is detached from the fabric of architecture, the one-to-one relationship between the body and its representation produces an uncanny effect of autonomy and animation."[16] The weight and texture of the robes create a tactile presence as if the viewer can feel the heavy material as it drapes over the body of God. The halo also has a weight to it that seemingly contradicts the ethereal presence and indication of divinity that a halo is supposed to bring. Halos in Trinity prints and paintings are flat and either solid gold (Fig. 3), outlined in gold or only a gold haze behind the head of God.[17] Stefano's

[16] Nagel, The Controversy of Renaissance Art, 115.

[17] For examples of outlined halos see: Antonio di Donnino Mazzieri's Altarpiece with the Holy Trinity (1485) and Bartolomeo Vivarini's Trinity with Angels (1488). For an example of a gold haze halo see: Giovanni Bellini's Baptism of Christ (1500–1502).

Trinity halo (Fig. 17) is a thick triangle balanced on God's head. This thickness gives the halo a real presence and adds to the overall physicality of the statue.

The most notable contribution to the material presence of the statue is that it is a statue made from stone. Hans Belting claims that the "monumental sculpture seems to have been placed under taboo after the end of antiquity…[and] sculptures were always single cult images or figural shrines of relics that … were made of a wooden core covered with gold foil, not of marble or bronze."[18] There is still that association with the permanence of marble and bronze, or stone in the case of the *Trinity*, and the threat of idolatry. Much like the omnipresence of God the Father, the material's longevity is permanent and perhaps too close to the permanence that God creates. The figure has a literal weight from its materials. God is real; God is present and brought to life in front of visitors to the chapel.

Stefano da Putignano's *Trinity* represents shifting Renaissance attitudes towards images and the universality of capturing the unknown. This statue is representative of transitions in the conventions of representing the divine through art. Even 100 years prior, it is inconceivable that a stone statue of the Trinity would have been accepted, let alone an object of devotion. No longer was a stone statue of God, explicitly forbidden in the Bible and by countless religious authors, denounced as idolatry. Instead, it exemplifies the changing discourse around images, both in artistic and religious contexts. The development of Renaissance Humanism can be used to understand the significance of the blurring of divinity and humanity in the *Trinity*. During a period when human values and experience were of increasing importance representing God in a sort of divine humanity was a way to attract the viewer and inspire devotion.

Figure 17. Stefano da Putignano, *Trinity* (Halo Detail), 1520, Chiesa Matrice, Turi. (Photo: Una D'Elia) http://hdl.handle.net/1974/29175.

[18] Belting, "Statues, Vessels, and Signs," 297.

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Flat Tire

Leon H. Hsu

Flattened, the tire was. Pedalling with great strength, I push myself forward in the country road illuminated by lonely street lamps, leading the front tire—headstrong—advancing. Trailing behind, the synthetic black rubber greets the asphalt paved road with a kiss from a frail body. In turn, a bathetic road rash of a romance cut short by the jealous effort of the front wheel.

*

As in horseback riding, it seems, each leap forward trembles the spinal cord, sending signals of alarm that attend to the physicality of both the earth and the flesh. In such a way, powered by the repetitions of my leg movements, unevenly, stumbling into the site where the bike pump rests with its cheerful blue cord. Rescuing the fate of the twins, one from tiresome work, the other from lonesome melancholy, but briefly as they would soon learn.

*

Once again, unable to contain its life-sustaining breath, the weight of my body—shouldering the tote which conceals the parallel reality still corked in that bottle of Rioja—brings the back wheel down to its knees. An attempt to rub skin with its former summer fling, embracing in flatness. Or like a flaccid cock unaroused by that supposedly amorous subject, he stands, no longer, without clinging to the bitterness of road-burn/sincerity.

*

Heightened tension, with an intent to stay, for the grip of present stretches further than an intended destination of a Homeric epic. Disregarding the skeleton of the bike and that of my being, all that remains is the acuteness of back pain, equivalent to a stubborn half-broken cork stuck in the bottleneck, clinging to its share of Dionysian blessing. Caught between the act and the acidity, deflated Ego and displaced desire, reality and the Real. Like the aftermath of one Geryon-Herakles affair in Anne Carson's Autobiography of Red, "caught between the tongue and the taste."

Family Portraits:
The Reconstruction of "Family Time" Through Generations

Yijing Li

Figure 1. Photo taken by my father, *Parents' engagement party*, at home, in China, 1989.

Figure 2. Photo taken by photographer in China, *My parents' wedding party*, at a hotel banquet, 1992.

Figure 3. Photo taken by my father, *Moon Festival Party*, at restaurant in Tianjin China, 2002.

Figure 4. Photo taken by my mother, *Chinese New Year*, China, 2019.

Marianne Hirsch's concept of "liquid time" states that photographs are not fixed into static permanence but remain dynamic and unfixed as they acquire new meanings in new circumstances. I had not considered this concept until I began going through family photographs after my grandfather passed away. There I was, sitting on the sofa in my grandparents' house, enabled by these photographs to perceive an odd thing—dining scenarios in my family photographs all represented the same behaviour of people holding cups of soft drinks, "clinking" glasses with or toasting each other, and smiling when the photographer pressed the camera shutter. No one considered this behaviour peculiar because it had already become a habit of my family's dining culture even though my grandfather never drank soft drinks because of his diabetes. Four family photographs (figures 1-4) present dining scenarios from the 1980s to 2020. These four portraits include three print photographs and one digital photograph, and were taken at different times, by different photographers, at different locations. Within a span of forty years, these four photographs showcase a changing family performance.

Scholarship has examined how such family portraits can be shaped by state policies and consumerism. Using this scholarship as an entry point, I will examine this group of images through several lenses. Firstly, I will compare the different symbolic meanings that were associated with the act of what I will call "clinking" glasses in China between the Cold War era of the 1950s and the Economic Reform era of the 1990s. I will explore the changing dining culture within my own family during this time by interviewing my grandparents and parents, and will examine how state policies influenced how Chinese families adapted to consumerism and reflected a desire to engage in an American middle-class life. Secondly, I will examine if these family portraits reshaped my generation's understanding of "clinking" glasses or toasting. I will also examine whether general family portraits of this nature further influenced Coca-Cola's localization and marketing strategy in China. Thirdly, I will examine how Coca-Cola's advertisements to Chinese consumers reinforced the link between soft drinks, toasting with glasses, and a sense of "family harmony." As Roland Barthes observes, photography has a remarkable suitability for mythmaking through advertisement. Moreover, I will consider how the

Coca Cola's brand's co-creation practices gives consumers certain expectations about how to pose, look, and feel in front of the camera in the age of social media.

The conformity of the action of clinking glasses in these four photographs over a time span of forty years started to attract my attention after reading research studies on Chinese wine culture. To my knowledge, there are no depictions of clinking glasses in any Chinese handscroll paintings from the pre-modern era (figure 5 and 6). There also does not appear to be any trace of this custom in pre-modern Chinese books, fictional nor non-fictional. This absence indicates that the behaviour of clinking glasses may not have exited in pre-modern Chinese dining culture. The lack of any visual or textual evidence of this action may be because the action did not conform to pre-modern China's strict rank system and Confucianism's ritual system. Pre-modern Chinese drinking etiquette dictated that the host would toast elders and superiors first, followed by the other guests. When toasting elders and superiors, those in attendance would stand up and bow modestly. As a result, the act of touching glasses together across one table contradicted the table etiquette of the time. Although there is no academic scholarship in the West that records who invented the action of clinking glasses, it has appeared in various Western apocryphal stories and modern oil paintings (figure 7).

Figure 5. Hongzhong Gu, *The Night Revels of Han Xizai*, 980 AD, Song Dynasty, Palace Museum, Beijing.

Figure 6. Qiu Ying, *Spring Night Dinner Party at Plum Garden*, Ming Dynasty, Palace Museum, Beijing.

Figure 7. Peder Severin Krøyer, *Hip, Hip, Hurrah! Artists' Party at Skagen,* 1888, Goteborgs Konst Museum, Sweden.[1]

The customs associated with pre-modern Chinese table etiquette were in place until the era of the Republic of China.[2] Since the Opium Wars of 1840, modernization and westernization had begun to take root in China and the action of clinking glasses started to appear in royal and upper-class families. However, westernization was limited to a privileged class who could afford to study and travel abroad, and the domestic spread of this westernized cultural trend began to decline in the 1950s. From 1950 to 1953, China was fighting a proxy war against America in Korea. Around this time, the newspaper *People's Daily* started to associate Coca-Cola and the act of clinking glasses with

[1] Imaged source: https://www.meisterdrucke.com/kunstdrucke/Peder-Severin-Kr%C3%B8yer/72423/Hip-Hip-Hurra!-K%C3%BCnstlerpartei-in-Skagen,-1888.html

[2] Mu-Chou Poo, "The Use and Abuse of Wine in Ancient China." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient,* vol. 42, no. 2 (1999): 138. DOI:10.1163/1568520991446820.

bourgeois society. The action was seen as a behaviour that conformed with "American civilization," a view that reflected the Cold War ideology between communist states and capitalist countries. These products and behaviours were regarded as being "as dangerous as the American formidable military."[3] This Cold War ideology intensified during the Cultural Revolution.[4] According to my grandmother, toasting with imported soft drinks in public during the era of the Cultural Revolution was reported by Red Guards and even led to public criticism.[5] As a result, no one dared to engage in this behaviour at the dining table. Unfortunately, most of my family photographs taken before 1990 were taken in studios and do not depict dining scenes from this era.

The Chinese government re-established diplomatic ties with the United States and initiated its "Open Door Policy" in 1978. This policy encouraged Chinese society to modernize by "learning from the West." Since the introduction of the policy, hundreds of publicly circulated materials and internal communications were published in China with the aim of introducing Western literature, music, art, philosophy, and economics to the Chinese public. A consumer revolution based largely upon a sampling of Western culture and lifestyle took place among common people in China, and clinking glasses when toasting one another during both formal and informal gatherings began to emerge as part of this introduction of Western customs.

The first two family portraits I consider were taken in 1989 and 1992 respectively. They show scenes of clinking glasses together while family members toast each other at my parents' engagement party and wedding party. My father does not remember toasting in this way at a dinner party during his childhood, but this action had become a social norm after he graduated from university.[6] Although my generation is only removed by seventeen years from all the brutal political movements of the Cold War era, clinking together glasses filled with soft drinks became a social norm and an essential aspect of

[3] The People's Daily is the official newspaper of the Centre Committee on the Chinese Communist Party. The newspaper provides direct information on the policies and viewpoints of the Chinese Communist Party.

[4] The Cultural Revolution was a sociopolitical movement in China from 1966 until 1976. One of its goal was to preserve Chinese communism by purging both remnants of capitalist and traditional elements from Chinese society.

[5] The Red Guards were members of a mass student-led paramilitary social movement mobilized and guided by Chairman Mao Zedong during first phase of the Cultural Revolution.

[6] My father was born in 1967.

our dining culture.[7] The disappearance and then re-emergence of imported soft drinks on the dinner table in China can be seen as an indicator of one country's political ideology movement. Wang Guangyi's contemporary artwork, Great Criticism (figure 8), combines Chinese socialist subjects with the Western consumer brand Coca-Cola to showcase the abrupt societal change that took place in contemporary China. While Wang's artwork was gathering international attention on the global stage, my family portraits were quietly recording the same underlying tensions and power plays of the world within vernacular dinner scenarios. Even though family photography was being maligned by scholars' critical gaze at that time, these images document Chinese people's aspirations to live a modern and bourgeois life during the Economic Reform era. They reflect the ascendancy of the bourgeoisie and naturalize class aspirations through the rhetoric of the domestic.[8] These aspirations signal the bourgeois aspect of the family photograph when envisioned as an instrumental technology in producing normative family integration, and reveal how images attest to life as people wish it to be, but not always as it is.[9] As Zuromskis has argued, snapshots allowed us to record ourselves and our histories as we would have them remembered."[10]

Figure 8. Wang Guangyi, Great Criticism: Coca Cola, 1990–93, oil on canvas.

[7] I was born in 1993.

[8] Thy Phu and Elspeth H Brown, "The Culture Politics of Aspiration: Family Photography's Mixed Feelings," *Journal of Visual Culture,* Vol. 17, no. 2, (2018): 153. https://doi.org/10.1177/1470412918782352.

[9] Pierre Bourdieu,"Social Space and Symbolic Power." *Sociological Theory*, vol. 7, no.1 (1989): 14–25. https://doi.org/10.2307/202060.

[10] Catherine Zuromskis, "Snapshot Photography, now and then: making, sharing, and liking photographs at the digital frontier." *After Image* Volume 44, Issue 1-2, (July-Oct 2016) https://doi.org/10.1525/aft.2016.44.1-2.18

While people use snapshots to record history as they want it to be remembered, snapshots can also impact peoples' memories as time passes. Time is the best catalyst to create a new "tradition" or to add various meanings to peoples' aspirations, and the ability of time to work in this way is illustrated through family photographs. When I was a child, I always considered the clinking of glasses represented in the photograph of my parents' engagement party a celebration of two families' futurity, and I had never thought there could be an additional meaning beneath this action. Since my generation did not live through the Cultural Revolution, the clinking of glasses was rather an iconic behaviour that indexed "family union" rather than a performance that signaled a desire for the "prosperity of the American Life."[11] As my generation grew up, China entered a new era and started to chase the "Chinese Dream".[12] With the embodiment of China's new political ideology, the association between clinking glasses and American life started to fade from peoples' minds. Moreover, even after learning about the political background of Economic Reform and the Cold War context of the photograph of my parents' engagement party, my personal connection to this family portrait still leads me to focus on the family union within the image. This inclination is because each family portrait still carries a particular punctum that is personal to the viewer.[13] The punctum of this photograph made me reflect on how it communicates notions of respectability, happiness, and futurity. Examined through both lenses, this family portrait breaks out of the cultural field into the personal, but also has the power to change the cultural field through time. Family portraits can create a new social norm by forming a connection between the clinking of glasses and ideas of family union in Chinese culture.

Because family portraits can carry or reconstitute new memories for new generations, they also have the capability to reconstruct a new reality in the new world. When Coca-

[11] Margaret Olin, "Touching Photographs: Roland Barthes's "Mistaken" identification," in *Representations*, vol. 80, no. I, (2002). DOI 101. 10.1525/rep.2002.80.1.99.
[12] The Chinese Dream is a term closely associated with Xi Jinping, the General Secretary of the Chinese Communists Party. Xi began promoting the phrase as a slogan during a high-profile tour of an exhibit at the National Museum of China in November 2012, shortly after he became leader of the CCP. Xi said that the Chinese Dream is the "great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation".
[13] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, 1st Edition. (US New York: Hill and Wang, 1981)

Cola used the clinking of glasses in their advertisements as a traditional Chinese behaviour, Chinese audiences did not feel peculiar about this representation because our generation does not associate the clinking of glasses with a Western bourgeois lifestyle. Six years on from the Cold War era, Coca-Cola no longer saw itself as a crucial force in America's global campaign against communism.[14] Instead, the company started to embrace Chinese cultural business campaigns. Ironically, when Coca-Cola was searching for traditional Chinese elements to build a connection with their consumers on a personal level, they used the action of clinking glasses in various advertisements without recognizing that this action was imported from the West. Neither Coca-Cola nor Chinese audiences realized this action was originally a Western bourgeois social custom that was once interpreted as the opposite of Chinese "tradition". Moreover, those advertisements deepened the associations of clinking glasses within Chinese culture. Coca-Cola's 2017 advertisement for the Chinese Lunar New Year campaign depicts a traditional Chinese New Year's Eve scenario and is filled with traditional Chinese setups like red lanterns, red winter grilles with the Chinese character "Fu", Chinese hotpots and other Chinese festival decorations (figure 9 and 10). In the advertisement, the whole family is clinking glasses with each other, saying "Happy New Year" and evoking the idea of "family togetherness." Coca-Cola naturally associates ideas of "Chinese harmony" through the behaviour of "clinking glass" with their product—Coke. The naturalness of this association comes from the way photography represents its objects. Roland Barthes had a theory that the nature of the modern "myth" could connect an iconic object with community identity. In his "Rhetoric of the Image," he examines photography's remarkable capacity for mythmaking through advertisement, in this case of packaged soft drinks and festival dinner scenarios.[15] Although the Coca-Cola advertisement is full of "symbols," there nonetheless remains in the visual image a kind of natural "being-there" of objects. If we apply Charles Pierce's icon and index theory to our reading of the image,

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[14] Kuisel, Richard F. "Coca-Cola and the Cold War: The French Face Americanization, 1948-1953." *French Historical Studies*, vol. 17, no. 1, DOI:10.2307/286280 (1991): 96–116. At a convention for international bottlers, a placard of Coca-Cola wrote, "When we think of Communists, we think of the Iron Curtain, BUT when THEY think of democracy, they think of Coca-Cola."

[15] Roland Barthes, "Rhetoric of the Image", in *Roland Barthes, The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: University of California Press, 1985)

the connotations of family union can be tied to indexicality; this idea seems to exist in the photograph along with people holding the soft drink and toasting. Moreover, through advertising, Coke is wrapped up in mythic meanings in order to "naturally" appear as an answer to consumers' needs and desires for family harmony. The storyline of Coca-Cola's advertisement tends to present a "problem" within the family, as in the 2017 advertisement the "Loneliness of the Snowman" and the 2019 advertisement "The Little Conflict between Brothers that Caused Family Disharmony." At the end of these narratives, Coke becomes the "solution" to solve all family problems, and clinking glasses of Coke together with one another becomes a symbol of the family's happy ending. Coca-Cola persuaded consumers by addressing cultural anxieties and then using the myth to smooth over these anxieties.

Figure 9 *Coca-Cola Chinese New Year Advertisement Campaign in China, 2017.* [16]

[16] Image source: https://www.thedailymeal.com/news/drink/coca-cola-celebrates-chinese-new-year-new-ad/122916

Figure 10. *Coca-Cola Chinese New Year Advertisement Campaign in China, 2017.*[17]

The connection between clinking glasses filled with soft drinks and Chinese family harmony was reinforced in the age of social media, when Coca-Cola's marketing practices increasingly included the participation of consumers as a way of co-creating brand value. In the age of social media, brand management changed its strategy from attributing a series of product qualities in an advertisement to generating a whole relay of social effects through the participation of consumers. Coca-Cola uses the concept of "consumer discipline" proposed by John Sinclair; this concept regards consumers as "immaterial labourers" within brand co-creation practices.[18] Sinclair's concept of "immaterial labour" was originally proposed by Italian sociologist and philosopher Maurizio Lazzarato, who described the affective labour of human contact and interaction during social activities as being transferred to an intangible product. Coca-Cola further develops the labour of human contact by creating the association between clinking glasses of coke and people's desire for family harmony, and applies this theory to encourage Chinese consumers to co-create brand aura.[19] Even though the cultural meaning of family harmony did not

[17] Image source: https://www.thedailymeal.com/news/drink/coca-cola-celebrates-chinese-new-year-new-ad/122916

[18] Charles Sanders Peirce, "Logic as Semiotic: The Theory of Signs," in *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, ed. Justus Buchler, (New York: Dover Publications, 1955: 98–119; John Sinclair, "Globalization and the Advertising Industry in China." *Chinese Journal of Communication* Vol.1, no. 1 (2008): 82.DOI:10.1080/17544750701861947

[19] Michael Hardt, and Antonio Negri. *Empire* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000), 292; Yinuo Shi, *Glocalization in China: An Analysis of Coca-Cola's Brand Co-Creation Process with Consumers in China*. (London, Canada: The University of Western Ontario, 2019), 8.

originally reside within the consumer goods themselves, the meaning was gradually transferred to them via the behaviours and practices of consumers, who acted within the beliefs of their culture.

The fourth photograph I examine is a digital photograph posted on Instagram by my cousin to showcase the harmony of an extended family. On the social media post accompanying the image, he wrote, "Three generations dining together to celebrate Chinese New Year. I helped my aunt to cook at least three dishes. Am I a great chef or not? We will wait for the count down together while eating dumplings!" Social media platforms have fundamentally changed peoples' roles from passive listeners to active participants, and encouraged their storytelling through symbols and actions within family photography. People have started to recreate the scenarios in advertisements and voluntarily participate in the performance in their real lives. My cousin's Instagram post can be seen as my family's reenactment of the original story setup of Coca-Cola's 2019 Chinese New Year Campaign (figure 11).

Figure 11. Left: Coca Cola Chinese Lunar New Year Advertisement Campaign 2019. Right: Photo taken by my mother in China, *Chinese New Year at home*, 2019.

This reenactment verges upon role-playing in its elastic appropriation of the virtual scenario in the advertisement. At the moment the camera shutter was pressed, all of my family members shared in a performance of the act of clinking glasses in front of the camera. Barthes wrote about how photography will "instantaneously make another body" for oneself before the camera and transform oneself "in advance into an image" as suggested by the time.[20] Indeed, everyone in that photo had attuned themselves to the event of photography, and catered to the social process that positioned them in relation to spectators and camera operations. They all posed themselves with the assurance of knowing how to present themselves, and this produced them as subjects in a dynamic performance who played with, confirmed, and at times subverted expectations about how to pose, look, and feel.[21] The clinking of glasses was an action intended to convey a message to the potential audiences on my cousin's social media. The message was that his family was happy and united. The photographer—my mother— and the viewer—whoever saw the photograph on Instagram—collaborated in the reproduction of family happiness and unity. This family portrait shaped its representation because viewers encountered and projected a screen made up of dominant mythologies and preconceptions. Meanwhile, this cultural mythology was further reinforced through the photograph's distribution on social media.[22] This image projected my cousin's aspiration to this life despite the inconvenient and unpleasant facts of his daily life. Behind the virtual stage curtain of social media, the inconvenient truth was that our grandfather was fighting diabetes, so his cup was empty. This blurring of reality that the photograph accomplishes aligns with Nancy West's corporate study of Kodak, which looks at how "through advertisement, consumers learned to use their amateur cameras to project fantasies that were distinct from real life, thereby erasing inconvenient and unpleasant facts from daily life."[23]

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[20] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, 1st US edition. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981)
[21] Ariella Azoulay*, Civil Imagination: A Political Ontology of Photography*, (English edition. London: Verso, 2012)
[22] Jane Hirsch, *Family Photographs: Content, Meaning, and Effect*. (New York: Oxford: University Press, 1981)
[23] Nancy Martha West, *Kodak and the Lens of Nostalgia, Cultural Frames, Framing Culture.* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000)

West's study led me to think analytically about my family portraits and I started to understand Barthes' description of two parts of a person separated between mind and emotion, the scholarly verses the personal.[24] Certainly, the studium of these four family portraits denotes the field of their cultural or educational possibilities. However, this field is pierced by a second element, the punctum, which, as Barthes' theory illustrates, breaks out of the cultural field into the personal. It did "shoot out of it like an arrow", as he describes, and pierce me.[25] Within these family portraits are the favourite dishes cooked by my mother that I missed out on because I had to stay overseas to study. And most importantly, I saw the time I spent with my grandfather that I am not able to live again in my current reality. These moments are permanently recorded by these family photographs. Those soft drinks that were supposed to symbolize Coca-Cola's marketing strategy are transferred to nostalgic memories. By looking at these family photographs, the past and present me is connected—the past communicating with the present, and the present with the past. The notion of "family time" is once again reconstructed in my present mind through the forever absence of the past in my future.

In conclusion, through the presence of people clinking glasses in these four family photographs that span forty years, we can see how the same behaviour held different meanings throughout various generations. In the beginning, family portraits reflected different aspirations that were shaped by state policies under different political ideologies. As time passed, the memories carried by family portraits formed a new social norm and constructed a new reality for a new generation. The permeability of this new reality will be attested through consumers who engage in brand co-creation processes—in the social media era, consumers re-enact advertisement scenes in family portraits to "co-create" brand processes that will further reinforce the new reality. After examining the images through these critical lenses, the punctum of these family portraits still shoots out of the cultural field and forms a unique memory for me. The notion of "family time" finishes its final reconstruction in an enunciation of love and loss.

[24] Margaret Olin, "Touching Photographs"
[25] Barthes, *Camera Lucida*

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Disneyland and the American Frontiers:
A Timeless Utopia

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Abstract:

In 1955, Disneyland opened its doors and the American public descended into the fantastical world of Walt Disney. While Disneyland corresponded to the company's growing brand as a movie-making empire, it also reflected the way that the original American colonies and the ever-developing Western frontier shaped the American mindset. Based on the arguments of Louis Marin in his 1984 book *Utopics: Spatial Play*, this essay builds upon his statement that Disneyland "is the representation realized in a geographical space of the imaginary relationship that the dominant groups of American society maintain with their real conditions of existence, with the real history of the United States, and with the space outside of its borders." Through an analysis of the park's layout and select relevant cultural case studies such as the Monsanto House of the Future (1957), John Turner's Frontier Thesis, and John F. Kennedy's rhetoric in the early sixties, this essay looks to understand how Disneyland visually manifests distinctly American narratives and how these mythologies contribute to the theatrical distortion of reality in the park.

> "Here you leave today and enter the world of yesterday,
> tomorrow and fantasy."
>
> - Disneyland's dedication plaque, 1955.

In 1955, the first visitors to Disneyland squinted against the harsh California sun to take in the inaugural views of Main Street USA, beginning their descents into fantasy. They walked into a park crafted through a mid-century American mindset, where one could comfortably move along the sliding scale of reality to fantasy, and past to future. Today, Disneyland and its off-branching parks can be analyzed and understood in a myriad of ways; as a bridge connecting Modern and Postmodern American societies, as an aid to the shaping of culture in the American public and domestic spheres, and even as a place of pilgrimage for many American citizens. Disneyland is a case study to understanding the American psyche, how the legacies of the settler-colonial mindset and Manifest Destiny still hold significance in the culture of America today, and how colonialism has remained deeply intertwined with our economics. Much of this paper was influenced by the arguments posed by Louis Marin in his 1984 work *Utopics: Spatial Play,* in which he argues that Disneyland "is the representation realized in a geographical space of the imaginary relationship that the dominant groups of American society maintain with their real conditions of existence, with the *real* history of the United States, and with the space outside of its borders."[1] This essay will attempt to deconstruct the overarching and distinctly American narratives that connect each of the Lands within the Anaheim-based park, and the economic drivers behind these narratives. It will assess how these ideas contribute to the overall hyperreal, fantastical, and Utopic presentation of a "city" that Disneyland elicits.

[1] Louis Marin, "Utopic Degeneration: Disneyland" in *Utopics: Spatial Play,* trans. by Robert A. Vollrath, (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1984): 273.

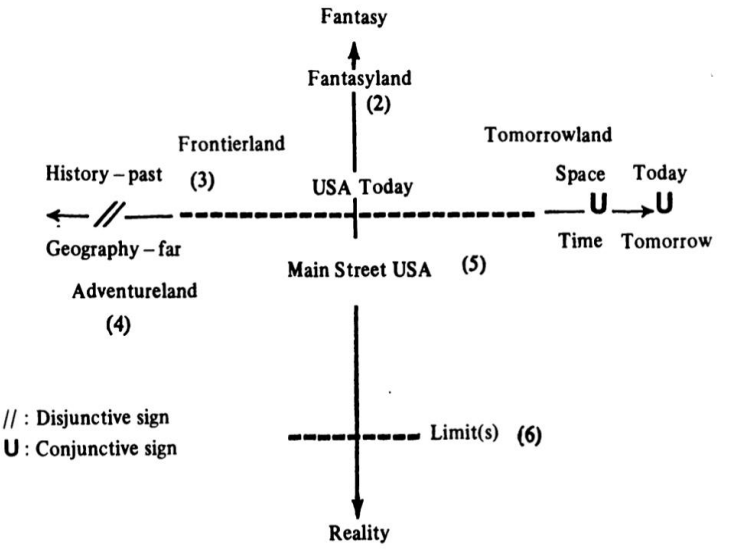

Fig. 1 Diagram of Disneyland map by Louis Marin, *Utopics: Spatial Play*

Fig. 2 Map of Disneyland. From disneyland.disney.go.com

The long Y-axis of Disneyland begins with the familiar tinges of a quasi-reality, a rural downtown strip of a classic Western town. Here, Main Street USA is famously modeled after Walt Disney's hometown and meant to ease the visitor into Disneyland. The road (aided by both the ticket booth and tunnel entrance that precede it) acts as a slow entry and exit portal. It is entirely pedestrian, excepting the horse-drawn carriages that mosey along, thus extending the time that visitors spend taking in the sights. One can imagine this crawling entrance as not only a method to disperse crowds but also as an intentionally prolonged admittance into fantasy. The park's magic flows over the visiting body in a slow, oozing trickle. It culminates at the center of the park and a Disney franchise icon: Sleeping Beauty's castle. Main Street USA, despite its role as a portal between the real and imaginary worlds, is also a meticulously designed theatrical illusion. Karal Ann Marling argues, "the buildings at Disneyland often fool you into thinking that they are turn-of-the-century business blocks or Third World trading posts, but they are actually 1950s-style malls."[2] What kind of public space is Main Street USA, if not a mall? There are no permanent residents, despite allusions to it. There is a barbershop quartet and a horse-drawn carriage, and along with the implication that the houses along Main Street USA are inhabited, there is an illusion of communal public life - yet no reality or life behind the buildings. According to Judit Bodnar, privately owned public spaces are seen as the future of downtown sectors, where the "commercialization of public space" is heralded as the solution to urban regeneration.[3] She argues that these "privately owned public spaces" such as malls are "more interested in creating a 'community' rather than a 'public' with all the diversity and grittiness that the public entails."[4] Main Street USA is the ideal downtown sector, as there are no rentals, no garbage, and no "grittiness." Despite this, there are the theatrical implications of community, and it seamlessly blends reality with fiction[5].

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[2] Karal Ann Marling, *Designing Disney's Theme Parks: The Architecture of Reassurance*, (Paris: Flammarion, 1997), 29.

[3] Judit Bodnar, "Reclaiming Public Space" in *Urban Studies,* vol. 52, no. 12. (Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publishing, 2015), 2096-97.

[4] Marling, *Designing Disney's Theme Parks: The Architecture of Reassurance*, 29.

[5] One must also remember that visitors do not just spend money inside of the park, but they pay significant amounts for entry into the park. This creates a filter of who can and cannot enter, already

Not only does the overarching design of the park create an ease of transition between Lands, but its design is also based on real city planning. According to Chris Nichols, the expansion from a center point was directly inspired by the "radial street plan of Paris."[6] Beyond the intricate details and well-thought out aesthetic presentations in each of the Lands, a vital part of Marin's argument is the position that Main Street USA and the extending Lands have in the planning of the park. He says:

> "Main Street USA is a universal operator that articulates and builds up the text of Disneyland on all of its levels. We have discovered three functions of this operator:
> (1) *phatic* -- it allows all the possible stories to be narrated;
> (2) *referential* -- through it, reality becomes a fantasy and an image, a reality;
> (3) *integrative* -- it is the space that divides Disneyland into two parts, left and right, and that relates these two parts to each other. It is at the same time a condition by which the space takes on meaning for the viewer and a condition by which the space can be narrated by the visitor (the actor)."[7]

Following Marin's graph of Disneyland (Fig. 1), Main Street USA and Sleeping Beauty's castle function as a center that also splits the park in half. From West to East, one can move across space and time: from the history of Frontierland and Adventureland to the future of Tomorrowland. From South to North, one can move from reality into fantasy; from the relative verisimilitude of Main Street USA to the aptly named Fantasyland and fun-house distortion of Mickey's Toontown (Fig. 2). At the meeting of Marin's axes, the spectrums of reality to fantasy and history to future, is what Walt Disney imagined as "the heart of Disneyland."[8] It is in this pulsating spirit of Disneyland that a plaque reads; "...Disneyland is your Land, here age relives fond memories of the past...And here youth

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preventing the "city" or "public spaces" from being true ones. Additionally, this creates a "public space" that does not have unhoused people, who are common in the downtowns of California.

[6] Chris Nichols, *Walt Disney's Disneyland,* (Cologne: Taschen, 2018), 47.

[7] Marin, 281.

[8] Nichols, 47

may savor the challenge and promise of the future,"[9] and the illusions to history and future are thus stated explicitly.

Frontierland is the most visually connected to Main Street USA but is more precisely influenced by pop culture concepts of the American Wild West. This portion of the park is home to rides whose stories "involve…conquest or exploitation…the penetration into and victory over the lands of the first inhabitants…"[10] One ride emblematic of this claim is *Big Thunder Mountain Railroad,* which touts mining aesthetics and whips riders around a red, rocky mountainous landscape in mining carts pulled by a locomotive. Here, the rider is seated within technology that allowed the expansion and acceleration of the extraction of ore, providing wealth to settlers and enacting irreversible destruction to the land. The rider is therefore placed in the role of the settler colonizer, a role that is not critically understood in the context of the park. The rides and attractions in this segment of the park all tell narratives from the perspectives of the settlers, and there is no consideration for displaced, abused and murdered Indigenous peoples.[11] This is understandable in the context of the grander utopic vision of the park; acknowledgement of such atrocities would be an admission of guilt, one that would pull the visitor (the customer) out of this fantasy of American history. Before recent additions, Frontierland was the largest Land on the left side of the park. This and Adventureland occupy the Past on the X-axis of Marin's chart of the park. Adventureland is modelled on a vague tropical country, distinct from the North American continent. Rides here include a tropical River Safari, where visitors sit in boats to view exotic animatronic animals shriek and wail from a safe distance, and the *Pirates of the Caribbean* ride, which inspired the successful movie franchise and glorifies the life of sea-faring swashbucklers. Marin points to Frontierland as the signifier of "the temporal distance of the past history of the American nation," whereas Adventureland represents

[9] As quoted in Matthew Wilson Smith, "Bayreuth, Disneyland and the Return to Nature" in *Land/Scape/Theater,* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2002), 267.

[10] Marin, 284.

[11] It should be noted that there was once an "Indian Village" in Frontierland that featured teepees, demonstrations of traditional art making and Indigenous actors in traditional dress. This is a direct legacy of the human zoos which were exhibited in 19th century World's Exhibitions, such as the one in which Turner presented his Frontier Thesis.

the "spatial distance of the outside geographical world."[12] While Adventureland carries more explicit references to British colonialism (complete with Pith helmets sold in the "local trading posts"), these signifiers are still familiar to anyone with general knowledge of the history of American film and pop culture.

Tomorrowland is the major Land on the right side of the park from the entry. Here, on Marin's graph, it is the Future on the X-axis spectrum of time. Tomorrowland, when it was originally constructed, was emblematic of the Post-War potential of a new American frontier: Space. In the sixties, America was enraptured by Outer Space, and Disneyland provided an environment that envisioned this futuristic lifestyle, dependent on the latest technologies and scientific advancements. As Marin states, this Land is "space as time, the universe captured by American science and technology of today."[13] In the same vein as Frontierland and Adventureland, Tomorrowland proposed an American frontier version of space. The future according to Disneyland will be full of the same familiar institutions and social standards, but instead it would look vaguely like a *Jetsons* episode or a PBS cartoon special. Yet Space in Tomorrowland, was treated with the same "strange, exotic primitivism" as Adventureland, both places to overtake, where "brutal savagery" is soon to be corralled by civilization.[14]

The future of Space in Tomorrowland, then, becomes the futuristic-in-between of the narratives that we see represented in Frontierland and Adventureland. Frontierland is the already tamed West, the true destiny of the American landscape realized. Notably, as there is never an acknowledgement of an Indigenous populations' existence, this land is framed as empty and thus American claims to it as justified. Adventureland is still teaming with untamed flora and fauna, the possibilities of adventure and danger ever-present, yet there is industry and occupation which grounds visitors in the familiar territory of a frequently told false colonial history. Tomorrowland, then, is the combination of these two narratives, and it is the ultimate American frontier fantasy. It is resource rich, easily conquered and there are no pre-existing people. Tomorrowland is the fantasy future for the American history; it erases the bloody past, disintegrating even

[12] Marin, 284.

[13] Marin, 285.

[14] Ibid.

the memory of those killed. In Tomorrowland there is the recognizable American-ness in the built environment and society, and there is also the unknown adventure; the new advancements, resources, and journeys yet to be discovered in the empty final frontier.

In 1893, at the Chicago World's Fair, Frederic Jackson Turner presented his argument that would become known as the Frontier Thesis. He argued that "the existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward, explain American development."[15] In other words, the "national character" of the United States was shaped significantly by the ongoing growth of the nation's false claim to land. The expansion of stolen territory and institutions that formed the American Democratic system through that expansion were continually shaped by the fluctuation of the frontier line. Disneyland, as previously mentioned, was originally opened in Anaheim, California. California has its own deep history that is deeply embedded with colonialism, one of the most notable instances of these actions being the Gold Rush that brought thousands of settlers into the region in search of economic success. The Gold Rush, as well as previous occupations that occurred even before the official founding of the United States, are all larger examples of what Disneyland is on a small scale; the act of settling on Indigenous land, erasing this violence through rewriting, and retelling historical narratives to advance American national mythology. Disneyland, and the country from which it emerged, benefit from rewriting history into a narrative which justifies ongoing settler colonialism. And these stories are maintained because they are the foundation of what America tells itself about its own actions as a means to achieve "progress."

This idea is not one that sits secretly underneath the surface of the churning gears of American progress either, it is explicitly referenced. For example, at the 1960 Democratic National Convention, Senator John F. Kennedy proposed the existence of a New Frontier, one of progress through plastics and penetration into Outer Space: the frontier of the 1960s.[16] Kennedy labeled this frontier as one "of unknown opportunities and perils - a frontier of unfulfilled hopes and threats" a collection of mysterious chances for progress to be achieved. He would again in 1962 allude to a choice that Americans

[15] Frederic Turner, *The Frontier Thesis,* 1893.

[16] John F. Kennedy, *Democratic National Convention Speech,* 1960.

were to make, only this time it was not the choice to go to the moon, but a choice between "the fresh air of progress and the stale, dank atmosphere of "normalcy" - between determined dedication and creeping mediocrity."[17] Kennedy frames progress as a choice in both of these speeches. The next frontier that he proposes is waiting to be conquered, all American citizens had to do was support its exploration.

While analyzing Disneyland's intricate relationship with the frontier legacy of the United States, it is important to turn to the ways that the park and external corporate affiliates worked to shape the future that it was touting. The Monsanto House of the Future[18] sat in Tomorrowland from 1957 to 1967 and was an attempt by the Monsanto company to try to integrate plastics into the domestic sphere (Fig. 3). At the time it was ground-breaking, but it was to quickly become "the house of the future that wasn't."[19] The floor plan was a large X, splitting the home into sections that all met in the center (Fig. 4). The master bedroom, two smaller children's bedrooms, dining, family room, and living room each occupy a capsule in the ends of the X. The kitchen, main bath, and children's bath sit in the center, breaking up an otherwise open floorplan. The future that the MHOF introduced did not attempt to radically change the way families lived together.[20] This was not a future that envisioned alternative ways of living or cohabitating. Instead, it kept the Wife in the kitchen, constantly seeking out ways to make the chores easier and to better run her household.[21]

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[17] John F. Kennedy, *Rice Stadium Speech,* 1962.

[18] Referred to from here on as MHOF.

[19] The MHOF was named this in Lisa Scanlon's MIT Technology Review article on an MIT museum exhibit about the house. https://www.technologyreview.com/2005/01/01/231834/the-house-of-the-future-that-wasnt/.

[20] Gladwin Hill, "4 Wings Flow from a Central Axis in All Plastic 'House of Tomorrow.'" (New York: The New York Times, 1957).

[21] This "battle of the sexes" thread ran through much of mainstream Post-War advertising. Monsanto pushed plastics as a way that men were able to succeed in the "conquest of air" during World War 2. Now, plastics would allow women to work more efficiently in the home, in the pursuit of the "conquest of man!" (As quoted in Phillips, 98).

Fig. 3 , Monsanto House of the Future, From wired.com

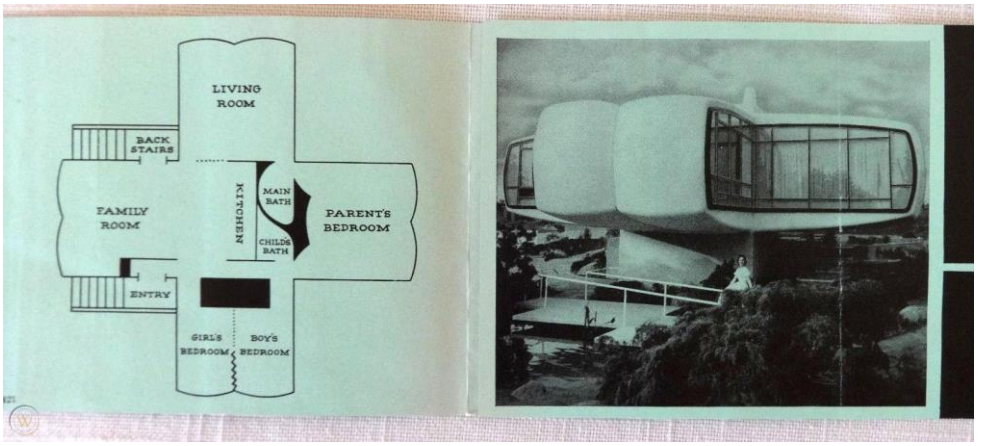

Fig. 4 Monsanto House of the Future original brochure and floorplan. From worthpoint.com

The MHOF was designed not just with the ease of the inhabitants in mind, but also the constructors. It was meant to be easily assembled, possibly by the homeowners themselves. The MHOF was, in theory, able to be built "anywhere and expand infinitely," allowing for endless additions to the capsulated way of living. This air of "anywhere" suits the influence of the American frontier and colonization in Disneyland. While it is easy to infer that the creators behind the MHOF did not envision it as a means of occupation in distant colonies, the sentiment is born from the seed of frontier and exploration. One could go anywhere with the MHOF and bring American comforts and plastic dishes. In fact, the interior holds elements connected to the seeds of colonization as well, especially when placed in Disneyland, which was the only space that the MHOF would ever be constructed. The movement of the house's inhabitants mimics the movement of a visitor through Disneyland, up and down, left and right along the axes. Even if the visitor does not grasp the intricacies of the map, the movement is copied when examining the house. Maybe exploring is a more pertinent word, fitting with the narrative of the visitor, an explorer, and adventurer at Disneyland. All of this motion mimics the axis of the compass, which after all is an iconic tool of the colonial explorer. It moves from North to South, East to West, and in between, in search of all the "unfound" and "unclaimed" places. Plastic, in its own way, could be understood as the proposed new frontier of housing by MIT and Monsanto, a new way for Americans to succeed as the most efficient and clean nation.

After the extremely difficult removal of the MHOF in 1967 (turns out that convenient assembly does not include a seamless de-assembly), Disneyland did not exhibit another futuristic house until 2008, with the arrival of The Dream Home. This build was also backed by a corporate sponsor, this time HP and Microsoft. The corporations backing each exhibit were actively shaping the understanding and perception of the future home for millions of visitors. The goal, similar to the MHOF but with an early 21st Century update, was to highlight the latest technology assisting the efficiency of the domestic sphere, a presentation of "future living". Here, we see the presence of a more contemporary frontier, that of the technology boom. In the MHOF, the frontier was plastic, in The Dream Home, it is electronics. The Dream Home had features such as a group of kitchen appliances that can talk to each other, seamless connections between personal tablets and mounted wall screens in nearly every room, and an excessive amount of touch screens. It is also interesting to note that the AI entity that runs the family cookbook is named Lillian, and assists "Mom" with the meal preparations. Again, a female presence is placed in the command central kitchen, however this time the one with the controls is not a human being.[22] The implication of the benefits of a self-contained home is at work in both the MHOF and the Dream Home, a sense that everything you need could be at your fingertips.[23]

As in Marin's axis diagram, History/Past to Tomorrow is the spectrum of the X-axis of Disneyland. This is the condensing of time within a small park. Part of the allure of Disneyland is the air of timelessness that ensnares the visitor, a feature that its creators actively sought to enhance.[24] This same method of condensing time for

[22] Which raises the question, will Smart Homes and AI integration be as detrimental to our lived environments as plastics have been for our natural one?

[23] A continuation of this research would benefit from the question of the success of the two presentations, the MHOF and The Dream Home respectively, in their goals to shape the way middle class Americans lived. Some questions to be discussed would be, are these two at the forefront of groundbreaking discussions of these ways of living? Or did they emerge from already existing ideas in the milieu of the creation of products that make living easier? It's likely a combination of both, but I believe that further research could look closer at the reception and inception of both of these projects.

[24] As quoted in Smith, one publicist claimed that "In Disneyland, clocks and watches lose all meaning, for there is no present. There is only yesterday, tomorrow and the timeless world of fantasy" (268).

narrative's sake was used by John F. Kennedy in the opening lines of his speech at Rice Stadium in 1962. He said, of America, that "No Man can fully grasp how far and how fast we have come, but condense if you will, the 50,000 years of man's recorded history in a time span of a half-century."[25] This measurement of the success and progress of the human race was, of course, measured in modern times by the improvements and headway done by the USA. This shrinkage of time meant to clarify the unprecedented times that America had carved out, similarly to the narrative created at Disneyland. Each of these methods of compressing time into an understandable metaphor, either 50,000 years into fifty or a turn left or right at Sleeping Beauty's castle, allowed Americans to weave an understanding of history that appropriately matched their frontier-developed mindsets. By shrinking time, we can see how steadily and quickly America's pursuits and accomplishments have happened. Through this miniaturization of time between the past and future, the narrator (i.e., the Visitor or the Listener) is able to live in each nearly simultaneously. 'Look how far we've come so quickly,' they are able to proudly state. "We choose to go to the moon,"[26] said John F. Kennedy in 1962, choosing here being the operative action. The solar system is now ours for the taking, and we chose its exploration. Disneyland, in a way, laments the end of the settling of the American West and general colonialism abroad, and it displays a representation of this period with added charm, fantasy, and romanticism. Simultaneously it is nostalgic for a time of physical frontiers, but is also promoting the search of future frontiers. Kennedy claimed that "this country was conquered by those who moved forward -- and so will space."[27] Kennedy nods at the conqueror mindset in his quoting of George Mallory, who was one of the first to climb Mt. Everest and said he did it "because it was there." In four words, the mentality of the colonizer is summed up: the world is for the taking.

Thus, Disneyland satisfies the American frontier and colonial mindset, allowing the visitor to own all of the representations of past and future. But Disneyland is clear that "it is fantasy that is absolutely reproduced."[28] Because of the intensity of this fantasy

[25] Kennedy, 1962.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Eco, 43.

and its ability to suspend the visitors' disbelief (even if just momentarily), Disneyland gives “the impression…of belonging to a fantastic past that we can grasp with our imagination.”[29] Then, after leaving, the Disney hangover still lingers. Our visitors may find themselves “homesick for Disneyland,” and unsure where else they will find the satiation of the ownership that was once theirs.[30] Therefore, the hyperreality aspects of Disneyland show how it has ushered in the postmodern image economy, where simulation and spectacle are often sought after as triggers of excitement and joy, as well as sources of capital.

Michael Sorkin argues that Disneyland is the “utopia of transience, a place where everyone is just passing through,” which lends strength to the atmosphere of harmony and tranquility.[31] Because there are no true inhabitants, just tourists, consumers, and workers, there are no discernible issues in the “city” of Disneyland. And as Sorkin states, Disneyland is “physicalized yet conceptual”[32] which is why it is such a strong contender for a true utopia, because it is not actually real. The representations and fictional narratives are what shape it into a utopia, and as Marin reminds us, *only* a utopia because “it’s harmony exists only on a stage.” As he says, it is a confluence of many aspects of the real world, “the past and future, time and space, the playfulness and serious determination to be found on the market, the real and imaginary - are all brought together.”[33] The representation of, and the slight differences between or introduction of fantasy within, these “realities” in each of the Lands are what creates Disneyland’s utopic nature, the strength of its illusion. This illusion continues into the interior of the buildings that line the sparkling street, where visitors are brought into the fantasy world, but pay with reality’s money to take part in this vision. As Umberto Eco argues, Disneyland “blends the reality of trade with the play of fiction” where people are presented with toy houses and fictional downtown sectors, and then are enticed into the

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Michael Sorkin, “See You in Disneyland” in *Design Quarterly,* no. 154, (Minneapolis, MN: Walker Art Center, 1992) 13.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Marin, 282.

Mall "where you buy obsessively, believing that you are still playing."[34] The frontier does not just exist in the physical plane, it also finds its way into your pocketbook. The MHOF is a less subtle example of this, as I have attempted to use it as a means of seeing how American expansionism in Disneyland goes further than the use of glorified colonial narratives, it also works its way through economics. And yet, the economic elements of Disneyland, including the stark dichotomy between the appearance of economy and the actual treatment of its workers, has potential for another essay entirely.

Marin points out that each Land is home to its own frontier, either entirely fictional or loosely based on a singular perspective in a past reality. In the case of Adventureland, he says that it "represents the next possible fields of action, because adventure is also a frontier…"[35] Adventure, which is the most satiated narrative in the entire Disney franchise, is usually present in stories as something that happens to the protagonist, whether they chose it or not. Journeys and adventures in films, like the ones Disney produces and models its parks after, come with real risks. Often protagonists lack power over their situation, and their character arc follows their eventual grandiose triumph where they had little agency before. One example of this is the newly minted *Star Wars* section of the park, which is an extension of the universe based on a story that follows a traditional Hero's Journey. In the original trilogy, Luke is an outsider to the Jedi and is ignorant of their way of life. Through his arc, he faces trauma and many losses, including those of his guardians, his mentor, and even his hand. He did not pick his role as the "chosen one" and even when he comes to accept his destiny, there are still trials and tribulations that deeply affect him. This is the key to understanding the appeal of Disneyland, as it allows the visitor to be temporarily in the role of the protagonist at the peak of their adventure narrative without any real fear of loss. The visitors to Disneyland become the main characters of their narrative through the park and therefore have ownership over a part of this fiction. They have the power of choice and the distance from the emotional trauma that comes with "real" adventure. Disneyland, and the

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[34] Umberto Eco, "Travels in Hyperreality" in *Travels in Hyperreality,* trans. by William Weaver, (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1977) 43.

[35] Marin, 284.

subsequent parks modeled after it, is about "the 'aestheticization' of reality."[36] This aestheticization would grow and spread, aiding the domination of the Postmodern, because, in the end, it is all about ownership, individualized and intense experiences, and capital. The underlying goal of the park is to create a private fantasy of ownership for the individual. It does this through the classic touch stones of falsified American history; colonialism (ownership of the land), heroism (ownership of a narrative journey), and personal advancement through the purchasing of products (ownership of your life outside of the park).

To conclude, both the private and public representations in Disneyland join together to become a singular thing, something to be experienced, owned, and achieved. Through examining each of these spaces individually, we see that the true common thread between the Lands and the Homes (MHOF and The Dream Home respectively) is the American psyche, each one influenced by the frontier, colonial, and Postwar legacies. And it is not just in the USA, as Karal Ann Marling points out, as no longer is "Disneyland unique…a one-of-a-kind place."[37] There are parks across the globe, but each still has a Main Street USA to usher in the visitors and introduce them to their little slice of American Hometown living. The rewritten American history has expanded beyond the North American continent, which is after all, what America seems to do best. And as Marshall McLuhan proposed, the postmodern is a period of the global village, and Disney Parks are thriving in this globalization and image-driven era. This sort of fantastical theatre in environment building coined the term "Disney realism," allowing anyone to escape and descend into a spectacular distortion of reality. Disneyland gives each visitor the condensed, false history and still colonial future of America, a projection of romanticism and possibilities unbounded and unchecked. It could all be yours, and it briefly is, for as long as you can afford the entrance fee.

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[36] Walter Benjamin as quoted in Frederic Jameson, "Introduction" in *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,* 7th printing (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 1.

[37] Marling, 29.

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