

On Horror: Transcreation, Imagery and the Grotesque in *Les Chants de Maldoror*

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Abstract

This thesis will explore the ways in which the effects and affects of horror can be enhanced through the technique of hypotyposis. In an experimental translation of *Les Chants de Maldoror* (1874) by the Comte de Lautréamont, I will endeavour to draw out the imagery already in the source text in order to make the target text more horrific to the reader. In some places, I will change the course of the plot itself in order to make the target text more terrifying to the reader.

The focus of this thesis will be on horror as an experience of the grotesque, and on the ambivalent mental state that the grotesque compels in the reader as they wait for a resolution to a scene, or attempt to resolve irreconcilable aspects of a certain object or being. I will begin with a historical overview of the concepts “grotesque,” “horror” as a literary genre, and “body horror.” Then, I will examine the ambivalence inherent in *Maldoror* (1874), the suspension generated by its narrative style and its genre, as well as how this ambivalence is used to prolong the affects of horror. I will explain how they are used to increase the time during which the reader is suspended in ambivalence. I will then proceed to examine hypotyposis as it relates to the valency of poetic imagery and the “real-in-the-instant” as theorized by Barbara Folkart. I will then explain the experimentation implicit in my translation through the lens of Haroldo de Campos’ “transcreation.” After a thorough analysis of my translation as compared to another, by Guy Wernham (1965 [1943]), it will be seen that hypotyposis is an extremely useful tool that can be put to great use in evoking horror.

Résumé

Cette thèse examinera les façons dont les effets et les affects de l'horreur peuvent être augmentés grâce à la technique de l'hypotypose. Dans une traduction expérimentale de *Les Chants de Maldoror* (1874) par le Comte de Lautréamont, je m'efforcerai de faire ressortir l'imagerie déjà présente dans le texte source afin de rendre le texte cible plus horrifiant pour le lecteur. J'irai même jusqu'à modifier le déroulement de l'intrigue afin de rendre le texte cible plus terrifiant pour le lecteur.

Cette thèse se concentrera sur l'horreur en tant qu'expérience du grotesque, et sur l'état d'ambivalence où le grotesque entraîne le lecteur qui attend la résolution d'un événement du récit, ou qui tente de résoudre des aspects inconciliables d'un objet ou d'un être particulier. Je commencerai avec un parcours historique des concepts du « grotesque, » de l'« horreur » comme genre littéraire, et de l'« horreur corporelle ». Ensuite, j'examinerai l'ambivalence inhérente à *Maldoror* (1874), l'effet de suspension généré par son récit et son genre, et comment cette ambivalence sert aux fins de prolonger les affects associés à l'horreur. J'expliquerai comment ils sont utilisés pour augmenter la durée pendant laquelle le lecteur est suspendu dans l'ambivalence. J'examinerai ensuite l'hypotypose en relation avec la valence de l'imagerie poétique et le « réel dans l'instant » tels qu'ils sont théorisés par Barbara Folkart. J'expliquerai ensuite l'expérimentation implicite dans mes propres traductions dans le contexte de la « transcréation » de Haroldo de Campos. Après une analyse approfondie de ma propre traduction à la lumière d'une traduction précédente de Guy Wernham (1965 [1943]), on verra à quel point l'hypotypose comme concept peut servir pour pousser l'évocation de l'horreur.

Dedications

This thesis is dedicated to:

Helmut

Jane

Dan

Robbie

Erin

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Introduction

Translating horror may be a slightly atypical topic for a thesis, but it nonetheless remains a fascinating one. I find myself interested by horror in all its expressions: from paintings to video games to books, and everything in between. I have never shied away from morbid curiosity, which is part and parcel of body horror. Though it is always difficult to explain why you like something, perhaps I enjoy the feelings that horror causes in me. In fact, the “visceral transgression” of horror is emblematic of the affective load the genre carries (Reyes, 2014). Horror, particularly body horror, allows the reader to safely experience emotions outside the “experiential remit” of typical life, a what-if sensation and a sympathetic response (Reyes, 2014; Cardin, 2017 p. xxxii). There is a kind of catharsis that follows the thrill of this kind of safe experience. Dr. Matt Cardin (2017) posits that, in horror, there is a recognition of the deepest, darkest parts of life. This amplification of real-world horrors can be a comfort, an acknowledgement that someone shares your fears through the confrontation of those very fears. This visceral, corporeal aspect of the grotesque will be the focus of this thesis, wherein I examine how horrific imagery can be enhanced through translation.

1.1 Introduction to the Text and Its Author

Maldoror is a long-form prose poetry work written by Isidore Lucien Ducasse under the *nom de plume* Comte de Lautréamont. Published by Albert Lacroix in Brussels between 1868 and 1869, the text is composed of six *chants*, each one subdivided into a number of *strophes* (Bornier, 2000). The work is generally existential in nature, questioning the limits of man’s

capacity for evil and following the titular protagonist, who proves more than happy to test those limits. The character of Maldoror acts as both protagonist and narrator for the majority of the text, in which each strophe is a disconnected vignette of a scene in his life or some philosophical exploration. Maldoror's musings include questioning God's benevolence, examining the perfection of math, speaking to the ocean and admiring her grandeur, and dissecting his hatred of women's voices. The protagonist's life is filled with cruelty, murder, and senseless violence, of which he is nearly always the perpetrator. This violence often brings the text into the realm of body horror (which will be discussed later), a genre of horror which provokes a visceral reaction in humans as we see "ourselves" deformed.

I chose this text for two main reasons: firstly, it is an excellent example of finely crafted style. Ducasse's mastery of poetic devices is apparent from the first page, and his literary style is enthralling. This aspect in itself is a challenge to translate. Secondly, this text remains effectively horrific, even as society's fears change over time. New technologies create new existential terrors (e.g. cloning brings our attention to the self by creating an identical, separate self). Societal focuses shift which subjects scare us. The "cult of youth" and constant pressure to have a perfect body has led to "beauty terror," the fear of being unable to reach that physical ideal. An increasing awareness of the nature of disease after the AIDS epidemic, as well as during the current global pandemic, has made us more aware of contagion patterns and our own mortal fragility (Reyes, 2014, p. 21). *Maldoror's* grotesque body horror is, as will be discussed later, an enduring fear. In *Maldoror*, Ducasse "presents 'spectacles' of violence in a compelling mixture of lurid, lyrical, and humorous prose" (Guerlac, 1988, p. 118). This enticing combination is what prompted me to select this text.

Not much is known about the life of Isidore Lucien Ducasse, and there are some conflicting accounts and a good deal of speculation. Ducasse was born in Montevideo, Uruguay, on April 4, 1846. He was the only child to French immigrant François Ducasse, who worked for the French Consulate in Montevideo as a *commis-chancelier*. His mother, Jacquette-Célestine Davezac, died a year after his birth (Marshall et al., 2016). Not much is known of his childhood, but he grew up in a time when Argentinian forces were laying siege to the city, famine was common, and cholera and yellow fever ran rampant. Given his father's wealth, it is unlikely that he was ever directly affected by these events, but it is interesting to imagine how they might have influenced the moral stance taken in *Maldoror*. In 1859, at the age of 13, Ducasse went to France for his studies. Though he was a gifted child, he was a poor student, often bored and daydreaming in class. He allegedly never even took the *baccalauréat* exam to complete his high school education. Ducasse returned to Montevideo in 1867 to show his father a draft of the first chant and ask for his funding to publish it. By 1868, Ducasse was back in France publishing the first chant (anonymously, due to its subject matter). He finished the next five chants within a year, and published them all in 1869 as the Comte de Lautréamont (Bornier, 2000; Marshall et al., 2016). The next year, just after publishing his poetry collection *Poésies I, II*, he was found dead in his apartment at age 24. The cause of death is still unknown, though it was rumoured that he caught a bad fever days before his untimely demise (Lautréamont, 1920 [1869], Preface, n.p.).¹ *Maldoror* was never publicly distributed in his lifetime (Bornier, 2000). In Ducasse's own words: "J'ai fait publier un ouvrage de poésies chez M. Lacroix. Mais, une fois qu'il fut

¹ I could only access the preface in an online version of the text that was published online without page numbers. The rest of the citations are from the published 1874 version of the text.

imprimé, il a refusé de le faire paraître, parce que la vie y était peinte sous des couleurs trop amères, et qu'il craignait le procureur général" (Lautréamont, 1920 [1869], Preface, n.p.).

Though the events occurring in Montevideo during the mid- to late-1800s may well have shaped the author and his works (as other texts have examined), this thesis will not delve into any speculation on the subject.² Not only would it deviate from the stated goal of examining the interaction between horror, hypotyposis, and translation, but it would be merely conjecture, unsupported by any extant evidence. Only seven of his letters remain, though it is likely that more are yet to be discovered. Very little was written about Ducasse's childhood, and what letters remain from his early adulthood are mostly him imploring various people (including Victor Hugo) to read and review *Maldoror* (Thomson, 1979 [1972]). Instead, this thesis will consider that the death of the author, both literal and figurative, means it is imperative to focus on a potential reader's interpretation of the text, not the authorial intent.

Although nearly unknown in his time, Ducasse is now an acclaimed writer and a celebrated precursor to several literary movements. When Lacroix finally distributed *Maldoror* in 1874, it would see no commercial success. It would take another sixty-odd years before Ducasse's works would come to the attention of the twentieth century French surrealists, particularly Philippe Soupault (Thomas, 2006; Bornier, 2000). Ducasse's writings have often been referred to as the "Bible of Surrealism," and even a cursory examination of *Maldoror* can explain why: Ducasse flouts literary tradition, liberates the protagonist from conventional morality, and creates "startling images drawn from the demon-haunted regions of the unconscious" (Bornier, 2000, p. 171). His belief that words precede thought would set the

² Bill Marshall et al. mention a few such authors in their article "Trois Poètes De L'Atlantique Français : Jules Laforgue, Isidore Ducasse, Jules Supervielle."

foundation for surrealist André Breton's automatic writing, and is the cornerstone of Surrealist poetics (Stubbs, 1996). From the 1930s on, studying and writing about Ducasse's limited publications would become quite profitable, seeing a success the author never did. He would have particular importance to the *Tel Quel* movement of the 1970s, which critiqued the Surrealists' co-option of his works (Guerlac, 1988). Ducasse's writing style also shares many similarities with the *Oulipo* movement, wherein authors thought of literature as a science of creation, and of perfect literature as a process of creation relying upon perfectly followed formal rules. Ducasse's three tenets of writing would become the unifying beliefs of Oulipo's founding members (Thomas, 2006). To quote Ducasse: "Le phénomène passe. Je cherche les lois" (Lautréamont, 1870, p. 39). *Maldoror*'s author was only recognized for his writing skills decades after his death, but has since become a renowned and well-studied author and poet.

1.2 Introduction to Horror and the Grotesque: Ambivalence

In order to properly set the foundation for this thesis's intended exercise, it must be determined what horror means for the purposes of this thesis. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines horror as: "painful and intense fear, dread, or dismay; intense aversion or repugnance" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). But horror lies both in those emotions and in the ways in which those emotions are evoked and maintained. A more scholarly definition is that "horror" is the extended experience of the "grotesque" in its modes of fear and abjection. The grotesque — the root concept of this thesis — is defined as a quality or characteristic of textual imagery that suspends a reader in a state of ambivalence. By "suspended," it is meant that readers are held in that state of incomplete and unresolved cognition for an indeterminate period of time while they wait for

some narrative event (whether expected or unexpected) to provide closure, or while they wait to fully perceive, understand, and categorize an image that is slowly being fleshed out by the author who has chosen to linger on it. When this type of suspension happens in a depiction of the monstrous — and in the comic, whimsical or fearful mode — we have the “grotesque.” And when the grotesque is used to provoke extreme fear and anxiety, we have “horror,” which prolongs ambivalence in the mode of fear (Fraser, 2016). And here the connection might be made with the feeling of dread provided in the dictionary definition.

“Ambivalence” has two potential meanings, the first defining the formal properties of an object, and the second, the mental state brought about by that object. An ambivalent object “displays the physical properties of two things at once” — it is a chimera. An ambivalent mental state arises when one is “caught suspended between contradictory ideas/emotions with respect to the [ambivalent] object. The resulting emotion is a tension connected with the struggle of making sense of something” (Ryan, 2016, p. 115). In essence, ambivalence is an unresolved contradiction that creates a fundamental tension within the mind as it tries to explain and categorize something that, by definition, exists in a state in between categories. It is a going over or a falling sort of a certain rational parameter (Toikannen, 2013). “Depending on the interpreter’s disposition, this tension can manifest in a number of affects – intellectual interest, mirth, or even raptness; anxiety, aversion, or even abjection” (Fraser, 2016, pp. 114-115). This thesis will examine the anxiety and aversion induced by ambivalence: horror.

1.3 Suspension in Horror as a Translation Challenge: The Technique of Hypotyposis

One of the ways in which horror literature is able to suspend the reader in ambivalence is through long description of abnormal bodies, or parts of abnormal bodies. This is precisely why horror can be considered an experience of the grotesque. These abnormal bodies break down the barrier between human and non-human, life and death, health and disease. In other words, they break down the barriers between systems that we once thought to be discrete, self-contained, and independent of each other — in a way that makes it no longer possible to tell where one system ends and the other begins. When a body appears deformed, or is decomposing naturally, or when its working systems are violently interrupted, its boundaries fail, and its components merge with each other and the outside world in a way that we have evolved to be deeply alarmed by. We will see later (Hurley, 1996; Toikkanen, 2013; Edwards and Graulund, 2013; Reyes, 2014) how this idea has been theorized in the context of horror fiction. For the moment, I will offer an example of it in horror fiction, and then describe the translation challenge that I have found in it. The following excerpt is from “Berenice,” which is among my favourite of Edgar Allan Poe’s short stories:

My burning glances at length fell upon the face.

The forehead was high, and very pale, and singularly placid; and the once jetty hair fell partially over it, and overshadowed the hollow temples with innumerable ringlets now of a vivid yellow, and jarring discordantly, in their fantastic character, with the reigning melancholy of the countenance. The eyes were lifeless, and lustreless, and seemingly pupilless, and I shrank involuntarily from their glassy stare to the contemplation of the thin and shrunken lips. They parted; and in a smile of peculiar meaning, *the teeth* of the changed Berenice disclosed themselves slowly to my view. Would to God that I had never beheld them, or that, having done so, I had died!

The shutting of a door disturbed me, and, looking up, I found that my cousin had departed from the chamber. But from the disordered chamber of my brain, had not, alas!

departed, and would not be driven away, the white and ghastly *spectrum* of the teeth. Not a speck on their surface—not a shade on their enamel—not an indenture in their edges—but what that period of her smile had sufficed to brand in upon my memory. I saw them now even more unequivocally than I beheld them then. The teeth!—The teeth!—They were here, and there, and everywhere, and visibly and palpably before me; long, narrow, and excessively white, with the pale lips writhing about them, as in the very moment of their first terrible development. (Poe, 2018, p. 39)

What Poe accomplishes with this passage is exactly what I hope to accomplish with my translation: to draw out imagery in such a way that the reader might be suspended in fearful ambivalence for longer, to exhaust the emotion. This is precisely what hypotyposis is — a lingering on an image for the purpose of more exhaustive description. It is “vivid picturesque description,” using language to get as close as possible to the real world (Merriam Webster, n.d.). This concept will be examined with regard to transcreation later in this thesis. Poe plays here with the contrast between the perfection of the teeth and the decomposing face, dwelling on both images to emphasize this incongruity. His poetic language, the rhythm of the text, and even the syntax are linguistic tools through which he accomplishes his goal: to horrify. This passage could, of course, have been written in a far less evocative way, much more succinctly. Poe could have omitted entirely the form and shape of the teeth from his description. For example:

My burning glances at length fell upon her face.

Her forehead was high, and pale; her hair, once black, was now a vivid yellow that fell upon her hollow face, and jarred discordantly, with the reigning melancholy of the countenance. Her eyes were lifeless, and I shrank involuntarily from her stare to the contemplation of her thin and shrunken lips. In a smile of peculiar meaning, her lips parted to reveal *her teeth*. Would to God that I had never beheld them, or that, having done so, I had died!

The shutting of a door disturbed me, and, looking up, I found that my cousin had departed from the chamber. But from my disordered brain, had not, alas! departed, and would not be driven away, the white and ghastly *spectrum* of her teeth. I saw them now even more unequivocally than I beheld them then. Her teeth!— They were here, and

there, and everywhere, and visibly and palpably before me, as in the very moment of their first terrible development.

Note that the reduced focus on the teeth lessened the effectiveness of the entire passage, because there is no longer the contrast that made the original so striking. I removed certain adjectives that made this Berenice less human. The pupilless appearance of her eyes, for example, was a large part of her newly grotesque face in the original. I changed the inhuman determiner “the” for the human pronouns “she” and “her,” humanizing Berenice and removing the distance that existed in the original. I did not merely omit adjectives, though they are certainly crucial to conveying imagery — in certain places, I changed the syntax in order to take the focus away from **the** teeth. Take also the sentence from the original: “They parted; and in a smile of peculiar meaning, *the teeth* of the changed Berenice disclosed themselves slowly to my view.” Here, the teeth are acting syntactically as the subject to the reflexive verb “disclosed themselves,” making them alive, giving them agency. In my revised version, the teeth are merely “revealed,” no longer giving them charge of the action. All of Poe’s technical choices in this passage create the visceral imagery he uses to draw out the horror of the scene, with focused attention on the perfect teeth of an otherwise ghastly visage.

Similarly, I could choose to translate *Maldoror* in such a straightforward and succinct fashion. However, as we have seen, this would not serve to amplify the grotesque nature of the text. Because a thesis provides me with a rare opportunity to explore, experiment, and push against contemporary normative boundaries (one that not many translators are given in their daily work), I have chosen to elaborate upon the horrific grotesque in *Maldoror*. Through my

creative translation, I will attempt to augment the effects and affects of horror through imagery: namely, through the technique of hypotyposis.

1.4 Methodology and Literature Review

I have begun with an overview of the author and the work, as well as the author's importance to future literary movements. The following sections will provide the theoretical basis for my translation, before I move on to an analysis of my translation in comparison to a well-known translation published approximately 50 years ago.

Chapter 2 will outline the history of the three main concepts of this thesis: the grotesque, horror (in literature) and body horror, specifically. This section serves to illuminate how the grotesque, as the root concept of this thesis, encompasses the other two concepts, as well as to display the interaction and interrelation between these concepts. Before examining my translation, it is important to look at these three concepts, which will be the focus of my translation strategy. Central to this thesis will be Wolfgang Kayser's work *The Grottesque in Art and Literature*, first published in 1963. This foundational text contains a comprehensive history of the grotesque, as a term and as an artistic and literary movement. His key concepts will be expanded upon by authors such as Philip Thomson (*The Grottesque*, first published in 1972); Justin Edwards and Rune Graulund (*Grottesque*, 2013) and Arthur Clayborough (*The Grottesque in English Literature*, first published in 1965). Although Kayser has contributed much of the historical leg-work for these authors, their elaboration upon the central themes of the grotesque and explorations of body horror have been illuminating. Matt Cardin (*Horror Literature through*

History, 2017) will provide the basis for our history of horror in literature, supplemented by Kelly Hurley (*The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism, and Degeneration at the Fin de Siècle*, 1996) and Xavier Aldana Reyes (*Body Gothic: Corporeal Transgression in Contemporary Literature and Horror*, 2014), who explore the Gothic genre in relation to the body, as well as themes surrounding the transgression of the body politic. Thus, the second chapter of this thesis will explain the concepts and emotions that I am aiming to enhance through my translation.

Chapter 3 illustrates the grotesque aspects of the text itself. It will be seen how *Maldoror* is fundamentally grotesque in its construction, from its very genre to its narrative style. Ambivalence is woven into the very fabric of this text. Robin Lyndenberg (“Surviving Lautréamont: The Reader in ‘Les Chants de Maldoror,’” 1977) provides a strong theoretical basis for the ways in which the complex syntax and narrative style of *Maldoror* serve an affective purpose. Suzanne Guerlac (“Lautréamont-Ducasse: At the Edge,” 1988) highlights how the ambivalence and transgression of the genre of prose poetry mirror the ambivalence and transgression of the themes in *Maldoror*. Jarkko Toikkanen (*The Intermedial Experience of Horror: Suspended Failures*, 2013) explains how horror can be conceptualized as the reader’s loss of control in the face of an anticipatory reality. The goal of chapter 3 is therefore to tie together the concepts in chapter 2 and the work itself, arguing that it is the idea candidate for this kind of examination and translation.

Chapter 4 explains my approach to this translation, including defining the concept of hypotyposis and the theory of transcreation. Barbara Folkart’s influential article “The Valency of the Poetic Image” (2000) is used to illustrate the ways in which imagery approaches the “real-in-the-instant.” I will examine how hypotyposis can be used to increase the valency of horror imagery in my translation. The concept of *imago*, as a precursor to hypotyposis, will also be

touched upon to provide the rhetorical foundations of the term. “Transcreation” is the concept in Translation Studies that allows me to assume a position of creative freedom and translate for the purpose of augmenting the affective charge of the text. Theorized most famously by Haroldo de Campos, in various writings (*Novas : Selected Writings*, 2007), transcreation is precisely what it sounds like: a creative act of translation by a translator, who chooses to change the form of translation while keeping the “spirit” and basic concepts of the source text.

Chapter 5 will be the examples and analysis of the effectiveness of my creative translation. In my analysis, I will compare three versions of *Maldoror*: the original French version, Guy Wernham’s 1943 translation, and my elaborated translation. The last one is perhaps the most contentious: why add to what the author has written? My answer will be only that other literary translators have done so in the same experimental mode that I am proposing here, and for precisely the same reason: to forestall the resolution of ambivalence that takes the reader out of the “real-in-the-instant” and effectively ends the sensation. Robin Robertson, one example that we will re-visit, gives a protracted translation of the flaying of Marsyas, an episode in Ovid’s *Metamorphosis*, for this same purpose (Folkart, 2000). I would like to follow suit and increase the affective impact that horror has on the reader by increasing the duration and intensity of the reader’s suspension in the grotesque. I will select and discuss a limited number of strophes in *Maldoror* for discussion with respect to their grotesque elements, and I will translate four specific scenes with the goal of enhancing their imagery through hypotyposis, thereby enhancing what makes them horrific. After analyzing these four scenes, I venture some conclusions about the effectiveness of the experiment and of course leave my readers to decide for themselves.

In this thesis, I will be referring mainly to a singular “reader” of the text. While there is an infinite number of possible readers, I posit that I, as the translator, am the first reader of the

text. My interpretation of the source text will inevitably colour my translation, as the things I consider important in the source text will, consciously or unconsciously, manifest themselves with greater emphasis in my translation. (Cienski, 2015; Witt, 2019). This also ties into the subjectivity of horror, which will be examined in further detail later in this thesis. In my experimental translation, I emphasize the things I find most horrific in the source text, or add to it in ways that I personally find to be disturbing or scary.³ This subjectivity is mitigated somewhat by the skill of the writer, as has been demonstrated in the Berenice example: it would be difficult for anyone to say that my rendition was in any way more affective than Poe's, even if a person was not particularly disturbed by its content. Thus, I shall consider myself first and foremost the reader of the text, and concede that my subjective outlook has impacted my translation choices, whether I know it or not.

³ I also emphasize things I believe to be common fears among most people. This is, again, influenced by my own view of society and of those around me, as well as the popular forms and genres in which horror appears. In this, however, I took the extra step of having my peers review my translations in order to gain feedback on whether they were affective or not, as a slight counterbalance against my personal views.

Chapter 2: History of Concepts — The Grotesque, Horror and Body Horror

2.1 The Grotesque

The term grotesque often comes up in direct relation to horror, and to body horror specifically. The grotesque has a long, storied history as one of the first and fundamental types of horror in fine art, and later in literature. The word is derived from the Italian *grotta*, or cave, formed into *grottesca* (f) or *grottesco* (m) to denote an ancient ornamental art style uncovered in the late fifteenth to early sixteenth century.⁴ This ornamental style has its roots far deeper than Renaissance Italy, but was taken up by Renaissance artists to great success. Cardinal Todeschini Piccolomini commissioned Pinturicchio to decorate the ceilings of the library of the Siena Cathedral “with such fantastic forms, colors, and arrangements as are now called grotesques” (Kayser, 1981 [1963], pp. 19-20).⁵ Raphael subverted the natural order with his famous grotesques on the pillars of the Papal loggias, mixing human and inhuman, mixing a “sinister quality” into his playful world (Kayser, 1981 [1963], p. 21). The grotesque was the “antithesis of reality” (Clayborough, 1967 [1965], p. 12). Note that in this usage, the grotesque is a noun, far different from how it is used today.

The word grotesque is now used most commonly as an adjective, not as the noun denoting an ornamental art style, or even literary style. It is used in the sense of “a grotesque

⁴ Some give dates as exact as the year 1500.

⁵ The majority of this section will reference Kayser’s seminal work. Most of the other sources I have found either cite solely Kayser, or cite a mixture of Kayser and other primary sources from the era they are discussing.

creature” or “a grotesque scene,” and not as simply “a grotesque.” Now, it has become synonymous with the affect it is intended to provoke (Fraser, 2016). Its use as an adjective began in France in the early sixteenth century, where its Italian etymological roots were not so foreign as in Germany and the rest of western Europe. The French use of the letter c in “crote” and “crotisque” would only be supplanted by “grotesque” with a g in the late seventeenth century, influenced again by the Italian. In English, the spelling “grotesque” would precede the French by about a century as the most common spelling of the term (Clayborough, 1967 [1965]). These still were used to mean the ornamental art style, and would not come to refer to other things until approximately a century later.

In sixteenth-century Italian art, the word was understood in its comedic form, but with a fantastical element, giving rise to its sixteenth-century synonym, the dreams of painters (*sogni dei pittori*), wherein man, animal and nature were freely combined. Natural wholes are disintegrated and recombined to suit the artist’s tastes. In the early half of the century, there were no strong patterns or conventions to the art style (Clayborough, 1967 [1965]). During this century, the grotesque spread from Italy through western Europe, affecting drawing, engraving, painting, sculpture, scrollwork, jewelry and even tools. Wolfgang Kayser (1981 [1963]) distinguishes between three similar decorative art styles that were popular in this period: the arabesque, Moresque, and grotesque. The first denotes a two-dimensional that is solely composed of “rigidly stylized leaves and tendrils painted over a uniform background which is preferably kept in black and white” (Kayser, 1981 [1963], p. 22). The second makes use of three dimensions and often completely camouflages the background with more realistic leaves, shoots, and occasionally animals. The third is a melding of animal and human where conventional rules of statics, symmetry and proportion are ignored. Though it started as line drawings, it rapidly

became the art style of choice for scrollwork. The grotesque was further developed at the turn of the seventeenth century, when in Germany the *Knorpel-Ornamentik* (*Knorpel* = gristle, cartilage) replaced the clear scrollwork style. This grotesque ornamental style flourished in Germany through the seventeenth century. The firm contours of scrollwork have vanished, and the art is “fantastically distorted,” featuring chimeras with extra limbs and protrusions that meld into one another (Kayser, 1981 [1963]).

The grotesque in sixteenth-century France was expressed more explicitly in its comedic aspect, and would remain this way for approximately two hundred years. The grotesque was thought of mainly as caricature, gross exaggeration of traits, something “qui a quelque chose de plaisamment ridicule” (Clayborough, 1967 [1965], quoting Richelet’s *Dictionnaire français* (1680)). The work of Jacques Callot, an early seventeenth-century caricaturist, was often described as grotesque. As an art form, it was ugly, and posed a problem to contemporary aestheticians, who believed that art was meant to replicate the beauty of the world. Used outside of art, it became a condemnation of the perversion of moral truth (especially in the English language). In Germany, the adjective *grotesk* was seldom used in the eighteenth century, and when it was, it denoted the same kind of comedy as its French counterpart, or meant simply “bizarre” or “outlandish” (Clayborough, 1967 [1965], pp. 9-10). It was only relatively recently that the grotesque would begin to move away from its meaning as purely ornamental art or as a bizarre style of uneasy comedy, and take on the meaning used in this thesis: one that encompasses both the comic and the fearful expressed in monstrous bodies, and creates an unresolved tension in the reader in many different mediums, including stage plays, literature and art (Thomson, 1979 [1972]).

The grotesque in the Pre-Romantic and Romantic period (the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) was a term evolving throughout Europe. In these hundred-or-so years, the grotesque would evolve completely from describing an ornamental art style to describing a genre of art, prose, and poetry. In Italy, the meaning of “grotesque” developed within the *commedia dell’arte*. In these plays, characters were given masks meant to resemble animals, which would cover their entire faces and add a “chimeric” element to the production. Their world was thus described as grotesque, and while the grotesque did continue with the themes of exaggerated caricature, it often took on a darker aspect to what had been known previously. It was a formalization of carnival-grotesque imagery, laughter with an underlying element of discomfort. It played with the human need to “laugh it off,” to lighten the mood when confronted after a confrontation with something uncomfortable (Bakhtin, 1984 [1965]). This artistic consciousness of and experimentation with extremes of emotion vacillating between fear, laughter, and alienation inspired the mid-to-late-eighteenth-century German *Sturm und Drang* style, which featured many grotesque elements, such as striking and exaggerated contrast that evoked dissolution and estranged its audience. The Gothic genre helped to develop the conception of the grotesque as the horrific through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Various philosophers, poets, authors, and playwrights began to discuss, define and use the grotesque as something simultaneously comedic and horrific, half-formed and perplexing. These included Möser, Flögel, Jean Paul, Wieland, Gerstenberg, Hugo and Poe, among others. Friedrich Schlegel was perhaps the first to use the term grotesque in the dual sense defined above, the “tragicomedy,” in 1798. E. T. A. Hoffmann was especially proficient in melding the 3 types of grotesques seen thus far: the ornamental, the caricature, and the horrifying comedic. In an analysis of Hoffmann’s works, in 1827, Walter Scott defined the grotesque as a literary category for the first time. The grotesque

was no longer associated with caricature, or somber landscapes, but with rather with “helplessness and disparagement before an increasingly absurd and fantastically estranged world” (Kayser, 1981 [1963], pp. 77-78). Poe would add to the grotesque a coexistence of the beautiful, bizarre, repulsive and ghastly, especially in *The Masque of the Red Death* (2018, first published 1842).⁶ In nineteenth-century French literature, the grotesque had become associated with revolutionary ideals, with artistic freedom and overthrowing the rigid stylistic rules of previous eras. By this time, the grotesque as a term was used without derision, and almost always in the dual meaning of the tragicomedy, with themes of isolation. The Romantic grotesque was in some ways terrifying, alien: all that is familiar has become corrupted, the “natural order” is overthrown. Nothing is secure or familiar (Kayser, 1981 [1963]; Clayborough, 1967 [1965]; Bakhtin, 1984 [1965]). In these ways, the grotesque took on much of its dual aspect during the Romantic period, veering into horror, through evolving styles of art and writing.

The grotesque is painted with finesse — and with a strict attention to the detail and proportion of the alienating worlds it creates. Similarly, Ducasse wrote his poetry very rationally and deliberately, following formal rules. To Ducasse, a writer who knows his constraints is more powerful than one who writes whatever comes to mind. Neither the art nor the literature is horrific because it is unintentional, an automatic or unconscious action. In fact, it is horrific precisely *because* it is very intentionally created with care and attention to detail. This, despite the fact that the grotesque works largely by invoking the kind of alienating contingency that we find in dreamscapes or fantasms. In other words, there is a strong distinction to be made between the high rationality informing the creation of this type of art (and our theoretical reflection on it),

⁶ Which is beginning to take on a new relevance, as a modern pandemic is once again revealing the social and economic inequalities of our world.

and the high affectivity (and lower rationality) that this type of art is designed to invoke in someone responding to it (Fraser, 2016). Ducasse himself makes this point by protesting against the need for creating new methods of automatic writing driven by impulse. Rather, he insists that access to horrific dreamscapes can and should be gained through strict adherence to more traditional formal rules of poetry writing:

[...] je ne crois pas qu'il soit nécessaire, pour arriver au but que l'on se propose, d'inventer une poésie tout à fait en dehors de la marche ordinaire de la nature, et dont le souffle pernicieux semble bouleverser même les vérités absolues ; mais, amener un pareil résultat (conforme, du reste, aux règles de l'esthétique, si l'on y réfléchit bien), cela n'est pas aussi facile qu'on le pense.

Here, Ducasse states his beliefs directly: it is not necessary to reinvent poetry in order to make good poetry, and making good poetry while following the conventional rules or poetics and rhetoric is much harder than one might believe. Grotesque art and literature are effective because of their intentionally crafted nature. Their mingling of forms is done with purpose and skill, not at random and in ignorance of what makes aesthetically good art in that particular period. This will, of course, pose translation issues for me, as I must also be able to create good art (to some degree), but this will be examined later on. What is important here is to note is that the grotesque is not ugly or disturbing because it is badly done, but for the exact opposite reason. It is ugly or disturbing because it is very well done.

Where the grotesque poses problems in translation is that it has two fundamental aspects: it is both horrific and comedic. It is a contradiction and play. Even the scene in which Maldoror is transformed into an octopus is an expression of the grotesque. Depending on how it is conveyed, this kind of scene can have a predominantly comedic or horrific aspect. Describing how the octopus slithers around on land and plops down a set of stairs to cannonball into the

ocean is funny. Describing the transformation that takes place, how muscle is torn from flesh, how bone is ripped from body, how lungs turn to gills and begin to suffocate on land — well, that is typically not so humorous. Ducasse in this same scene describes “l’antilope humain,” mixing the human and the animal. The combination of human and non-human bodies is one of the grotesque’s defining characteristics (Fraser, 2016; Edwards and Graulund, 2013). In this way, it complements the ways in which body horror can alienate the reader from the victim by transforming the victim’s body in such a way as to make it no longer recognizably human (Edwards and Graulund, 2013). The perversion of the human form takes on another aspect in *Maldoror* when the human body is mixed with rotting vegetation and fungi. In an evocative scene, an unknown narrator describes the degradation of his body as he becomes fused with various vegetation (Lautréamont, 1874, pp. 202-204). This scene combines aspects of the grotesque (mixing human and non-human bodies) with aspects of body horror (the degradation of the human body). In my eyes, this passage in the original takes on more of the comedic aspect of the grotesque, especially in how it depicts the family of toads that lives under his armpit. But that does not mean that these two aspects of the grotesque are mutually exclusive. In fact, both are ever-present in the grotesque. It can be evidenced in that same paragraph, when the comedic takes a dive into the horrific as he warns the reader not to let a toad escape, as it can enter your brain. This is how the grotesque creates an ambiguous state of mind in a reader: the comedic and the horrific exist at once, irresolvable in their tension (Thomson, 1979 [1972]). Thus, the grotesque contains within itself both humour and horror at once, and the author may choose to bring one or the other to the forefront.

This brings us to a definition of the grotesque. I will use Philip Thomson’s “the ambivalently abnormal” (Thomson, 1979 [1972], p. 27). Each of the separate points of this

definition has been elaborated above, making it an excellent synthesis of the conclusions already reached. The emphasis is on the unresolved nature of ambivalence, the grotesque that emerges as a liminal form created by hybridizing two opposing forms, disturbing the coherence of these logical oppositions. The typical example is the distinction between human and animal, which ignores completely that humans are animals and exist in the same natural order, yet which is essential to the way in which humans have conceived of themselves for centuries (Edwards and Graulund, 2013). The grotesque is the irreconcilably strange, the fusion of two (or more) things that cannot be. The focus can be on a carnival-esque, comedic grotesque, or on a perverse, horrific grotesque. The grotesque has been used as a tool in horror literature for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. We have examined how the grotesque has evolved, and now let us examine how horror has evolved in literature alongside the grotesque.

2.2 Horror in Literature

Horror in literature has as lengthy a history as the grotesque does, but unlike the grotesque, it does not exist as an artistic or literary genre, per se. Rather, it is a *mode* that can be employed in many different genres, such as the fantastic and the Gothic. Because horror evolves with the times, as discussed above, it has no set formula, no formal characteristics developed by extensive repetition that can be used to produce other works to the same effect. Horror can slip between “high-brow” and “low-brow” literature with ease, being incorporated into a range of styles and genres (Cardin, 2017; Toikkanen, 2013). It is “a specific kind of aesthetic experience” rather than being a genre unto itself (Toikkanen, 2013, p. 4). Unlike the tragedies of classical antiquity, which did follow a certain formula as distinguished by Aristotle in his *Poetics*, horror

has not had the same kind of standard model — arguably until horror cinema in recent years. It is considered a genre of speculative fiction, meaning that it encompasses many genres that share horrific elements, but is not necessarily a distinguished genre in and of itself. As the experience of the grotesque, horror is “some quality of *wrongness* or *repulsiveness* — physical, metaphysical, moral, or otherwise — that leads one to shrink from someone, something, some event, some idea” — far too broad-ranging an emotion to consign to one particular genre (Cardin, 2017, p. xxx). It is the feeling that something is fundamentally *wrong*, a feeling that can be evoked in any text. (This is despite modern conceptions that horror is a genre, fueled by repetitious movies that follow the same or similar plot beats, scares, and conclusions.) Thus, a discussion of the history of horror must take into account the various genres in which it is primarily expressed.

Horror is found in the ancient world as early as written text allows. Even the *Epic of Gilgamesh* (ca. 1700 BCE) has elements in it meant to inspire fear, such as the descent into the underworld. However, it was the ancient Greeks who included even more horrific elements in their stories. The diverse genres of classical antiquity allowed for the incorporation of many strange and supernatural elements in multiple ways (Cardin, 2017). The infamous myth of Heracles features him losing his mind and murdering his wife and children. Heracles himself was the descendent of Io, who was driven mad by Hera and wandered the lands for several years in the form of a cow. Losing one’s mind was a common theme of Greek mythology, and is still a common fear in modern times (think especially of the terror of diseases such as Alzheimer’s). Not coincidentally, ancient Greek and Roman mythology features many humans (and gods) shape-shifting into animals, human-animal hybrids (harpies, sirens) and animal-animal hybrids

(chimeras, gryphons). These grotesque combinations were central to the supernatural and horrific elements of the heroic tales of antiquity.

By dint of its length, it difficult to summarize trends or shifts in literature during the Medieval era. The main themes of horror in this age revolve around the supernatural, including Beowulf (which, in his illuminating 1936 lecture, J. R. R. Tolkein argued was primarily about monsters) (paraphrased in Cardin, 2017). The romances of the twelfth century featured the knight in shining armour beating away the horrors of the ungodly werewolves, ghosts, and fairies. These kinds of tales were not interested in delving the psychological depths of horror quite yet, but merely in presenting the fantastical as a threat. Starting in the thirteenth century, but flourishing in the fourteenth, were tales of women being seduced by demons and fairy kings attacking the realms of man. Concurrent with this was a shift to focusing on the inner, psychological toll that confronting the supernatural and horrific could have on the protagonist (generally still a knight). These narratives reveal “a profound concern with understanding the human condition, and with determining the limits to which a person can be pushed” (Cardin, 2017, p. 13). This signaled the beginning of explorations into the human psyche through horror, which would develop into more focused inquiry in later centuries.

The early modern era was a time of great upheaval, with torture, colonization and persecution occurring on a mass global scale. The literature of the time reflected the fears surrounding the Reformation. Many “non-fiction” works were published on witchcraft, demonology and “ghostes and spirites walking by nyght” (Cardin, 2017, pp. 14-15). These works served the dual purpose of informing the readership of these supernatural beings, while simultaneously evoking fear in the readership. Truth and sensationalism were presented in these texts, both at the scholarly and vernacular level. Revenge tragedies, such as those written by

Shakespeare, became the most popular vessels for horror in the early modern period. One of the defining aspects of these early modern writings was “the closeness of horror and laughter” (Cardin, 2017, p. 17). It can be seen through this description that horror is indeed the experience of the grotesque, and that the early modern writers were exploring the effect and affect of this style. Infamous writer of the macabre, John Webster, was experimenting with various grotesque aspects in his plays by portraying lycanthropy as an extreme form of mental distress and disorder in *The Duchess of Malfi*. Ferdinand, brother of the titular duchess, experiences a mental breakdown after the death of his sister, gradually adopting wolf-like behavioural traits (Cardin, 2017). This blurring between human and animal is indeed one of the defining characteristics of the grotesque, and its exploration in early modern literature would pave the way for its use in future genres.

The emergence of the Gothic novel in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century meant that horror was, for the first time, a tool used in a very widely consumed genre. Many of these texts sought to bring people back to the Christian faith during a period when it started coming into question, and threatened the supernatural consequences that would arise from straying from God. The early modern introspection mentioned above was expanded upon in the idea of the “sublime” in literature. Many writers of the time tried to explain the draw of such scary stories as the attraction of the sublime. The sublime refers to an affective state of both terror and awe, a momentary failure of cognition, and became an important aesthetic category in Britain and Western Europe. Joseph Addison theorized in the early eighteenth century that the sublime was attractive because of the self-reflection it caused upon reading, positing that terror was “at the centre of our attempts to understand our own identity” (Cardin, 2017, p. 21; Toikkanen, 2013). Seen through this lens, the sublime was an aspiration for many writers. In the

mid-eighteenth century, Horace Walpole invented the Gothic as a literary form, and his work *The Castle of Otranto* is often seen as the first Gothic novel, and is certainly one of the most influential. He published it as a faux translation of a thirteenth-century Italian manuscript, and in his apology for this deception (appended to the book's second edition), he coined the term "Gothic story" for this genre that combined history and fantasy to inspire the sublime (Punter, 2012; Cardin, 2017).

The Gothic genre has been closely tied to the grotesque from the genre's inception. Many of these tales depict monstrous creatures, human-animal hybrids, and the breakdown of the human body and mind. Kelly Hurley describes the destruction of the human into the "abhuman" as the ambivalent state in which the human subject tries to cling to the illusion of autonomy and self-identity while being "aroused by the prospect of a monstrous becoming" (Hurley, 1996, p. 4). Abhumanness can be read as a trauma and paralysis, but reveals a wide range of morphic possibilities in terms of human-animal hybridity: slug-men, snake-women, fungus-people, etc. Thomson notes that "...the grotesque has a strong affinity with the *physically abnormal*," which is certainly typified by the abhuman (Thomson, 1979 [1972], p. 9, original emphasis). In other words, the grotesque expresses itself in the Gothic genre through abhumanness. The subject is ambivalent about their own transformation, as they stray further and further into the abnormal. The Gothic "represents human bodies as between species: always-already in a state of indifferentiation, or undergoing metamorphoses into a bizarre assortment of human/not-human configurations" (Hurley, 1996, p. 10). Essentially, Hurley is noting that the grotesque lives in the Gothic, that they are inseparable, and that the use of the grotesque is a means by which the Gothic explores the societal fears of the authors and their contemporaries.

Hurley also makes the connection between the grotesque and the fantastic, as defined by Tzvetan Todorov (1976). The fantastic, argues Todorov, is distinguished by hesitation in the reader (which may or may not be shared by hesitation in a character). The reader must decide how much of the supernatural narration to take as truth, as there is no clear indication in the story as to how much of it is “real.” This hesitation is one of the defining characteristics of the genre, as distinguished from other genres, where the supernatural elements are clearly either real or unreal.⁷ The fantastic “*occupies the duration of this uncertainty* [...] The fantastic is that hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event” (Todorov, 1976, p. 25, my emphasis). There is a clear parallel here between the fantastic genre and horror as the experience of the grotesque. Todorov’s hesitation (“the duration of this uncertainty”) is indeed “ambivalence,” as defined above: the reader is caught in a mental state with no resolution. Todorov is careful to define the fantastic as the experience of that uncertainty, because the moment that it is resolved, the text falls into a different genre.

Both the fantastic and the grotesque are states which await resolution, and both involve a certain mental tension between unresolvable states. The fantastic and the grotesque deal specifically with the supernatural in a natural world, the invasion of something that cannot be.⁸ They are, and are not, our world. They shatter our illusions of an “apparently harmonious world, [...] alienated under the impact of abysmal forces” (Kayser, 1981 [1963], p. 37; Thomson, 1979 [1972]). There is space here for an overlap between the two, as indeed occurs in the Gothic. The abhuman takes on both the supernatural aspects of the fantastic, the impossibility of becoming

⁷ Todorov (1976) gives the example of a fable, wherein the reader knows that the animal speaking in the fable is not meant to be taken literally, but in an allegorical sense.

⁸ And this invasion of the supernatural into the natural or mundane is, I would argue, an essential part of most horror stories. Body horror is often the outlier in this regard, in terms of its very grounded nature in reality. Body horror often comes straight from the real, from surgery, torture, or other forms of bodily mutilation that occur every day.

something that cannot exist, and the grotesque, the mixing together of monstrous bodies. Thus, the fantastic and the Gothic, as literary genres, incorporate the grotesque as one of their methods of inspiring horror.

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as technologies of war developed, the impacts of battle on citizens were much more deeply felt. Now, citizens were increasingly closer to the front lines of battle, and writing about death and war became much more intimate as more and more people had first-hand experiences of horror. The supernatural still held its relevance in these years, avoiding the increasing censorship that affected both news and literature alike. The Gothic genre took on more of a refined, psychological horror aspect that distinguished it from its precursors in the eighteenth century. By approximately 1825, however, the Gothic heyday in Britain was over, and it survived mainly in the “lower-class” literature like penny dreadfuls until its resurgence at the turn of the century (Hurley, 1996). The import of Gothic novels to America and Germany would see famous authors such as Edgar Allan Poe and E. T. A. Hoffmann further develop the psychological and supernatural horror of the post-Gothic or late Gothic novel (Kayser, 1981 [1963]).⁹

One feature of these post- or late Gothic texts was insistent ghostly hauntings. Death had changed in the nineteenth century, and as funerals became more ostentatious and extravagant, people looked for ways to express their anxieties at this blatant hypocrisy. It is also in this century that the theme of mental illness emerged prominently in horror (Cardin, 2017). The Gothic at the end of the nineteenth century was not just reactive to the societal concerns of the time — the discovery of the human unconscious, advances in criminal anthropology, theories of

⁹ Interestingly (and I think not coincidentally), Hoffmann wrote of the grotesque aspect of the *commedia dell'arte*. He was referring specifically to Jacques Callot, whose illustrations of the *commedia dell'arte* prove its grotesque nature.

evolution — but it was productive as well, aggravating the fears of the population about those very subjects. The pre-Victorian Gothic also played a role in the turn-of-the-century Gothic: the earlier writings had invented a “systematic discourse of the irrational,” which radically complicated and reshaped ideas of human subjectivity in the context of scientific inquiry (Hurley, 1996, p. 6).

This brings us to modern horror literature, which flourishes as a niche genre under writers such as Stephen King and Thomas Ligotti. Notable twentieth-century authors have kept their influence on the horror genre, especially H. P. Lovecraft, whose works are still being adapted and whose universe is constantly expanding thanks to the Internet.¹⁰ Shirley Jackson’s *The Haunting of Hill House* (1959) was recently adapted in a Netflix series. Horror novels saw a boom in the 1980s, in part due to King’s popularity. Anne Rice’s *Interview with the Vampire* (1976) helped to bring vampires to the mainstream as relatable outcasts of society. The rise of the “splatterpunk” genre, which revels in occasionally gratuitous depictions of gore and violence, coincided with the rise of the zombie, transformed from a corpse resurrected by voodoo to the mindless undead with a craving for brains. Both of these have become the two most prominent monsters of modern horror — and now even of romance!¹¹ Their monstrosity has turned to an exploration of fears surrounding disease and ostracization instead of being purely otherworldly embodiments of evil. In recent years, independent publishers are helping this niche genre to survive, and horror anthologies have replaced the periodicals of the past century. There has been

¹⁰ Guillermo del Toro has been working (so far unsuccessfully) to have his film adaptation of Lovecraft’s *At the Mountains of Madness* released for the past several years.

¹¹ Though there has always been a sexual undercurrent to vampire stories, so this shift is less surprising than that of the zombie.

somewhat of a renaissance of the short horror story because of this, and the new mediums of the twentieth century have also embraced horror (Cardin, 2017).

Increasingly, horror movies are moving into the mainstream, being consumed by a wider audience. Although this has served to bring many lesser-known artists, writers, and directors to the forefront of pop culture (Jennifer Kent and Eli Roth, for example), it also has solidified some of the tropes of modern horror, most notably in movies. Now, people often do conceive of horror as a genre, which is partly why *Parasite*, for example, was able to so effectively pull off its clever twist midway through the movie. It was not marketed as a horror movie at all, and due to audience expectations, the dive into horror at the halfway point was particularly shocking. There is also more and more interplay between mediums: films are based off of books, but those same films inspire fans to create their own works online.

Short horror stories abound on the Internet, often in the “genres” of creepypastas or SCPs. Both are community-based efforts to create horror stories in a somewhat consistent style — online anthologies of horror. Creepypastas are urban legends, often brief, and often entirely fabricated. Slenderman is among the most famous of these, and even had a movie made about it in 2018, further proof of the intermixing of mediums. SCP stands for Secure Contain Protect and is a fictional foundation that houses “SCPs,” strange otherworldly creatures, possessed objects, and even strange locations. The SCP Foundation is one of the largest collaborative fiction efforts of all time. Users have come together to submit stories, standardize information files for the SCPs, create classifications for the SCPs, and even create entire games about individual SCPs and the SCP Foundation.¹² YouTube has helped the popularity of these emergent horror genres,

¹² The most popular games were *SCP-087* (2012) and *SCP - Containment Breach* (2012), though many more exist. Both of these are still being updated to this day, and though their player-base has decreased significantly, there is

with creators reading the stories, complete with voice acting, sound effects and accompanying illustrations. Creepypastas and SCPs are a kind of revitalization and re-imagining of the traditional monster. Instead of being the embodiment of evil, the horror has shifted to the utter inability of the scientists at the Foundation to fully understand the SCP, even after years of study. Importantly, these monsters are not always dangerous, they are not all a threat to human life or sanity. They are simply impossible to understand, completely abnormal objects. The Internet has become an important part of the melding of these new mediums through which horror is expressed.

2.3 Body Horror

This thesis will focus on a certain aspect of horror that is often connected to the grotesque: body horror. Though the grotesque is a crucially important aspect of body horror, the two terms are not synonymous. Body horror can be defined as the fear and anxiety provoked by the body's mutilation, mutation and degradation. It focuses on "indeterminacy and estrangement from one's own body" (Reyes, 2014, p. 54). Often, its victims are rendered powerless by outside forces, especially by all-consuming institutions like the capitalist system (Edwards and Graulund, 2013). (In *Maldoror*, the very state of the protagonist's victims carries with it a certain lack of power. A child and a mentally disturbed woman, for example, are in society comparatively powerless to Maldoror.)

still media attention when major updates are released, which sees a renewal of interest in the games with a wider audience.

Maldoror himself is, much like an inhuman monster, “*disgusting* as well as threatening” (Asma, 2014, p. 949, original emphasis). According to horror philosopher Noel Carroll (in Asma, 2014), humans are conditioned to hate and fear the interstitial space between human and non-human. This can help explain why blood, feces and vomit are so revolting: they blur the line between human and not human, *of* me but *not* me. Indeed, the body is inherently interstitial, operating largely without our express cognitive control, and bodily fluids break the barrier between inner and outer. Monstrous anatomies, hybrids, mixing sexes and deformity all inhabit this interstitial space, calling into question the impositional and prescriptive nature of the body politic in a way that provokes discomfort, at the very least (Reyes, 2014; Edwards and Graulund, 2013). Similarly, Maldoror as a character is seemingly human, but his thoughts and actions are so removed from most readers’ that he is distanced from humanity. He lacks empathy for most creatures, whether human or not. The reader recognizes him as human, while at the same time being unable to attribute common human characteristics to him. The protagonist occupies, mentally, this interstitial space. His very being repulses the reader, who struggles to reconcile the man and his lack of humanity. Since the reader has such insight into Maldoror’s perspective (due to the primarily first-person narration), his very thoughts serve to disgust the reader. The protagonist of this text is repulsive to the reader, inhabiting the interstitial space between human and “monster.” This can be similar to the disgust that many people feel when thinking of the modern-day stereotype of the psychopath.¹³ This is precisely the “ambivalently abnormal” that

¹³ This modern conception of psychopaths as cruel and completely unfeeling monsters is currently being debated and debunked by psychologists, psychiatrists and neuropsychologists, among other professionals. There are varying levels of an anti-social personality disorder that do not necessarily prevent a person with this disorder from living a normal life and participating actively in society in productive, helpful and healthy ways. I am here merely referring to the pop-culture view of anti-social personality disorder and psychopathy as popularized in modern media.

Thomson expresses in his definition of the grotesque. It is applied here not merely to physical states, but to mental abnormalities as well.

Naturally, there is a certain subjectivity to what suspends a certain person in feelings of horror. To a modern audience, it may seem as though *Maldoror* has lost some of its effectiveness because so much of its horror relies on graphic violence and a perversion of the human condition. *Maldoror* being so unequivocally evil might appear less intimidating to a generation of people who grew up watching documentaries about serial killers and psychopaths. The text's rejection of God is less upsetting in a world where organized religion is increasingly shunned. The graphic violence may no longer shock people the way it used to, as societies have been conditioned by a long history of splatterhouse movies and similarly gory novels.

However, the societies of the twenty-first century still have an aversion to violent images and body horror. Scenes are still cut during editing. Movies, books and especially video games are still protested and banned for their violent content, particularly when it is also sexual in nature (Reyes, 2014).¹⁴ There were scenes from *Maldoror* that I did not feel comfortable expanding on for this very reason. Some of the scenes I felt were equally effective (and affective) whether I extrapolated on the imagery or not (or perhaps this is just to excuse my own discomfort at the thought of drawing the scenes out). Needless to say, although what invokes horror is subjective, “violence against the body, no matter its popularity, can always reach levels of extremity which become noticeable precisely for their unusual attempt to go beyond what is seen to be acceptable at a particular time” (Reyes, 2014, p. 13).

¹⁴ The infamous “Hot Coffee” incident from the 2004 game *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* springs immediately to mind as a controversy involving both sex and violence.

The effectiveness of body horror relies on the fact that everyone consuming any media has a body. There will always be intrinsic human fears about aging, death, or worse, and no concept of understanding is free from the body's influence. Our "corporeal intelligibility," our shared consciousness of what pain means and what it entails, is manipulated when we read body horror, and is what makes it affective (Reyes, 2014, p. 17). Body horror plays with these fears by distorting the body politic (Edwards and Graulund, 2013; Toikkanen, 2013). Importantly, this kind of horror is "unredeemed by laughter," distinguishing it from the grotesque (Reyes, 2014, p. 4). The body is constantly wrapped up in social and political discourses, which delineate the limits of transgression at any given time in any given place — this is the body politic (Reyes, 2014).

One limit that is near-constant is the barrier of skin, which in body horror is often permeated and corrupted through violence, surgery, or grafts of skin or other body parts. Frankenstein's monster in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein: or, the Modern Prometheus* (1818) is the quintessential example of transgressing the skin barrier: he (or perhaps it) is made up of the flesh of corpses, but is beautiful by design. The grotesque contrast of those two aspects, irresolvable, is what creates the monster. The monster is *like* man, but is not man, a concept which harkens back to the interstitial space between human and inhuman. It (or perhaps he) is a horrific reflection of its creator. The transgression of the body politic inherent in surgery is, I would argue, why most people cannot stand to watch it. The line between inner and outer has entirely faded away, and the private, inner workings of the body have become public (Edwards and Graulund, 2013). Even the most precise, the least invasive, surgery holds some measure of body horror, because it transgresses the body politic. Surgeons break bones and remove body

parts, distorting a “helpless victim,” in a sense. This shift has reflected the modern fears surrounding the body.

Even the mere idea of transgression, where the body is concerned, is enough to inspire discomfort and fear in most people. This is why the body horror of *Maldoror*, though not as visually descriptive as other texts, still crosses societal lines to this day. The idea of, for instance, smashing someone’s head against the stairs, inspires horror on its own without a reader needing any description (though, as will be seen, an effective description heightens the emotion). The very concept of mutilation and death is both fascinating and horrific, hence the recent resurgence of “true crime” documentaries and stories by pundits on the Internet. Morbid curiosity still comes into play whether or not there is any detail of, say, a crime.

The grotesque is primarily concerned with the mixing of bodies, so its connection to and use as an aspect of body horror is readily apparent. The grotesque body is exaggerated, but it is not merely satirical or “cheesy” or camp. It is one where the body exceeds its own limits (or the limits we place on it), ceases to be itself. It is a body that tests our conception of the human body as a whole by destroying the confines between the body and the world, and between some bodies and other bodies. The grotesque is interested in “what protrudes from the body, all that seeks to go out beyond the body’s confines” (Bakhtin, 1984 [1965], p. 316; Reyes, 2014). It is also concerned with the inner workings of the body, with things that transgress the skin barrier, ignoring the “impenetrable” barrier and merging outer and inner. Thus, the grotesque body inherently invokes body horror due to its mutilation, decomposition and mutation that transgress the body politic. These “mortifying corporeal nightmares” place the body at the centre of experience, exploring and revealing our fears surrounding the vulnerability and fragility of our own flesh (Reyes, 2014, p. 4).

Chapter 3: Ambivalence in *Maldoror*

3.1 Ambivalence in its Genre

Maldoror fits into the ambivalent genre of prose poetry. As a genre, its defining characteristics are still under debate: a certain rhythmicity maybe, perhaps the absence of the consistent measure and rhyme found in traditional poetry, and possibly an uncoded verse with no syllabic stability. Of course, it undoubtedly contains evocative imagery that provokes strong affect, just as poetry does. The sheer length of *Maldoror* has caused some to call it an “epic prose poem,” countering the notion that any prose poem is by nature brief (Scott, 1999, p. 26). There is no clear answer as to what separates prose poetry from its related genres, only general guidelines. In this way, the text breaks the conventions of both the genres it borrows from — ambivalent and transgressive by its very nature.

Interestingly enough, French prose poetry finds its roots in transgression and translation. In the late eighteenth century, French translators crossed the traditional linguistic frontiers of French poetry by translating verse from other European languages into prose in French. Relying on the borrowed authority of pseudo-translations (where the author of an original work pretended that it was a translation in order to assume the authority of the supposed original author), these authors disguised their contravention until prose poetry became an accepted literary category (Marmarelli, 2005). In the case of *Maldoror*, the ambivalence and transgression of the genre supports the transgression of the text’s themes: a general “refusal of taboo, a stepping over the line of interdiction” (Guerlac, 1988, p. 119-120). Georges Bataille (paraphrased in Guerlac, 1988) writes that transgression is “doubly inscribed” as interdiction/transgression. Interdiction

sets the boundaries, which transgression crosses: interdiction is work, transgression is play.¹⁵ For Bataille, the very act of writing literature is a transgression against the traditional economic tenets of production and negativity (paraphrased in Guerlac, 1988). It is, in the limited sense, a transgression against the principles of discourse: literature is written without immediate reply, but still with the expectation of being read.

Maldoror exemplifies this transgression in the text, as God punishes Maldoror for putting pen to paper to write. Further, *Maldoror* is read as the transgressive text to the interdiction of *Poésies*, but in many ways this reading can be considered incomplete. Instead of pitting Ducasse against himself in his two works, as is often the case, it could be more conducive to see a continuation of transgression in both of these texts. In *Maldoror*, transgression is more easily evident, but given that transgression is doubly inscribed, *Poésies* offers a “pensée de la loi transgressive,” in which the law is both upheld and rendered empty and meaningless (Guerlac, 1988, p. 120-121). Thus, the genre of prose poetry that Ducasse uses to such great effect serves to underline the transgression of his texts in thematic and philosophical terms.

3.2 Ambivalence in its Narration

It was said that *Maldoror* was proof of its author’s madness. Indeed, its preface is a letter to the publisher Lacroix from one L. G., who spends considerable time refuting the claims of M. Léon Bloy.¹⁶ Bloy apparently repeated incessantly “que l’auteur était fou et qu’il est mort fou” (Lautréamont, 1920 [1869], Preface, n.p.). There is no surviving evidence to support his claim,

¹⁵ And here we can see a very clear link between these two dualities and the two faces of the grotesque.

¹⁶ L. G. is perhaps Léon Genonceau, a contemporary of Ducasse’s and a literary critic.

however. Although it could be said that Ducasse had a troubled mind (as many poets are said to have), his letters show that he was fully in touch with reality until his final days. But Bloy's presuppositions may not have been fully unfounded. Ducasse writes *Maldoror* in an ambivalent way that leaves very little separation between narrator and author (Bornier, 2000). The first few strophes of the first chant act as an *avis au lecteur*, which is typically a note from the author or editor used to warn the reader of the shocking nature of the text (as this one is), or to clarify certain things that the reader might misinterpret. Normally, the *avis au lecteur* is paratext, but in this case, it is part of the main body of the text. It appears *in* the text, which points to it being a narrative device rather than paratext added for publication (Chatsiou, 2014).¹⁷ It does, however, address the reader directly, as is standard. The supposed author warns the reader in the very first sentence of the text to arm themselves with logic and cold blood should they wish to read this dark, poison-filled tale:

“Plût au ciel que le lecteur, enhardi et devenu momentanément féroce comme ce qu’il lit, trouve, sans se désorienter, son chemin abrupt et sauvage, à travers les marécages désolés de ces pages sombres et pleines de poison ; car, à moins qu’il n’apporte dans sa lecture une logique rigoureuse et une tension d’esprit égale au moins à sa défiance, les émanations mortelles de ce livre imbiberont son âme, comme l’eau le sucre.”
(Lautréamont, 1874, p. 5)

It is not until the fourth strophe of the first chant that Maldoror reveals it was him acting as the narrator-author and writing the previous strophes:

Qui l’aurait dit ! lorsqu’il embrassait un petit enfant, au visage rose, il aurait voulu lui enlever ses joues avec un rasoir, et il l’aurait fait très souvent, si Justice, avec son long cortège de châtements, ne l’en eût chaque fois empêché. Il n’était pas menteur, il avouait la vérité et disait qu’il était cruel. Humains, avez-vous entendu ? il ose le redire avec **cette** plume qui tremble ! (Lautréamont, 1874, p. 8, my emphasis)

¹⁷ Paratext has a specific location in reference to the text itself.

From this point on, the narrative is generally from Maldoror's point of view, with occasional breaks to the third person.

Whenever the narrative switches between the first and third person, the line between narrator and author is blurred to the point of erasure:

Tantôt Maldoror se rapproche de Mervyn, pour graver dans sa mémoire les traits de cet adolescent ; tantôt, le corps rejeté en arrière, il recule sur lui-même comme le boomerang d'Australie, dans la deuxième période de son trajet, ou plutôt, comme une machine infernale. Indécis sur ce qu'il doit faire. Mais, sa conscience n'éprouve aucun symptôme d'une émotion la plus embryogénique, comme à tort vous le supposeriez. Je le vis s'éloigner un instant dans une direction opposée ; était-il accablé par le remords ? [...] Puisque vous me conseillez de terminer en cet endroit la première strophe, je veux bien, pour cette fois, obtempérer, à votre désir. Savez-vous que, lorsque je songe à l'anneau de fer caché sous la pierre par la main d'un maniaque, un invincible frisson me passe par les cheveux ? (Lautréamont, 1874, p. 291-292)

In scenes such as this, it is never explicitly noted who is taking over the narration. It is an omniscient narrator, but it is unclear whether it is simply Maldoror speaking in the third person, whether the author has taken over the narration, or whether there is an unknown narrator who has been accompanying Maldoror the entire time as he writes his book. This is complicated by the fact that normally it is Maldoror speaking in the first person, writing the text itself (as seen above) and due to the fact that the narrative apparently switches back to his perspective in the very next strophe. Despite this, the final strophe of the text seems to be written from Ducasse's perspective, as it discusses the poetry and aesthetics of the work. The switch to the third person is never signaled by any event or formatting. It can happen between strophes, or in the middle of a strophe. There is no consistency in the narration. This uncertainty was the cause of Bloy's claims: it is nearly impossible to tell when, or even if, the author is writing in his own voice, making this entire narrative structure take on a sort of uncertain hybridity. One can assume that the narrative switches between protagonist and omniscient narrator, but one can never be entirely

sure. This ambivalence in style complements the ambivalence of the genre. The rare switch between first- and third-person narration subverts the reader's expectations and further suspends the reader in an ambivalent state (Lydenberg, 1977). This state is never fully resolved, because it is never revealed whether it is Maldoror's third-person narration or not. Though subtle, this is yet another way in which *Maldoror* suspends the reader in an ambivalent, questioning state of mind. This unknown and unresolved tension in the narration is yet another element that contributes to the horror of *Maldoror*.

Maldoror further inspires ambivalence in the reader by narrowing the gap between the *narrateur* and the *narrataire*, or the gap between narrator and reader. Ducasse's use and mixing of pronouns contributes in no small part to this confusion. In blurring this line between *narrateur* and *narrataire*, "the reader loses the security of his distance from the narrative," which helps enhance the horror of the text (Lydenberg, 1977, p. 212). Moving the narration closer to the reader means that they are unable to remove themselves from the immediacy of the horror: the reader cannot help but keep reading, as implicated as they are in the narrative itself. The "arbitrary shifts in the discourse" gradually draw the *narrataire* in as part of the text itself (p. 212). The reader's assumptions about their own role are reversed and contradicted as they are involved in the text itself, in its creation. But Ducasse does not, as discussed, do this unintentionally, or without finesse. He is carefully embodying the narrative traditions in order to usurp them in his own narrative.

In the above passages, Ducasse as an author (and narrator and protagonist) warns the reader to not come into the experience of this text as they would any other traditional text. The character Mervyn is punished for this very expectation of normalcy in the sixth chant, allegorically reflecting the reader who does not heed Ducasse's warning. His random mixing of

“je” and “tu” in the narrative creates a fictional space “in which fixed identity and function may be temporarily dissolved” (Lyndenberg, 1977, p. 217). Ducasse (in a passage that will make up part of my analysis) implicates the reader directly by asking them a question that assumes their involvement already: “Homme, n'as-tu jamais goûté de ton sang, quand par hasard tu t'es coupé le doigt?” (Lautréamont, 1874, p. 12). Maldoror is assuming a familiarity, an intimacy, with the reader that the latter cannot escape. From an innocent admission to perhaps tasting their own blood and tears, the reader is then implicated in a far more serious situation: torture. The narrative switches to the imperative, “Bande-lui les yeux,” a sort of instructional manual that the reader is assumed to want to follow (Lautréamont, 1874, p. 13). This switch from the hypothetical “have you not done this?” to the imperative “do this” marks the switch from a general “tu” to a personal “tu.”

Ducasse equates the reader's experiences of reading the text with an understanding of real life, causing the fictional to supplant the real. But it is not so straightforward, as Ducasse also constantly reminds the narrataire of the page separating them from the narrateur (Lyndenberg, 1977). Far from weakening the grotesque, this narrative confusion “integrates the reader,” as the narrator can be seen as “the reader placed inside the book,” or as man in general (Kayser, 1981 [1963], p. 63). The reader can never be sure of the true message of the text, all the while being made to be directly involved in it. The reader is never sure of their place in the narrative, as Ducasse takes on the role of author, narrator, and protagonist all in one, managing to involve the reader in all of this. This is the kind of irresolvable tension that Ducasse inspires in the reader through narrative devices.

3.3 Ambivalence in its Imagery

Maldoror suspends the reader in ambivalence, and so renders its reader powerless. The reader knows that Maldoror will keep committing heinous acts against his fellow man, regardless of the other person's moral character. The reader's inability to influence the protagonist is suspension in horror, further complicated by the direct implication of the reader in the narration. There seems to be no end to Maldoror's mutilations, as he distorts the human body from its natural state. He creates abnormal bodies and thusly creates ambivalent forms — the anticipation of this and the reader's loss of control in the face of it creates ambivalence. The reader may even want to stop reading the text in order to take back some control and “prevent” Maldoror from committing these horrible acts, to no longer be a part of the violence. At the very least, the reader will no longer have to experience them. The reader, at some point, recognizes that they are making the text by reading it (Lyndenberg, 1977). While discussing the horror of Thomas Ligotti's “The Clown Puppet,” Professor Jarkko Toikkanen points out:

For the reader, the experience is one of having to look right at the image described in words with no way of avoiding it if one is to read the story at all. As such, looking at the face [of the clown puppet] or, alternatively, not looking at the face shows a loss of control: on both sides, there is a suspended failure of thought and reflection to take hold of the scene. (Toikkanen, 2013, p. 4)

The length of time that the reader spends in an ambivalent state is dictated in literature partly by the pace of the reader and partly by the pace of the writing. (In movies, the control is more in the hands of the director, and less so in the hands of the audience. In theatres, the only choice is to look away, where at home the audience can pause, fast-forward, etc. to gain some control over the pace of the narrative.) However, what Toikkanen observes here is that no matter what, the

reader has lost control. The reader looks at the face of the clown puppet, surrendering control completely to the author, unable to look away until the author has decided that a resolution should be reached (or not) by completing the description of the face. Or, the reader does not look at the face of the clown puppet, i.e. the reader stops reading, or skips ahead. In this case, the reader is still left with an unresolved tension: what did the clown puppet look like? This question will remain unanswered until the reader surrenders control and continues to read the scene to its conclusion. Thus, *Maldoror* causes horror in the reader by forcing an impossible choice: either the reader is caught in tension by reading, or the reader is caught in tension by not continuing to read. Though this technique is inherent in all horror media, it nonetheless contributes to the feelings of horror, the tension that arises from the state of unresolved cognition that needs a conclusion.

The imagery of the text is used to increase the affect of the body horror and the grotesque. Horror, as Toikkanen argues, is an experience where the reader's mind is intermedially suspended, and here I will connect this to the definition of horror as an experience of the grotesque, where the grotesque is horrific ambivalence. He elaborates, quoting Brian Massumi, that: "Fear is the anticipatory reality in the present of a threatening future. It is the felt reality of the nonexistent, loomingly present as the *affective fact* of the matter.' Here fear is the affect of what has not yet happened" (Toikkanen, 2013, p. 20). In literature, it is a reader forced to imagine what *might* happen, what might be coming next, the very phenomenon that keeps them reading. Thus, logically, increasing the anticipation draws out the fear. This is part of the reason why hypotyposis has been taken on as a translation strategy, as it involves adding to the imagery, increasing the length of the text. This, in combination with the stronger, more valent imagery (discussed in the next section) increases the affect of horror upon the reader.

Chapter 4: Translating Grotesque Imagery

4.1 Hypotyposis and Barbara Folkart's "real-in-the-instant"

The primary method through which I will increase the effect and affect of horror in *Maldoror* is hypotyposis. Hypotyposis "peint les choses d'une manière si vive et si énergique, qu'elle les met en quelque sorte sous les yeux, et fait d'un récit ou d'une description, une image, un tableau, ou même une scène vivante" (Fontanier, 1977, p. 390). In other words, it is extremely vivid imagery that has the effect of approaching a real scene experienced in real life. There are several types of hypotyposis, as outlined by Umberto Eco (2001, 2004). The first is simply mentioning, or pointing out the existence of some image. The second is "detailed description," when an image is described with some of its most notable characteristics (Eco, 2004, p. 104). The third is listing, where a space is described by "the accumulation of things it contains" (Eco, 2004, p. 105). The fourth is the rhythmic, frantic addition of several "incongruous or extraordinary" events on top of one another (Eco, 2004, p. 105). Eco also identifies another type of hypotyposis, which he calls the "*fractalisation of space at an ant's pace*" (Eco, 2004, p. 105, original emphasis). What Eco means by "fractalisation of space" is that the author asks the reader to pass through a space at a much slower pace, taking in each and every last, minuscule detail, as if the reader were an ant walking across a space that a human can cover in one step (Eco, 2001, 2004). Much of my translation deals with these last two kinds of hypotyposis, which work especially well in inspiring horror. The former because of its agitated nature, which inspires panic in the reader; the latter because it slows down and forces the reader to witness the scene in its full detail, to image witnessing or experiencing a horrifying event.

And where: “Imagery [...] is a sort of ‘conceptual materiality,’” then “[p]oetry is an attempt to get as close as possible to the real-in-the-instant. And imagery is one of the more obvious ways in which poetry engages the real” (Folkart, 2000, p. 233). Hypotyposis is the method by which to achieve this — it is imagery drawn out to its full potential. The valency of imagery (i.e. the power of imagery to create truth in poetics) is linked to its interaction with the real. This “real” is constructed in the poetry and gets reconstructed by every reader as they read the text. One way to achieve this connection to the real is to highlight the ways in which a reader experiences the world, i.e. to focus on describing what the reader would experience with their senses if they were a part of that scene. Naturally, the better part of this poetic imagery will focus on what is seen, because the majority of people experience the world primarily through sight. However, even a mention of what the character smells in the instant can serve to make the scene more real, as the olfactory senses are generally a second thought in life and literature. An image of chunk of flesh falling to the floor will always be more affective, and more real, if the dull, sticky thud of it hitting the floor and the metallic scent of fresh blood are also described. The more senses are incorporated into the scene, the more real the scene will feel.

The most valent imagery goes straight to the grain of experience, straight to the real, and conveys the singularity of the poem’s (or text’s) “occasion,” or the sense of “this place and this instant, in the mystery of their oneness” (Folkart, 2000, p. 233). The imagery must be “painterly” in order to be its most effective in creating valency, whether or not the things it is describing are possible (Folkart, 2000). And here, we see a connection back to the grotesque conceptualized as the dreams of painters: vivid imagery is essential to the effectiveness both of the grotesque and of poetry. But a further connection exists: that of the ties to the real that both poetry and the grotesque possess. Our fear of the grotesque arises in part from “an agonizing fear

of the dissolution of our world,” the mixing of things that should not be based on the categories we have placed our world in (Kayser, 1981 [1963], p. 31). This means that we ascribe to the grotesque some measure of verisimilitude, otherwise the crossing of these boundaries would not be effective. Thus, poetic imagery and the grotesque both have strong ties to the real world, and both rely on those ties in order to be effective.

This technique obviously presents a translation challenge, in that I will need to add to what the author has written in such a manner as to make the addition read like a natural extension of the translation. *Maldoror* is already a challenging text to translate: its long sentences and older vocabulary make it less accessible to the modern reader; the rhythm of the text is a challenge to recreate; the stylistic devices of the text are difficult to translate or replace. This is significant because prosody generates meaning. A similarity in sound constructs a similarity in meaning. A rhyme generates a sort of “buzz” in the listener, where “phonetic overlap induces a semantic overlap that contributes to the construction of the poem’s truth value” (Folkart, 2000, p. 232). The rhythm of the text is the way in which it “breathes” and serves to emphasize or de-emphasize certain ideas. Prosody can, in such a way, intensify imagery (Folkart, 2000).¹⁸ Although I am not translating pure poetry, I will need to recreate prosody in my translation, as well as in my additions, in order to hope to match up to the source text’s imagery and affect. The rules for prose poetry are not as strict as with poetry, though I will endeavour to equate rhythm with rhythm, to re-enact the flow of the original in my translation.

What I will be doing in this thesis is occasionally what de Campos calls an act of Laforguean *logopoeia* (which Folkart and Pound refer to simply as logopoeia) which is using

¹⁸ It is important to note, however, that it is not always possible to completely replicate the original in all ways, since logopoeia is often language-bound.

words for more than their denotation, taking advantage of the context of the word itself: its rhythm, musicality and assonance with other words (Pound, 1972 [1931]; de Campos, 2007; Folkart, 2000). I must “re-enact” the valency of the source text, in a certain way, as I translate the poetic imagery (Folkart, 2000, p. 235). I will be exploring the “lexical paradigm[s]” of the words already provided in the source text, latching on to the image and delving into the language (Folkart, 2000, p. 241). Not only am I re-enacting what is there, but I will also be adding valency to the existing imagery through hypotyposis. This, in turn, produces meaning (as seen above), and, more importantly to the goal of this thesis, serves to increase the time during which the reader is caught in ambivalence by the text’s imagery. As discussed, the longer the reader has to wait for a resolution to their ambivalent mental state, the more horror is amplified. The vivid depictions of body horror will highlight the grotesque aspects of the source text, focusing on bodies decomposing and being deformed.

4.2 Transcreation and the Imago

The ancient rhetorical device of *imago* can also be tied into the concept of hypotyposis and applied to my translation strategy. Entomologists will likely be more familiar with the term than most. In their field, it takes on a meaning similar to its rhetorical one: the transformation of an insect into its final form. Larvae “grow to become imagos” (Triasputri et al., 2019, p. 330). In rhetoric, it is used to denote the unattainable ideal of imagery as part of the rhetorical concept of *copia* (copiousness). Best elaborated by Renaissance philosopher and scholar Desiderius Erasmus in his text *On Copia of Words and Ideas* (2012 [1512]), *imago* refers to the process of applying *copia* to imagery. In other words, it is the process of using copiousness to enrich and

enhance imagery in language: hypotyposis. In this thesis, it will be considered an aspect of rhetoric to be used and considered during translation. Though Erasmus refined this concept in the sixteenth century, he draws most frequently on Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* (2001 [95CE]), a 12-book essay on education and rhetoric, written circa 93 CE (Erasmus, 1999). Eco identifies the kind of hypotyposis described in the *Institutio Oratoria* as “the agitated *piling up* of events,” citing Quintilian as the original identifier of this particular type of hypotyposis (Eco, 2004, p. 105, original emphasis). This term in rhetoric is far from new, but its most common use through history has been *imago dei*, or the perfect image of God. Despite this, in rhetoric, its use is not constrained to any particular concept, but can be applied to all imagery. It can therefore be seen as the older term for hypotyposis, the copious application of imagery in a text, though seen as less attainable — more linked to perfection than hypotyposis tends to be.

These above-mentioned concepts have been explored in translation theory through the idea of transcreation. Transcreation is “a retelling by the translator in another language, rather than a mere transfer of meanings from one linguistic and cultural system to another.” The goal of transcreation is “to reproduce a fluent text completely accessible to the target reader” (Spinzi et al., 2018, p. 4). It is about taking a concept in one language and “completely recreating it in another language” (Stibbe, 2009). Therefore, in the never-ending faithful vs. free debate of translation theory, transcreation is firmly in the latter camp, and favours domestication over foreignization. It is often considered to be closer to adaptation than translation because of this (Dybiec-Gajer et al., 2020). The term has been applied mainly to commercial translation, but over the past few years has been gaining popularity in a variety of translation fields, such as poetry and theatre. Its roots run much deeper, however, as it was an old Sanskrit practice of

creative translation. Translation proper was considered inadequate to capture the incarnation of the original work in the target language.

Tom Hubbard (2019) posits that there are three pillars of transcreation: aesthetic, linguistic and cultural. The aesthetic is concerned with the poetry of the target language, with not being over-literal in translation, which will more often than not create bad poetry in the target culture's view. The linguistic is concerned with still being as close to the source text as possible: it is not an adaptation completely un-fettered by concerns for the original. If that were the case, there would hardly be cause to include the "trans" in transcreation at all. The cultural is concerned with the various historical and geographical references contained in the source text, and if and how they can be transferred over to the target text. This includes historical allusions that are more difficult to translate, that may be grasped by one culture and not the other (Hubbard, 2019). David Katan (2018) has addressed this issue in terms of *trans-latere* or *trans-creare*, where he differentiates between transferring meaning and transferring the artistic, or creative aspects of translation as a creative literary field (Spinzi et al., 2018).¹⁹

Perhaps most famously, Haroldo de Campos and his brother Augusto have encouraged the use of the term "transcreation" as a term older than translation, which characterizes a certain style of target-oriented translation (Spinzi et al., 2018). In the late twentieth century, Haroldo de Campos would publish poetry and essays on "the creation of forms, the production of artistic content-structures whose material is the word" (de Campos, 2007). De Campos' concrete poetry aimed to encompass a spatial (visual) structure through language, not merely a conceptual one. Concrete poetry does not aim at a "faithful description of objects," but instead to create a parallel

¹⁹ Katan argues that translators are unintentionally "trapped" in the *-latere* dynamic by modern codes of ethics and conceptions of what translation should be.

world of things, a new form in poetry. To de Campos, the feel of the poem to the target audience was prioritized over the strict word-for-word transfer of typical translation in the twentieth century, when, to quote Boris Pasternak: “It [was] a habit to translate the meaning, not the tone, of what is said” (quoted in de Campos, 2007, p. 318). To de Campos, every translation is a “re-creation” of what was written. The transcreator translates not just the signified, but the sign itself, its materiality, its form. The very things that make up the sign are important in its recreation — the way it is pronounced, the way it interacts with the other signs in the poem, are important factors. They, too, admire Pound’s translations of poetry for precisely this reason. This has been discussed as capturing the “gestalt,” the “spirit,” the “climate,” of the original in the translation, but regardless of what it is called, transcreation relies on recreating the effect of the sign itself upon the reader (de Campos, 2007).²⁰

Today, the term and the approach are used mainly in literature and marketing. Arguably, some transcreation is needed in literature (prose or poetry) in order to properly convey the prosody of the source text. Literature as an aesthetic and emotional experience benefits from transcreation, which is able to re-enact the prosody of the source text in a way that a more “faithful” or “literal” translation fails to do. This means that transcreation embraces translations that are typically considered “mistakes,” such as sacrificing the literal meaning in order to keep the rhyme (Spinzi et al., 2018). Prosody is conserved over strict semantics.

Transcreation also allows me the freedom to add to the source text. The imagination required in reproducing the text is the image-making that can be closer to the “way the world represents itself,” closer to the real (Folkart, 2000, p. 237). I am taking the material and making it

²⁰ Pound's translation of *Homage to Sextus Propertius* is analyzed by J. P. Sullivan in the article “The Poet as Translator: Ezra Pound and Sextus Propertius.” It provides an in-depth analysis of the poem as a “creative translation” (p. 466).

mine, attempting a “*dépassement des textures de l’original*,” which extend far beyond the written word (Folkart, 2000, 240, original emphasis). Probably the most controversial of my translation choices is the way in which I translate the fourth passage in this thesis. It is the most experimental, adding not only imagery and affect, but entire events that did not happen in the source text. This is frequently used in the commercial aspect of transcreation, where the general idea of, for example, a slogan, is converted to something completely different in the target language. Commercials use this technique quite frequently. Historically, this kind of addition to translation was extremely common, and translators had the freedom to add, remove, and change aspects of the plot, even to rewrite, add or omit entire chapters, as they wished. It is in the spirit of such translations that I have approached the fourth passage especially, as will be seen.

Chapter 5: Translation and Analysis

Before a more thorough analysis can take place, I will first discuss the translation issues that affected most, if not all, of my translation segments. A first (and common) translation difficulty faced me immediately: what to do with the French “on.” This text’s pronouns, as explained above, are a surprisingly important facet of the story’s affect. The English “one” is seen as quite antiquated, and may be too noticeable, taking the reader out of the scene. It also serves to distance the reader from the narration, by posing the subject as a hypothetical person. Consider the difference between “One would not simply kill a man,” and “You would not simply kill a man.” The contrast is clear: the personal pronoun “you” is far more affective because it implicates the reader directly — Maldoror (or the narrator, or the author) is not merely theorizing, but he is talking to you. The reader is now part of the narrative. Although this is a change from the original text, it does fit the themes discussed previously. It blurs the line between narrator, author, protagonist and reader by closing the gap between all of them. Instead of “one” watching the scene unfold, “you” are watching it. It forces the reader to be more present in the narrative, to witness the imagery more directly. While it is sometimes important to maintain the general hypothetical (especially in passages where Maldoror waxes lyrical about the human condition and refers to the human race at large), I feel it is much more affective to speak to the reader directly in these passages in order to bring the reader closer to the story.

Perhaps the most challenging part of this translation was the syntax. The sheer length of these sentences, let alone the many nestled dependent clauses, makes translation a struggle in itself. However, this was an aspect that I wanted to preserve in my translation. These long

sentences make my translation, admittedly and intentionally, harder to read. The complex syntax complements Ducasse's narrative style: both are "infinitely digressive" (Lyndenberg, 1977, p. 225). Ducasse admits in his *Poésies* (1870) to writing such meandering sentences intentionally, in order to circumvent the attacks of conventional critics against his transgressive oeuvre. The reader must work to detangle the complex web of anaphoric and cataphoric references within the sentences that quickly become entire paragraphs. Ducasse is manipulating the reader: "The logical and metaphorical spirals of Ducasse's digressions and 'corrections' continually disorient the reader who loses his way, as he has lost his independent identity, in the stylistic maze of the discourse" (Lyndenberg, 1977, pp. 225-226). Thus, the narrative style and the very syntax of the text work in parallel to confuse the reader, to make them unsure of their place in the narrative and of Ducasse's place in narration.

Yet another reason I chose to conserve the confusing syntax is because it takes the reader longer to read, and certainly takes them longer to comprehend. This means that readers are waiting longer for a conclusion to the scene, for the full depiction of the grotesque event happening in front of them (figuratively speaking). Simply drawing out the time that it takes for the reader to read and understand the passage serves to increase the duration of the reader's suspension in an ambivalent mental state. Though this is a very effective method for exhausting the emotion of horror in a reader, it will be seen that it is important not to completely exhaust this emotion before the scene is finished.

Some may question why I felt the need to blend my additions with the source text, and the reason is quite simple: anything too jarring in terms of stylistic change becomes very noticeable, which pulls the reader out of their ambivalent state of mind. It has the same effect as reading a very serious history book about, say, the Roman empire, and suddenly reading that

Nero's robes were "on fleek." Such a stylistic departure from the themes or language of the source text would only defeat my purpose of increasing the affect of horror on the reader, because it would merely distract them from the scene taking place. It would break any immersion that the reader had in the text, and the grotesque cannot be truly scary if it is made unbelievable or laughable.

One of the most difficult issues I faced in translation was how to properly elaborate on the imagery; it was hard to decide where to "zoom in" on the body horror, and where to let it stand as-is. There were certain scenes that I felt would be perceived only as gratuitous if I had drawn out the imagery. The scene where Maldoror and his bulldog sexually assault a child is an example. In the source text, the scene is effective partially due to its lack of imagery, its understatement of horror. This means that the scene is effective exactly because it is the opposite of what I aim to do in my translation. There are two main images in this scene: the child's cross necklace, and the blood streaming down her legs. It would be difficult to meaningfully draw out the former (and, in my opinion, would not serve the horror — body or otherwise), and to me, feels unnecessary and disrespectful to do so to the latter.

This only serves to reinforce the notion that a text written nearly two hundred years ago still crosses boundaries that I personally refuse to push from their current levels of transgression. This is a scene of understatement that I do not want to touch. To frame this issue rather more in the theoretical light of the grotesque, there is no comedic undercurrent to this scene that would make it grotesque. Where a human-vegetable hybrid could very easily turn comedic, sexual assault cannot, at least not for me. There is no ambivalent balance between comedy and horror, no delicate interplay that can lean one way or the other. The grotesque fundamentally does not apply to this scene for that very reason. Its understatement serves the scene, the reader is not held

in ambivalence for very long at all. The third-person narration all but skips over the act. It defies drawing out because it is already such a terrible description. Even in its understated form, it goes beyond the limit of what I want to process in a receptive mode, let alone in the more active mode of an experimental translation. The translator's interest and pleasure in the grain of words and ideas is, as Folkart suggests, fundamental to this type of experiment (Folkart, 2000). This kind of evil, intentional transgression of boundaries is often more affective than, for example, the natural, biological processes associated with life and death. When free will is a factor in a body's degradation or desecration, it can be more horrifying because it involves human desires and impulses that are normally suppressed by an ethical consciousness and will. As such, ideas and images that do not allow for any enjoyment or exploration of language in a pleasurable way are best left alone. For such reasons, choosing which passages to translate was occasionally a challenge, and selecting the phrases and images to accentuate was doubly so.

Importantly, I chose not to add to every single one of the images in the passages I translated, for two main reasons. Firstly, I did not want to completely exhaust the emotions of the reader before they had finished reading the scene.²¹ This leads only to apathy, at which point the scene stops being effective. The goal is that the reader is as horrified by the end of the passage as they were by the beginning of the passage. Often, this works because of a certain escalation of the imagery and concepts of the scene (from the natural world invading the body to a human-made sword invading the body, for instance), but this escalation is most effective when the reader has the mental energy to continue experiencing horror as a visceral emotional reaction. Secondly, at some points, it is best to let the imagination of the reader work for you. There

²¹ It is less of a concern that the reader be able to finish the book, though this would be a consideration if I were to translate an author such as Stephen King. These horrific scenes are interspersed throughout the text, and between them are scenes that do not evoke horror, unless you have a particular aversion to math.

reaches a point where over-describing a scene becomes gratuitous, when the reader has “caught on” to what the author is trying to accomplish with that scene. The author walks a fine line between horror and an almost camp aesthetic of over-indulgence, and this is certainly the case when adding to an existing text or translation. I find this to be especially true in cases where violence is mixed with any kind of sexual undertones (or overtones), as mentioned above. This dual affront to the sensibility of the reader (transgressing the body politic not just with gore, but also with the breach of privacy that comes with talking of sex or sexual organs) puts them more on their guard, and they are less willing to suspend disbelief and to be engulfed in horror. It is especially difficult to elaborate upon this kind of sexual violence without swerving into the realms of the gratuitous, though like all horror, it is to a certain extent subjective. This will be examined in further detail as I analyze my additions to each passage below.

5.1 Parallel Text 1: Wounds and Alienation

The following passage is the first we will examine with regard to body horror, the grotesque, and hypotyposis. It is the sixth strophe of the first chant, and serves as an introduction to the kind of horror found in this text:

On doit laisser pousser ses ongles pendant quinze jours. Oh ! comme il est doux d'arracher brutalement de son lit un enfant qui n'a rien encore sur la lèvre supérieure, et, avec les yeux très-ouverts, de faire semblant de passer suavement la main sur son front, en inclinant en arrière ses beaux cheveux ! Puis, tout à coup, au moment où il s'y attend le moins, d'enfoncer les ongles longs dans sa poitrine molle, de façon qu'il ne meure pas ; car, s'il mourait, on n'aurait pas plus tard l'aspect de ses misères. Ensuite, on boit le sang en léchant les blessures ; et, pendant ce temps, qui devrait durer autant que l'éternité dure, l'enfant pleure. Rien n'est si bon que son sang, extrait comme je viens de le dire, et tout chaud encore, si ce ne sont ses larmes, amères comme le sel. Homme, n'as-tu jamais

goûté de ton sang, quand par hasard tu t'es coupé le doigt ? Comme il est bon, n'est-ce pas ; car, il n'a aucun goût. En outre, ne te souviens-tu pas d'avoir un jour, dans tes réflexions lugubres, porté la main, creusée au fond, sur ta figure malade mouillée par ce qui tombait des yeux ; laquelle main ensuite se dirigeait fatalement vers la bouche, qui puisait à longs traits, dans cette coupe, tremblante comme les dents de l'élève qui regarde obliquement celui qui est né pour l'oppresser, les larmes ? Comme elles sont bonnes, n'est-ce pas ; car, elles ont le goût du vinaigre. On dirait les larmes de celle qui aime le plus ; mais, les larmes de l'enfant sont meilleures au palais. Lui, ne trahit pas, ne connaissant pas encore le mal : celle qui aime le plus trahit tôt ou tard... je le devine par analogie, quoique j'ignore ce que c'est que l'amitié, que l'amour (il est probable que je ne les accepterai jamais ; du moins, de la part de la race humaine). Donc, puisque ton sang et tes larmes ne te dégoûtent pas, nourris-toi, nourris-toi avec confiance des larmes et du sang de l'adolescent. Bande-lui les yeux, pendant que tu déchireras ses chairs palpitantes ; et, après avoir entendu de longues heures ses cris sublimes, semblables aux râles perçants que poussent dans une bataille les gosiers des blessés agonisants, alors, t'ayant écarté comme une avalanche, tu te précipiterais de la chambre voisine, et tu feras semblant d'arriver à son secours. Tu lui délieras les mains, aux nerfs et aux veines gonflées, tu rendras la vue à ses yeux égarés, en te remettant à lécher ses larmes et son sang. [...] « Une fois sortis de cette vie passagère, je veux que nous soyons entrelacés pendant l'éternité ; ne former qu'un seul être, ma bouche collée à ta bouche. Même, de cette manière, ma punition ne sera pas complète. Alors, tu me déchireras, sans jamais t'arrêter, avec les dents et les ongles à la fois. Je parerai mon corps de guirlandes embaumées, pour cet holocauste expiatoire ; et nous souffrirons tous les deux, moi, d'être déchiré, toi, de me déchirer... ma bouche collée à ta bouche. » (Lautréamont, 1874, pp. 12-15)

This shorter passage nonetheless has horrific imagery of body horror that can be wonderfully expanded upon. The helpless child has his body mutilated by Maldoror, who, as discussed above, addresses the reader directly to implicate them in this torture. Due to the personal nature of this part of the text, it is easier to make the reader feel more connected to the narrator (in this case, Maldoror himself). This immerses the reader in affect far more than a text in which the reader is not so deeply implicated. This is why a passage such is perfect for such an exercise. I will be contrasting my translation with that of Guy Wernham, in order to demonstrate the effects of hypotyposis on the target text in comparison to an existing English translation that

is quite well executed. In order to devote the most time to examining the effects and affects of hypotyposis, I will not justify each of my translation choices where they differ from Wernham's. The primary point of analysis will be my additions to the text, with passing mention of other choices where they are relevant to body horror or to the grotesque.

Wernham's translation (chant 1 strophe 6, n.p.)	My translation
<p>One should let one's fingernails grow for fifteen days. O, how sweet it is to snatch some child brutally from his bed, a child who has nothing as yet upon his upper lip, and, wide-eyed, to make a pretence of passing your hand smoothly over his brow, brushing back his beautiful hair!</p> <p>Then, suddenly, when he is least expecting it, to plunge your long nails deep into his soft breast in such a manner as not to destroy life; for should he die you could not later enjoy his sufferings. Then you drink the blood, passing your tongue over the wounds; and during this time, which should last as long as eternity lasts, the child weeps. There is nothing so delicious as his blood, extracted in the manner I have described, and still warm, unless it be his tears, bitter as salt.</p>	<p>You must let your nails grow for fifteen days, until the top layer has begun to peel away. O! how sweet it is to brutally tear from his bed a child who has nothing yet upon his upper lip and, with eyes wide open, to pretend to gently stroke your hand upon his brow, brushing back his beautiful hair!</p> <p>Then, all of a sudden, when he least expects it, you sink your long nails into his soft chest, puncturing his skin with dull knives, the fragile flesh resisting just enough so that you must, in order to accomplish your goal, use the force of your muscles to pierce it, but in such a way that he does not die; because, if he died, you would not later have the testament to his suffering. Then, you lean down and lap the blood streaming from his open wounds, feeling the rough edges of flesh against your tongue, small strips of skin that have prematurely reached the end of life; and, the entire time, which should last as long as eternity, the child cries. There is nothing as good as his blood, extracted as I have just described, and still warm,</p>

Man, have you ever tasted your own blood when by accident you have cut your finger? How good it is, for it is tasteless! Moreover, do you recollect how on a certain day amid your sorrowful meditations you raised your cupped hand to your sickly tear-wet face, and then how inevitably your mouth sucked up the tears from that goblet that trembled like the teeth of a schoolboy as he glances at him who was born to oppress him? How good they were, for they taste of vinegar! One might call them the tears of the greatest lover among women, but the child's tears are more pleasant to the palate. The child will not deceive you, knowing nothing yet of evil. The greatest lover among women would betray you sooner or later...I divine this by analogy since I am ignorant of what friendship and love are (it is probably that I shall never accept them, at least from the human race).

Well, then: since your own blood and your own tears do not disgust you, be nourished with confidence upon the blood and tears of the child.

Bind his eyes while you are rending his palpitating flesh; and having listened for hours to his sublime outcries which resemble the piercing shrieks torn from the throats of the dying wounded on a battlefield, rush away from him like an avalanche;

pumping from those fresh holes in his body, if not for his tears, bitter as salt.

And you, have you never tasted your own blood, when you accidentally cut your finger? Is it not delicious? because it tastes of nothing. And do you not remember having, one day, in your dismal ruminations, taken your cupped hand, that diseased appendage wet with what was falling from your eyes; that hand which then moved fatally toward the mouth, which drank in long draughts, in that cup, trembling like the teeth of the student when he glances, out of the corner of his eye, at the one who is born to oppress him, those very tears? Are they not delicious? because they taste of vinegar. It is as if they were tears from the one who loves you most; but the tears of a child are far more palatable. He will not betray you, not yet knowing any evil: but the one who loves you most will betray you sooner or later...I am assuming by analogy, since I do not know what friendship is, what love is (it is likely that I will never accept them; at least, from the human race). So, since your own blood and your own tears do not disgust you, feed yourself, feed yourself with confidence upon the tears and the blood of the child.

Cover his eyes while you rip at his palpitating flesh, enlarging those crescents you had stamped into his skin; and, with just slightly more pressure,

then return in haste and pretend to be coming to his assistance. You will unbind his hands with their swollen nerves and veins, then restore sight to his wild eyes, and you will again begin to lap up his tears and blood. [...]

“Once I am rid of this transitory life I want us to be joined together through eternity, to form one inseparable being, my mouth pressed forever upon your mouth. Even in this wise my punishment will not be complete. You shall rend my flesh unceasingly with teeth and nails. I shall deck my body with scented garlands for this expiatory holocaust, and we shall suffer together, you from rending me and I from being torn...my mouth pressed forever upon your mouth.

you will be able to draw out yet more blood, pulsating from those crimson pockets, which, after having been thus widened, you will be able to penetrate with the tip of your tongue. Then, after having heard his sublime cries for long hours, so similar to the piercing wails torn from the gullets of the anguished, wounded in battle, you will, rushing like an avalanche, hurtle into the next room, and you will return and pretend to come to his aid. You will untie his hands, with their swollen nerves and veins, purpled and trembling from his ordeal, you will return sight to his lost eyes, all while continuing to drain his tears and his blood. [...]

“Once we leave this transient life, I want us to be interlocked for all eternity; to form one being, my mouth glued to your mouth. Even then, in such a form, my punishment will not be complete. So, you will tear me apart, without stopping, with your teeth and nails at once. Your teeth will cut into my flesh, ripping lip and rending tongue, fracturing teeth, until strips of my flesh hang off my skull. Your nails will separate skin from muscle, rupture vein, split tendon. And, after half an eternity, once you reach bone, you will scrape and scratch it into dust. I will wrap my body in embalmed garlands, for this sacrificial holocaust; and we will suffer, as one, me from getting torn apart, you, from tearing me apart...my mouth glued to your mouth.”

I wanted my translation to read, in contrast to Wernham's translation and to the source text, as an instructional text from the beginning. This is, in part, why I chose to use "you" throughout the passage. Not only does this directly implicate the reader, but with the use of the imperative, it reads as step-by-step instructions for how to commit this horrible act yourself. This serves to bring the reader closer to Maldoror and his actions, thusly increasing the affect of the entire passage. Though it can be argued that the impersonal "one" at the beginning lulls the reader into a false sense of security and distance, I would argue that the impersonal "you" that can fulfill that purpose instead (Lyndenberg, 1977). The use of "one" has become very antiquated, so much so that a reader would notice its explicit use, even in an old text such as this one.²² In Wernham's translation, which is now 77 years old, his use of "one" is less bizarre to his contemporary reader. I would argue that my use of the pronoun "you" here serves a dual purpose: one that is a general "you" and one that is a personal "you," specifically addressing the reader.²³ The section in the middle, where in the source text Maldoror addresses the reader by "tu," serves the same purpose in my translation, whether "you" has been used before that section or not.

In my translation, I have emphasized this shift by using "And you" instead of the strange-sounding "Man?" to signal to the reader that they are now being directly addressed. This section serves to disarm the reader, to make them empathize with Maldoror. Before this point, it is easy for the reader, regardless of the pronoun used, to dispute Maldoror's claims, to disassociate from his assumption of closeness. Wernham and I also differ on another small but key choice in this passage. Where Wernham uses "have you *ever* tasted your own blood," I use "have you *never*

²² I, at least, noticed it in Wernham's translation.

²³ Think of how most people would phrase a general, impersonal statement or question now: you would say "Well you wouldn't just steal something," instead of "Well, one would not just steal something."

tasted your own blood.” In doing so, I have presumed that the reader shares this similarity with Maldoror (and with, I believe, most other people. Who among us can say that they have never tasted their own blood and tears, if only by accident?). The reader may be inclined to retort against this “never” statement, but I am assuming that they cannot — and part of the affective power of this scene relies on my assumption. But that segment serves its very specific purpose of drawing the reader in regardless of whether “one” or “you” is used before this particular paragraph. It is for these above reasons that in this case, I chose to use “you” over “one” in order to increase the affective power of this entire passage.

I also chose not to add too much to the imagery to that important paragraph beginning with “And you.” This is the paragraph in which Maldoror is directly relating to the reader, so I thought it best to keep the descriptions only as vivid as they were in the source text, which I found effective as it was. Adding too much horrific imagery to this passage would only serve to alienate a reader further from Maldoror, which would go against the paragraph’s purpose. Making this passage too affective would push the reader away instead of pulling them in, as they would no longer be able to relate their own experiences to that of Maldoror. Adding eloquent imagery to this paragraph would therefore only serve to defeat its purpose, so I left the imagery almost entirely as it was in the source text.

Linguistically, there are some differences between my translation and Wernham’s, as is to be expected. I used a semantic network that is linked more to the body, blood and flesh, where Wernham used words that were perhaps more on the comedic side of the grotesque. For example, where Wernham uses “snatch some child,” I use “tear from his bed a child.” Tear here is far more evocative and affective, and is linked to the tearing of flesh that follows later in the passage. My additions make up a large part of this network, wherein I supplement some of the

existing imagery in the text. In some cases, this is a matter of extrapolating an image that is implied in the source text, such as my description of the child's "purpled and trembling" hands. There is no explicit mention of this in the source text, but it is an image that can be inferred from the long hours during which the child's hands were bound, and the image of the swollen nerves and veins. This is also the case with my addition of "puncturing his skin with dull knives," which is not mentioned in the source text, but can be inferred. Nails are hardly that sharp, and the mention that they are dull leads the reader to understand that it is more painful to the child than it would be with a sharper instrument. I am merely using hypotyposis to enhance an existing image, painting it more clearly in the reader's head through more explicit language.

In other cases, it is a matter of creating images that are not implied in the source text, such as the nails peeling in the first sentence. There is no reason to assume that Maldoror's nails are actually peeling, but there is no denial of this image either. It is a possibility that the source text does not explore, but that my translation does. It is a small detail that is perhaps more disturbing to me than to most, but is nevertheless at least a mildly disgusting image.²⁴ Though I could have added more to this sentence, its effectiveness in part relies on its brevity. It seems like a completely irrelevant statement, almost a mistake, a sort of spur-of-the-moment thought that leads nowhere. Increasing the length of this sentence decreases this effect on the reader, as the sentence becomes less spontaneous. As a short thought, it appears unrelated to the rest of the text, whereas drawing it out focuses the reader on the nails. Too much focus makes it clear to the reader that this is an intentional part of the passage that will be important later. As a shorter sentence, its relation to the rest of the passage is ambiguous, and it leaves the reader in doubt as to its relevance (if only briefly). Both of these techniques use hypotyposis not only to add more

²⁴ It is often nearly impossible to tell whether the things that disturb you will disturb others to the same extent.

detailed descriptions to the scene, but also to slow the scene in the vein of Eco's "ant's pace" of lingering on an image (Eco, 2004, p. 106, my emphasis). They allow me to become hyper-focused on particular aspect of an image, and to slow narration to prolong the reader's discomfort (and this is regardless of whether I have inferred the image from the source text, or created it as a new image). Thus, these are the two main ways in which I used hypotyposis through this passage to create a more robust lexical network in connection to the human body, blood, and flesh.

Additionally, I made use of a network of animalistic language in order to liken Maldoror to an animal, depicting the base aspects of Maldoror's psyche. Wernham's use of "nourish" is contrasted by my use of "feed," which is more of a base instinct. Where "nourish" has caring undertones of sustaining life in a wholesome way, "feed" feels more concerned with the act of satiating hunger in any way possible, with survival first and foremost. The animalistic undertones of "feed" are also generally associated with vampires, which connects very nicely with the events of this passage. The network of animalistic imagery is further strengthened by my use of "lap" the blood instead of "drink," (in the first instance — later Wernham uses "lap up" where I use "drain," which connects better to the talk of death that occurs in the very next paragraph), as well as "ruminations" instead of "meditations." Thus, my creation of semantic networks through this passage contributes to its effect on the reader: these small but subtle changes alienate Maldoror from the reader by associating him with an animal, or with inhuman actions and descriptions.

It is a difficult balance to create — the reader must be able to empathize with Maldoror in this passage, but doing so must still be disturbing to the reader. The paragraph beginning, in my translation, with "And you" must feed into the general horror of the narrative, but serve to turn

the reader's reflections inward, instead of chasing them completely away from the protagonist. Generally, Maldoror must be a disgusting, terrifying figure in and of himself, but not completely alien from the reader. This balance is again rather subjective, but I feel that I achieved it in large part by leaving the paragraph beginning with "And you" mostly untouched in terms of form and content from the source text, in as much as a translation can ever be. Modifying only the semantic network is a subtle change, and the affective power of these networks builds as the reader navigates through the passage. The affect of each word is important, but the cumulative changes are what really leave an impression on the reader. By contrast, adding imagery that was not in the source text, or enhancing imagery that already exists, creates larger, more noticeable affect in the reader. It is important that the rest of this passage does not overshadow the effectiveness of the paragraph that means to draw the reader in, but the reader must still be uncomfortable empathizing with Maldoror because he must be a terrifying person. This balance is achieved through careful consideration of the language used to describe Maldoror throughout the passage, as well as in particular sections that serve a particular purpose.

My additions in this passage serve to emphasize the sensations that Maldoror is feeling, so that the reader is brought into the "real-in-the-instant" that Maldoror is experiencing (Folkart, 2000, 233). Much of this experience is connected to what he perceives with his senses while he is drinking the child's blood, so most of the imagery that I added relates to the tongue. Most people do not consider their tongues when thinking of sensory organs in their daily lives. Even when considering taste, many do not think of the sensation of their own tongue inside their mouth.²⁵ Focusing on the sensations of an oft-ignored organ increases the reader's discomfort;

²⁵ As mentioned above, many of the body's functions occur outside of our conscious thoughts, and we forget the specifics of our own bodily functions.

the tongue is slimy, mushy, pliable, and yet still a very powerful muscle. It looks strange, covered in bumpy taste buds and papillae, and has a vaguely off-white coating, visible in some areas more than others.²⁶ It is a strange organ that we know logically breaches the barrier between inner and outer. We all know that it is attached somewhere deeper within us (to the hyoid bone in the throat, specifically), yet we can never access that part of the tongue, only seeing the few inches visible when we open our mouths. As such, the tongue is an especially strange organ, one that sits between inner and outer, and describing the sensations it feels is therefore especially disconcerting. I have included not only the textures that the tongue would experience, but also the forms it would take, squirming to fit into the tiny wells in the flesh of the victim. I elaborated upon the existing imagery to describe how the holes were widened enough to fit the tip of the tongue, the specificity of which is quite disturbing. It is so particular about its detail as to leave the reader no doubt as to what is happening; they must imagine the revolting sensation of Maldoror dipping his tongue into the fleshy holes that he created in this helpless child. My detailed descriptions surrounding the tongue therefore render the passage increasingly disturbing when compared to the source text and to Wernham's translation.

This is a passage that features a grotesque body, as Maldoror describes the two of them merging into one being through the eternal connection of their mouths. (This, in a way, is slightly reminiscent of a different kind of human centipede.) As "one being" I wanted to explore the concept of half of that being destroying its other half, the shared suffering that the single body experiences. Though my additions are slight in comparison to others made, the specificity is important. I have incorporated many aspects of the inner body (tendons, veins, bone, etc.),

²⁶ It must be noted that my own personal biases may be influencing this perception. There is no escaping the fact that horror is subjective, even when considering it in an academic setting.

describing in detail the violation of the skin barrier. I have added aspects of the body that a reader would not necessarily consider when reading the source text's: "Alors, tu me déchireras, sans jamais t'arrêter, avec les dents et les ongles à la fois." I focused the image on those specific parts affected by the child's teeth and the nails, brining the scene to life in the reader's mind. Though Wernham's "pressed forever" is perhaps more poetic than my "glued," it is less permanent. It implies that one or the other had a choice in the matter, and that eventually they could choose to separate. On the other hand, glued leaves no such option, they are both forced to maintain this position for eternity. Though it is not used literally, its connotations still exist and are still interpreted thusly by the reader. My additions have enhanced the horror of the grotesque body by getting increasingly specific about the parts of the body that are being mutilated.

In terms of prosody, there are a couple places in this passage where Wernham and I differ. His choices in some places I believe are better than mine, and in some places not as effective (such is often the case in any translation). However, I will focus this discussion only on the aspects that concern horror, imagery and the grotesque. Firstly, I believe that Wernham's "[...] since I am ignorant of what friendship and love are" is not as effective as my "[...] since I do not know what friendship is, what love is." The repetition of the "what [X] is" is anticipating a third item on this list to complete the parallel structure. It is implying that there are many other positive human emotions that Maldoror does not know, playing into the psychological horror of his emotional inhumanness. In addition, the rhythm of my repetition flows better than "what friendship and love are," which helps to drive home the implication of the above-mentioned parallel structure. The rhythm of this structure lends itself to the horror of the narrative, so I felt it was an important element to conserve from the source text.

It is in these various ways that I have enhanced the affect of horror upon the reader in this passage. Though it is always a balancing act between alienating the reader from the text entirely and appropriately disgusting them, choosing to leave certain paragraphs without major additions can help to draw the reader back into the text, incorporating them in the narrative and implicating them in the plot. The additions that I did make served to construct lexical networks concerned with the body, flesh, blood, and depicting Maldoror as more animal than human. Whether I added entire sentences or just a phrase into an existing sentence, these new aspects forced the reader to consider images that were left implicit in the source text, or that were not there at all. This disgusting imagery also increases the length of the text, and both of these factors mean that the reader is experiencing a scarier text for an increased amount of time. These elements are what augment the affect of horror on the reader, such that my translation is more horrifying to read than Wernham's.

5.2 Parallel Text 2: The Grotesque Body, Invasion and Infection

The second passage for analysis is the following:

Je suis sale. Les poux me rongent. Les pourceaux, quand ils me regardent, vomissent. Les croûtes et les escarres de la lèpre ont écaillé ma peau, couverte de pus jaunâtre. Je ne connais pas l'eau des fleuves, ni la rosée des nuages. Sur ma nuque, comme sur un fumier, pousse un énorme champignon, aux pédoncules ombellifères. Assis sur un meuble informe, je n'ai pas bougé mes membres depuis quatre siècles. Mes pieds ont pris racine dans le sol et composent, jusqu'à mon ventre, une sorte de végétation vivace, remplie d'ignobles parasites, qui ne dérive pas encore de la plante, et qui n'est plus de la chair. Cependant mon cœur bat. Mais comment battrait-il, si la pourriture et les exhalaisons de mon cadavre (je n'ose pas dire corps) ne le nourrissaient abondamment ? Sous mon aisselle gauche, une famille de crapauds a pris résidence, et, quand l'un d'eux remue, il me fait des chatouilles. Prenez garde qu'il ne s'en échappe un, et ne vienne

gratter, avec sa bouche, le dedans de votre oreille : il serait ensuite capable d'entrer dans votre cerveau. Sous mon aisselle droite, il y a un caméléon qui leur fait une chasse perpétuelle, afin de ne pas mourir de faim : il faut que chacun vive. Mais, quand un parti déjoue complètement les ruses de l'autre, ils ne trouvent rien de mieux que de ne pas se gêner, et sucent la graisse délicate qui couvre mes côtes : j'y suis habitué. Une vipère méchante a dévoré ma verge et a pris sa place : elle m'a rendu eunuque, cette infâme. Oh ! si j'avais pu me défendre avec mes bras paralysés ; mais, je crois plutôt qu'ils se sont changés en bûches. Quoi qu'il en soit, il importe de constater que le sang ne vient plus y promener sa rougeur. Deux petits hérissons, qui ne croissent plus, ont jeté à un chien, qui n'a pas refusé, l'intérieur de mes testicules : l'épiderme, soigneusement lavé, ils ont logé dedans. L'anus a été intercepté par un crabe ; encouragé par mon inertie, il garde l'entrée avec ses pinces, et me fait beaucoup de mal ! Deux méduses ont franchi les mers, immédiatement alléchées par un espoir qui ne fut pas trompé. Elles ont regardé avec attention les deux parties charnues qui forment le derrière humain, et, se cramponnant à leur galbe convexe, elles les ont tellement écrasées par une pression constante, que les deux morceaux de chair ont disparu, tandis qu'il est resté deux monstres, sortis du royaume de la viscosité, égaux par la couleur, la forme et la férocité. Ne parlez pas de ma colonne vertébrale, puisque c'est un glaive. Oui, oui... je n'y faisais pas attention... votre demande est juste. Vous désirez savoir, n'est-ce pas, comment il se trouve implanté verticalement dans mes reins ? (Lautréamont, 1874, pp. 202-204)

The body horror and grotesque aspects of this passage are clear to see: it features the narrator's body having degraded to become part-vegetation, part-human and infested with wild animals of all types. Though a reader may assume that the narrator is Maldoror, simply based on previous passages, nothing in this passage makes that explicit. The narrator has become part of the natural world from which humans so often separate themselves. Part of the effectiveness of the original text is the way in which the narrator endures this torment, with "an indifference that puzzles and frightens the observer" (Kayser, 1981 [1963], p. 33). To me, this scene in the source text embodies more aspects of the comedic grotesque, especially with the descriptions of the little animals that live in the narrator's corpse and tickle him. I will be aiming to bring it more into the realm of the horrific grotesque in my translation.

Wernham's translation (chant 4 strophe 4, n.p.)²⁷	My translation
<p>I am filthy. Lice gnaw me. Swine, when they gaze upon me, vomit. Scabs and scars of leprosy have scaled off my skin, which exudes a yellowish pus. I know not the waters of rivers nor the dew from the clouds. From my nape, as from a dunghill, an enormous toadstool with umbelliferous peduncles is growing. Seated upon a shapeless throne I have not stirred hand nor foot in four centuries. My toes have taken root in the soil and I have grown up around my belly in a kind of lush growth, neither plant nor flesh, where dwell vile parasites. Nevertheless my heart is beating. Yet how could it beat if the rottenness and the reek of my cadaver (I dare not say my body) did not abundantly nourish it?</p>	<p>I am filthy. The lice gnaw through me. The swine, when they see me, vomit. The scabs and sores of leprosy have scaled my skin, covered in yellow pus, which leaks slowly from the infected pits of my corpse (I dare not say my body). I no longer know the fresh water of the rivers, nor the dew of the clouds. On the nape of my neck, like on manure, grows an enormous mushroom, with an umbelliferous stalk; its roots, having pierced my skin and crept into my veins, prevent me from moving my head. Sitting on a shapeless wall, I have not moved my limbs in four centuries. My feet have taken root in the soil and compose, up to my stomach, a sort of vivacious vegetation, filled with vile parasites, that is not made of plant matter, but that is no longer flesh. Maggots have made their homes in the caverns of my intestines, which spill out from the hole in my abdomen; the wet sounds of their chewing and writhing has become more familiar to me than the songs of the birds that occasionally come to pick them off. Those maggots pupate and become the flies that, attracted by the fetid stench of my continued decomposition, circle my head and lay their eggs in my liver. Yet my heart still beats. But how would it beat if the rot and the</p>

²⁷ Note that Wernham combines the first 2 strophes in his translation, so it is actually the third section of his text, though it is the fourth in the source text.

In my left armpit a family of toads has taken up residence, and when they stir they tickle me. Take care that one of them does not escape and come scratching with its mouth at the interior of your ear; it could penetrate into your brain.

In my right armpit there is a chameleon who eternally pursues the toads in order that he may not die of hunger: everyone must live. But when one party has completely foiled the tricks of the other, they find nothing better than calmly to go about sucking the delicate grease that covers my sides: I am used to it. An evil viper has devoured my penis and taken its place. The villain has made a eunuch out of me.

reek of my carcass were not abundantly nourishing it?

A massive slug slowly made its way up to my face, and, after chewing, with infinitely small bites, a hole through my left cheek, fed for several months upon my tongue; after which it replaced that slimy appendage and now uses my mouth as shelter. I fear that next it will eat away my gums, and my teeth shall tumble out of that tunnel it had dug.

Under my left armpit, a family of toads has taken up residence, and when one of them stirs, its claws scratch me. Make sure not a single one escapes and comes to scrape away, with its mouth, the inside of your ear: it will then be able to access your brain.

Under my right armpit, there is a chameleon giving them infinite chase, so as not to die of hunger: everyone must live.

But when one party completely thwarts the ruses of the other, they find no better option than to give up the chase, and to suck the delicate grease that covers my sides: I am used to it. A mean viper has devoured my penis and has taken its place: she's made me a eunuch, the thief!

Ah! If only I had been able to defend myself with my paralysed arms, but I fear they have been transformed into logs of wood. However that may be, I can affirm that the red blood no longer circulates in them.

Two little hedgehogs of mature development flung to a dog, who did not refuse it, the contents of my testicles; and having carefully washed out the epidermis they have set up housekeeping within. My anus has been taken over by a crab. Encouraged by my inertia he guards the entrance with his pincers and causes me much pain!

Two jellyfish deserted the sea, suddenly enticed by hope in which they were not disappointed. They inspected narrowly the two fleshy portions which form the human backside, and, attaching themselves to these convex globes, they have so squashed the flesh by their constant pressure that nothing is left but these two monsters from the kingdom of viscosity, alike in color, form, and ferocity.

Speak not of my spine, for that is a sword! Yes, yes...I was not giving you my attention...your demand is just. You wish to know, do you not, how a sword comes to be thrust vertically in my back?

Oh! if only I could have defended myself with my paralyzed arms; but I think instead that they have transformed into logs, and bits of them have, here and there, rotted away. In any case, it is important to note that blood no longer wanders its redness there.

Two little hedgehogs, who grow no larger, threw to a dog, who did not refuse them, the inside of my testicles: the epidermis then carefully cleaned, they live in it, and their spines dig into me, scraping away yet more of my skin with their slightest movement. The anus has been taken over by a crab; encouraged by my inertia, he guards the entry with his claws, and brings me great pain. Two jellyfish have breached the ocean, unhesitatingly attracted by a hope that did not prove vain. They looked attentively at the two fleshy parts that form the human behind, and, clamping their convex bells, the jellyfish crushed them with a force so great, with a pressure so constant that the two mounds of flesh disappeared while two monsters stayed, having left their kingdom of viscosity, identical in colour, form and ferocity. The many years over which they accomplished this seemed an eternity, and their fibrous tentacles continue to sting me. Do not speak of my vertebral column, since it is a sword. Yes, yes...I was not paying

	attention to it...you are right to ask. You want to know how it became implanted vertically through my kidneys, do you not?
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This passage pays special attention to the imagery of the grotesque body as it decays into something unrecognizable; not human, but not quite vegetation either. The body is being taken over by the natural world, no longer able to function as a normal human body should, and yet not dying. It is held somewhere in a state between a live body and one decayed back into nature. Various creatures and vegetation have invaded the narrator's body. Whereas the previous passage had more of a focus on sensations, this passage concentrates on visual imagery, which I have enhanced through hypotyposis.

This passage is an important indicator of the tone of the original text, in many ways: brief moments of the text have a less serious tone, but are punctuated by horrific imagery or ideas that cut through the reader's sense of security and increase the tension of the narrative once again. For example, the image of the toads living under the narrator's armpit is more comedic, until that toad is seen to present an actual threat, even to this grotesque body: its ability to scrape away at the inner ear and penetrate the skull to reach the brain.²⁸ It is immediately followed by the comedic chase of the chameleon and those same toads, which is brought back to horror when they stop to suck the grease from the narrator's sides (and one can only wonder what this grease consists of).²⁹ This is an important feature, especially of this passage. As mentioned above,

²⁸ It can only be assumed that the narrator, even in this state, still has a functioning brain, meaning that despite the state of his body, the toads still pose a reasonable threat. If not, he would be unable to narrate this passage.

²⁹ Incidentally, it makes me think of adipocere, or corpse wax. Adipocere is an off-white substance produced when the lipids (fats) in a corpse kept in a warm, wet and anaerobic environment undergo saponification and become a white layer on the outside of the skin that hardens over time.

exhausting the reader's horror before the scene's conclusion leads to apathy. Since I am amplifying the horror, I wanted to make sure to not remove these little moments entirely, but instead to allow them to shock the reader with the sudden shift into horror that they present. I made simple changes such as "its claws scratch me," when describing the toads. This means that my translation is not quite as lighthearted as the source text, but it is not so horrific that it overshadows the shift into the very real threat of the toad accessing the narrator's brain. The reader still experiences that little "jolt" as they read that paragraph and it takes a turn for the worse.

This lightness of tone is especially important because I begin the passage with very particular imagery. I wanted to enhance the body horror that is already described, giving more detailed descriptions of the imagery that already exists in the text. Readers will note that I focused my attention in the first paragraph of the passage on infection and parasites, the invasion of the body by outside beings. These types of images and real-life events tend to be more deeply scary to people, because they can be contagious. There is no risk that an injury will spread to others, so the kinds of affect that images of injury evoke relate more to the theoretical injury of our own bodies. Illness, infection and parasites, however, are horrific in their invasion and corruption of the body, their physical repercussions, and their potential transmission to others. This kind of horror, with a rapidly spreading, unstoppable illness or parasite (as seen in Eli Roth's *Cabin Fever*), is especially poignant to a modern audience, given the current pandemic. The addition of maggots stresses the themes of death and decay in this passage, while getting excruciatingly specific with the base that I was given by the source text.

Because this scene deals with such a grotesque body, it is important not to completely push the reader away emotionally by making the body entirely foreign. They must still feel some

sort of attachment — since body horror relies on the fact that everyone has a body to mutilate, the narrator's body must still have recognizably human aspects. I noted which parts of the human body had not been described in the source text, such as the intestines, liver and the tongue, and added descriptors of these into the text. In doing so, I not only increased the time the reader spends in ambivalence by simply increasing the time in which the reader is waiting for a resolution to the grotesque body horror, but by describing more of the narrator's decaying corpse, I have purposefully pointed out more parts of the narrator that remain recognizably human, despite his general decay. The theme of this passage is the invasion of the body by things foreign to the human body; mainly by other animals. Because I am increasing the horror of the text, I wanted to also include the elements to ground the reader in the fact that this body was once very human, despite its being taken over.

Describing which part of the human body an animal is replacing and over how long of a period of time reminds the reader that the human body is experiencing pain and being corrupted over an extended period of time. Though there is something to be said for the rapid takeover of the body, sometimes the slower takeover can play on different fears, such as slow diseases like cancer and Alzheimer's disease taking over the body and mind. There is a certain loss of control that comes with the decay and invasion of the body, and this is emphasized in the passage in the narrator's loss of control of his own limbs (and neck specifically, in my addition). Far from decreasing the horror, this in fact serves as more points upon which the reader can relate their own body to that of the narrator, giving them a deeper emotional connection to his body breaking down and to his loss of control over himself and his faculties.

I also wanted to explore what describing the other senses (aside from sight) could do to enhance the affect of the passage, so I included more details about the sounds that the narrator is

experiencing. This makes the experience closer to the real by giving the reader more of the sensations that the narrator would be feeling in this situation, making it easier for them to immerse themselves in the scene. I added the songs of the birds and the sounds of the maggots, which offer a kind of sad contrast to each other. The more senses I can incorporate into my translation, the more the reader is closer to the “real-in-the-instant” of the scene, immersing them further in the horror of the narrator’s world (Folkart, 2000, p. 233). The source text already mentions the smells of his body, but I also added the flies’ attraction to that stench in order to further emphasize this in the passage, reminding the reader that his rotting corpse is horrifically rancid. Naturally, I added more reference to pain, but I also varied the kinds of pain that the narrator feels. I also added different kinds of pain: the lice gnawing *through* him; the roots of the mushroom piercing his neck; the maggots eating his intestines; the slug chewing away his cheek and tongue; the toads scratching with their claws; the spines of the hedgehogs; the stings of the jellyfish. These all influence the reader because of humanity’s shared conception of pain. The reader has experienced or can imagine similar types of pain, and we are able to empathize with the body and transfer that hypothetical feeling onto our own bodies. Describing different kinds of pain therefore increases the affect of body horror, as the reader is now forced to imagine each of these kinds of pain occurring in their own body. In the source text, the narrator is hurt by the crab, but it comes across as almost comedic because of the exclamation mark combined with the absurdity of the situation. I therefore removed the exclamation mark and used a more sober period. Even the smallest of changes can completely modify the tone of the sentence.

Lexically, I wanted to focus the semantic network on the mixture of vegetation and flesh that is the main image of this passage. Language such as “compose,” “taking root” and “decompose” build that network (in ways that are more or less obvious). It is intermingled with a

network (existing and added) surrounding very specific parts of the body; epidermis, kidneys, gums and teeth. This mixture of human and vegetative elements reinforces the themes of the passage, highlighting more subtly through language what is explicitly conveyed: the human body being taken over by the natural world.

Thus, in this passage that focuses on the grotesque body, I have enhanced the network of vegetative and bodily language. I have also added particular segments connected to the parts of the grotesque body that were not explicitly mentioned in the source text, as well as embellishing the imagery surrounding infection and parasites. All of these aspects serve to enhance the horror that the reader feels in different ways, such as emphasizing a loss of control over the body, or playing upon fears of infection and contagion. While maintaining the reader's connection to the body is important, this is not to say that the passage cannot become more horrific due to my additions. The analysis above has shown how each of these aspects contributes to the horror of the text, enhancing it from what it was in the source text and Wernham's translation.

5.3 Parallel Text 3: Sex and Violence

The third passage for examination and comparison is the following, in which an unknown person (who, by his thoughts and actions, as well as the first-person narration, is presumably Maldoror) approaches a brothel and witnesses a literal hair talking to itself, recounting the story of how it ended up in such a cell. It is among the more surreal and grotesque strophes of the original:

Une lanterne rouge, drapeau du vice, suspendue à l'extrémité d'une tringle, balançait sa carcasse au fouet des quatre vents, au-dessus d'une porte massive et vermoulue. Un

corridor sale, qui sentait la cuisse humaine, donnait sur un préau, où cherchaient leur pâture des coqs et des poules, plus maigres que leurs ailes. Sur la muraille qui servait d'enceinte au préau, et située du côté de l'ouest, étaient parcimonieusement pratiquées diverses ouvertures, fermées par un guichet grillé. La mousse recouvrait ce corps de logis, qui, sans doute, avait été un couvent et servait, à l'heure actuelle, avec le reste du bâtiment, comme demeure de toutes ces femmes qui montraient chaque jour, à ceux qui entraient, l'intérieur de leur vagin, en échange d'un peu d'or. J'étais sur un pont, dont les piles plongeaient dans l'eau fangeuse d'un fossé de ceinture. De sa surface élevée, je contemplais dans la campagne cette construction penchée sur sa vieillesse et les moindres détails de son architecture intérieure. Quelquefois, la grille d'un guichet s'élevait sur elle-même en grinçant, comme par l'impulsion ascendante d'une main qui violentait la nature du fer : un homme présentait sa tête à l'ouverture dégagée à moitié, avançait ses épaules, sur lesquelles tombait le plâtre écaillé, faisait suivre, dans cette extraction laborieuse, son corps couvert de toiles d'araignées. Mettant ses mains, ainsi qu'une couronne, sur les immondices de toutes sortes qui pressaient le sol de leur poids, tandis qu'il avait encore la jambe engagée dans les torsions de la grille, il reprenait ainsi sa posture naturelle, allait tremper ses mains dans un baquet boiteux, dont l'eau savonnée avait vu s'élever, tomber des générations entières, et s'éloignait ensuite, le plus vite possible, de ces ruelles faubouriennes, pour aller respirer l'air pur vers le centre de la ville. Lorsque le client était sorti, une femme toute nue se portait au dehors, de la même manière, et se dirigeait vers le même baquet. Alors, les coqs et les poules accouraient en foule des divers points du préau, attirés par l'odeur séminale, la renversaient par terre, malgré ses efforts vigoureux, trépignaient la surface de son corps comme un fumier et déchiquetaient, à coups de bec, jusqu'à ce qu'il sortit du sang, les lèvres flasques de son vagin gonflé. Les poules et les coqs, avec leur gosier rassasié, retournaient gratter l'herbe du préau ; la femme, devenue propre, se relevait, tremblante, couverte de blessures, comme lorsqu'on s'éveille après un cauchemar. Elle laissait tomber le torchon qu'elle avait apporté pour essuyer ses jambes ; n'ayant plus besoin du baquet commun, elle retournait dans sa tanière, comme elle en était sortie, pour attendre une autre pratique. À ce spectacle, moi, aussi, je voulus pénétrer dans cette maison ! J'allai descendre du pont, quand je vis, sur l'entablement d'un pilier, cette inscription, en caractères hébreux : « Vous, qui passez sur ce pont, n'y allez pas. Le crime y séjourne avec le vice ; un jour, ses amis attendirent en vain un jeune homme qui avait franchi la porte fatale. » [...] Après quelques instants de silence, pendant lesquels j'entendis des sanglots entrecoupés, il éleva la voix et parla ainsi : « Mon maître m'a oublié dans cette chambre ; il ne vient pas me chercher. Il s'est levé de ce lit, où je suis appuyé, il a peigné sa chevelure parfumée et n'a pas songé qu'auparavant j'étais tombé à terre. [...] Le flambeau de la vie s'étant éteint en moi, je me détachai, de sa tête illustre, comme une branche morte ; je tombai à terre, sans courage, sans force, sans vitalité ; mais, avec une profonde pitié pour celui auquel j'appartenais ; mais, avec une éternelle douleur pour son égarement volontaire !... » Et je me demandais qui pouvait être son maître ! Et mon œil se recollait à

la grille avec plus d'énergie !... « S'il avait, au moins, entouré de son âme le sein innocent d'une vierge. Elle aurait été plus digne de lui et la dégradation aurait été moins grande. Il embrasse, avec ses lèvres, ce front couvert de boue, sur lequel les hommes ont marché avec le talon, plein de poussière !... Il aspire, avec des narines effrontées, les émanations de ces deux aisselles humides !... J'ai vu la membrane des dernières se contracter de honte, pendant que, de leur côté, les narines se refusaient à cette respiration infâme. Mais lui, ni elle, ne faisaient aucune attention aux avertissements solennels des aisselles, à la répulsion morne et blême des narines. Elle levait davantage ses bras, et lui, avec une poussée plus forte, enfonçait son visage dans leur creux. J'étais obligé d'être le complice de cette profanation. J'étais obligé d'être le spectateur de ce déhanchement inouï ; d'assister à l'alliage forcé de ces deux êtres, dont un abîme incommensurable séparait les natures diverses » Et je me demandais qui pouvait être son maître ! Et mon œil se recollait à la grille avec plus d'énergie !... « Quand il fut rassasié de respirer cette femme, il voulut lui arracher ses muscles un par un ; mais, comme c'était une femme, il lui pardonna et préféra faire souffrir un être de son sexe. Il appela, dans la cellule voisine, un jeune homme qui était venu dans cette maison pour passer quelques moments d'insouciance avec une de ces femmes, et lui enjoignit de venir se placer à un pas de ses yeux. Il y avait longtemps que je gisais sur le sol. N'ayant pas la force de me lever sur ma racine brûlante, je ne pus voir ce qu'ils firent. Ce que je sais, c'est qu'à peine le jeune homme fut à portée de sa main, que des lambeaux de chair tombèrent aux pieds du lit et vinrent se placer à mes côtés. Ils me racontaient tout bas que les griffes de mon maître les avaient détachés des épaules de l'adolescent. Celui-ci, au bout de quelques heures, pendant lesquelles il avait lutté contre une force plus grande, se leva du lit et se retira majestueusement. Il était littéralement écorché des pieds jusqu'à la tête ; il traînait, à travers les dalles de la chambre, sa peau retournée. Il se disait que son caractère était plein de bonté ; qu'il aimait à croire ses semblables bons aussi ; que pour cela il avait acquiescé au souhait de l'étranger distingué qui l'avait appelé auprès de lui ; mais que, jamais, au grand jamais, il ne se serait attendu à être torturé par un bourreau. Par un pareil bourreau, ajoutait-il après une pause. Enfin, il se dirigea vers le guichet, qui se fendit avec pitié jusqu'au nivellement du sol, en présence de ce corps dépourvu d'épiderme. Sans abandonner sa peau, qui pouvait encore lui servir, ne serait-ce que comme manteau, il essaya de disparaître de ce coupe-gorge ; une fois éloigné de la chambre, je ne pus voir s'il avait eu la force de regagner la porte de sortie. Oh ! comme les poules et les coqs s'éloignaient avec respect, malgré leur faim, de cette longue traînée de sang, sur la terre imbibée ! » Et je me demandais qui pouvait être son maître ! Et mes yeux se recollaient à la grille avec plus d'énergie !... « Alors, celui qui aurait dû penser davantage à sa dignité et à sa justice, se releva, péniblement, sur son coude fatigué. Seul, sombre, dégoûté et hideux !... Il s'habilla lentement. Les nonnes, ensevelies depuis des siècles dans les catacombes du couvent, après avoir été réveillées en sursaut par les bruits de cette nuit horrible, qui s'entre-choquaient entre eux dans une cellule située au-dessus des caveaux, se prirent par la main, et vinrent former une ronde funèbre autour de

lui. Pendant qu'il recherchait les décombres de son ancienne splendeur ; qu'il lavait ses mains avec du crachat en les essuyant ensuite sur ses cheveux (il valait mieux les laver avec du crachat, que de ne pas les laver du tout, après le temps d'une nuit entière passée dans le vice et le crime), elles entonnèrent les prières lamentables pour les morts, quand quelqu'un est descendu dans la tombe. En effet, le jeune homme ne devait pas survivre à ce supplice, exercé sur lui par une main divine, et ses agonies se terminèrent pendant les chants des nonnes... » Je me rappelai l'inscription du pilier ; je compris ce qu'était devenu le rêveur pubère que ses amis attendaient encore chaque jour depuis le moment de sa disparition... Et je me demandais qui pouvait être son maître ! Et mes yeux se recollaient à la grille avec plus d'énergie !... « Les murailles s'écartèrent pour le laisser passer ; les nonnes, le voyant prendre son essor, dans les airs, avec des ailes qu'il avait cachées jusque-là dans sa robe d'émeraude, se replacèrent en silence dessous le couvercle de la tombe. Il est parti dans sa demeure céleste, en me laissant ici ; cela n'est pas juste. Les autres cheveux sont restés sur sa tête ; et, moi, je gis, dans cette chambre lugubre, sur le parquet couvert de sang caillé, de lambeaux de viande sèche ; cette chambre est devenue damnée, depuis qu'il s'y est introduit ; personne n'y entre ; cependant, j'y suis enfermé. » (Lautréamont, 1874, pp.165-174)

Wernham's translation (chant 3 strophe 5, n.p.)	My translation
<p>A red lantern, vice's ensign, suspended at the end of a rod swung its carcass beneath the whip of the four winds above a massive and worm-eaten doorway. A foul corridor, smelling of human thighs, gave on to a courtyard where cocks and hens, thinner than their own wings, scratched for food. In the wall that served as an enclosure for the courtyard divers openings had been frugally executed, each covered by a grating. The building was covered with moss. Doubtless at one time it had been a convent, but now it served as an abode for all those women who daily would exhibit the interior of their vaginas in exchange for a little money to any who would enter.</p>	<p>A red lantern, banner of vice, suspended at the end of a rod, balanced its carcass, whisked about by wind, above a massive worm-eaten door. A filthy corridor, reeking of human thighs, gave out onto a courtyard, where cocks and hens pecked at the ground, searching desperately for food, thinner than their own wings. On the western side of the wall that enclosed the courtyard were, parsimoniously placed, various cavities, each covered by a grate. Moss had consumed the main building, which doubtless had once been a convent, and which served now, with the rest of the structure, as the house of all those women who showed, each day, to any who entered, the</p>

I was standing on a bridge with piers that were plunged in the muddy waters of a moat. From its height I contemplated the minutest architectural details of the interior of that age-toppling structure on the landscape. From time to time the grating of one of the openings would lift with a grinding sound as if by the upward impetus of a hand that violated the nature of the metal. A man's head would appear in the opening, then his shoulders upon which would fall fragments of dislodged plaster; then his body covered with cobwebs would follow. Laying his hands like a crown on the filth of every description with which the ground was encumbered while he extracted his legs from the interstices of the grating, he would straighten himself up to his natural posture and go to dip his hands in a broken-down tub, the soapy water of which had seen entire generations rise and fall. Then he would hurry away from those slums as quickly as possible to breathe the purer air of the city's center.

interior of their vaginas, in exchange for a bit of money.

I was on a bridge, with piers that plunged into the muddy waters of the canal below. From such a height, I contemplated that construct, sitting in the countryside, leaning in its old age, and considered the slightest details of its interior architecture. Occasionally, the grate of one of those cavities would rise a small ways, screeching, as if by the ascending impulse of a hand that assaulted the very nature of the iron; a man showed his head at the mouth of the half-open window and, scraping his elbows, stomach and knees through the grime, wriggled through to his shoulders, upon which fell flakes of plaster, followed, in this laborious extraction, by his body covered in cobwebs. Putting his hands, as if grasping at a crown, on the various kinds of filth that covered and weighed on the ground, while his legs were still caught under the bars of the grate, he crawled, kicking his legs, toes scrambling for purchase, until he had escaped the grasp of that metal contraption. He then took on his natural posture once again, and went to dip his hands in the decrepit tub, the soapy water of which had seen the rise and fall of entire generations, and went then, as quickly as possible, from those back alleys, to go and breathe the purer air near the centre of town.

After the client had departed a naked woman would struggle out in the same manner and make her way to the tub. Then the cocks and the hens would come running up in flocks from various parts of the courtyard, attracted by the seminal odor, knock her to the ground despite her struggles, trampling over her body as if it had been a dunghill, and peck at the flaccid lips of her swollen vagina until the blood came. The hens and the cocks, satiated, would return to scratch in the courtyard grass; the woman, now clean, would rise trembling to her feet covered with wounds, as when one awakens after a nightmare. She would let fall the rag she had brought with her to wipe her legs, having no further need of the communal tub, and return to her lair to await another job.

The sight of all this inspired me, too, with the desire to enter that house! I was about to descend from the bridge when I saw upon the entablature of a pillar the following inscription in Hebrew characters:

“You who pass over this bridge, go not yonder. There crime fraternises with vice. One day his friends awaited in vain a young man who crossed that fatal threshold.” [...]

Once the client had left, a naked woman squirmed out into the courtyard in the same manner, and made her way toward the same tub. Then, the cocks and hens flocked to her from various points in the courtyard, attracted by the seminal odour, and knocked her down, despite her best efforts to remain upright, trampling her body as if it were a pile of manure, and shredding, with their sharp beaks, the reddened lips of her swollen vagina. The cocks and hens, their hunger now satisfied, returned to scrape at the courtyard’s sparse grass; the woman, now clean, rose, trembling, covered in wounds, as if waking from a nightmare. She let fall the rag she had brought to wipe her legs; no longer needing the communal tub, she returned to her lair, in the same manner as she had left it, to await another job.

Upon witnessing this spectacle, I, too, wanted to penetrate that house! I went to leave the bridge when I noticed, on the entablature above a column, this inscription, in Hebrew characters:

“You who cross this bridge, go no further. Crime lays with vice; one day, his friends waited in vain for the young man who crossed this fatal threshold.” [...]

After a few moments of silence, during which I heard broken, heaving sobs, he raised his voice

After a few moments of silence broken by irregular sobs, the hair spoke as follows:

“My master left me in this room. He does not come to seek me. He rose from his bed where I am lying and combed his perfumed hair, not dreaming that I had already fallen to the ground. [...]

“The torch of life was extinguished in me and I broke away from his illustrious head like a dead branch. I fell to the ground, without courage, without strength, without vitality, but with a feeling of deep pity for him to whom I belonged, with everlasting sorrow for his voluntary aberration!”

And I asked myself who his master could be! And I applied my eye to the grating even more enthusiastically!

“If at least he had taken to his soul the innocent bosom of a virgin. She would have been worthier of him and the degradation would have been less. He kissed with his lips that soiled brow, upon which men have trampled with dusty feet! He inhaled with shameless nostrils the emanations of those two moist armpits! I saw the skin of these contract in shame, while for their part the nostrils refused to accept that infamous respiration. But neither he nor she paid any attention to the solemn warnings of the armpits nor to the ghastly and dismal aversion

and spoke thusly: “My master has forgotten me in this chamber; he will not come to seek me. He rose from this bed, under which I have collapsed, he combed his perfumed hair, and did not dream that earlier I had fallen. [...]

“The flame of life having been extinguished in me, I detached myself from his illustrious head, like a dead branch; I fell to the ground, without courage, without strength, without vitality; but, with a profound pity for him to whom I belonged; but, with an eternal pain for his voluntary transgression!...”

And I asked myself who his master could be! And I glued my eye to the grate with even more excitement!

“If only he had, at least, embraced with his soul the innocent breast of a virgin. She would have been more worthy of him, and it would have been less degrading to him. He kissed, with his lips, that brow coated in mud, upon which many men have tread, their feet covered in dust!...He smelled, with brazen nostrils, the emanations of those two moist armpits!...I saw the membrane of the latter contracting in shame, while, for their part, the nostrils rejected that repugnant inhalation. But neither he nor she paid any attention to the solemn warnings of the armpits, nor to the grim and sickly repulsion of the

of the nostrils. She raised her arms higher and he buried his face in their hollows. I was forced to be an accomplice of that profanation. I was forced to be a spectator of that unprecedented contortion, to assist at the unnatural alloy formed of those two beings whose diverse natures were separated by an immeasurable gulf.”

And I asked myself who his master could be! And I applied my eye to the grating even more enthusiastically!

“When he was satiated with the odor of that woman he wanted to rip out her muscles one by one. But since she was a woman he spared her and preferred to inflict suffering upon a member of his own sex. He summoned from the neighboring cell a young man who had come to this house to spend a few carefree moments with one of these women, and commanded him to stand before him. I had been lying on the ground for a long time. Not having the strength to raise myself up on my burning root I could not see what they were doing. All I know is, the young man was hardly within arm’s reach when ribbons of flesh began to fall from the foot of the bed and come to rest beside me. They whispered to me that they had been ripped from the youth’s shoulders by the master’s claws.

nostrils. She raised her arms yet higher, and he, with an even stronger thrust, buried his face in those hollows. I was forced to be complicit in such a profane act. I was forced to be spectator to that grotesque writhing; I was forced to witness the perverse fusion of those two beings, though an immeasurable gulf separated their natures...”
And I asked myself who his master could be! And I glued my eye to the grate with even more excitement!...

“When he was satisfied from breathing that woman in, he wanted to strip her muscles from her bones, ripping them out one by one; but, as she was a woman, he spared her and preferred to make a member of his own sex suffer. He called over, from the neighbouring cell, a young man who had come to this house to spend a few careless moments with one of these women, and he ordered the young man to stand but one pace from him. I had been lying helplessly on the floor for a long time. Without the strength to lift myself on my burning root, I could not see what they were doing. What I do know, is that as soon as the young man was within reach, fine ribbons of flesh fell at the foot of the bed and came to lay beside me. They told me in hushed tones that the claws of my master had shred them from the young man’s shoulders. My master did not spare this man any torment, but started from the nape of the neck and, with great care, proceeded to peel

back skin from muscle, as easily as you would peel an orange. He slid one of his long claws attentively between the muscle and the hide, working with such precision that he need only slice through any one of the major arteries once, at the neck or the clavicle, for he proceeded to peel them down along with the rest of the skin. The screams began almost at once. From my position under the foot of the bed, I witnessed, after many hours, the inverted mould of those shoulders, painted a vivid vermilion, and still dripping, begin to hang from the torso of that man; who would by now have surely collapsed, were it not for the strong grip of my master around his neck. The exposed arteries, spilling their contents onto the floor, swayed slightly with the young man's jerking movements as my master made his way down to the chest, paying meticulous attention to the way in which he traced those ribs, heaving with the frantic breaths of the one whose organs they yet protected. Once my master had reached the young man's hips, the everted cast of the man's arms met the grimy floor with a wet slap, the perfect mold of each of his fingers tracing the flagstones. By now, after several hours, the man had become completely mute, his vocal cords having exhausted themselves entirely in their struggle against my master. As he worked his way down, carving through connective tissues, he propped the man up against the wall, leaving a stamp of that young

The youth, at the end of several hours during which he had wrestled with a power greater than his own, arose from the bed and departed majestically. He was literally flayed alive from head to foot; along the stone floor he dragged his skin, turned inside out. He told himself that his own character was full of goodness, that he loved to believe that his fellow men also were good; that for this reason he had acquiesced to the distinguished' stranger's request when he was summoned by him; but that never by any possible chance had he expected to be tortured by an executioner.

“By such an executioner!” he added after a pause. Finally he made his way to the grating which, out of pity, split itself down to the level of the ground before that body denuded of epidermis. Without throwing away his skin, which might still be useful to him if only as a cloak, he attempted to leave this cut-throat den. Once he was outside the room I could not see whether he had the strength to reach

man forever stained upon the rough stone of that squalid house. My master, after having stripped the skin off his legs, as you remove a pair of pants, in one swift motion, threw the young man onto that stained, soiled mattress and freed his feet completely of their flesh.

The young man, after those long hours, during which he fought against a much greater force, stood from the bed and left the room, majestically. He was literally skinned, from head to toe; he dragged behind him, inside out, across the flagstones of the floor, his own hide. He told himself that he was good; that he liked to think others were also good; that for this, he had acquiesced to the request of that distinguished stranger who had called upon him; but that, never, ever, would he have expected to be tortured by an executioner.

And by such an executioner, he added, after a pause. Finally, he made his way toward the grate, which, out of pity, raised itself just slightly off the ground, in the presence of that body, deprived of an epidermis. Without abandoning his skin, which could still serve him well, if only as a cloak, he tried to escape from this cut-throat house; once he left the chamber, I could no longer see if he had the force to make it to the exit. O! how the cocks and hens made way with respect, despite their hunger, from that long trail of blood

the exit. O, how the cocks and the hens kept their distance, in respect, despite their hunger, from that long train of blood upon the saturated ground!”

And I asked myself who his master could be! And I applied my eye to the grating even more enthusiastically!

“Then he who should have paid more attention to his dignity and his justice raised himself up wearily on his elbow. Alone, gloomy, disgusted and hideous! He resumed his clothing slowly. Nuns, buried for centuries in the catacombs of the convent having been rudely awakened by the sounds of that horrible night that reverberated in a cell situated above the vaults, took each other by the hand and came to form a funereal circle about him. While he sought the ruins of his former splendor, while he washed his hands with saliva and dried them in his hair (it was better to wash them with saliva than not to wash them at all after an entire night spent in vice and crime), the nuns intoned pitiful prayers for the dead, as when someone is lowered into the grave.

And indeed the young man could not have survived the tortures inflicted upon him by a divine hand, and his agony terminated during the chanting of the nuns...”

that had soaked the earth!” And I asked myself who his master could be! And I glued my eye to the grate with even more excitement!...

“And so, he who should have thought harder about his own dignity and his own justice, barely managed to raise himself onto his tired elbows.

Alone, pathetic, disgusted and hideous!... He slowly dressed himself. The nuns, entombed for centuries in the catacombs below the convent, after being suddenly awakened by the sounds of that horrible night, which reverberated in a cell above the caves, took each other by the hand, and came to form a funereal circle around him. While he searched the rubble for his former glory; while he washed his hands with spit, wiping them on his hair (better to wash them with spit than to not wash them at all, after an entire night spent in vice and crime), they chanted lamentable prayers for the dead, as when someone has been interred deep in that tomb.

In the end, the young man would not have to survive this torture, inflicted upon him by a divine hand, and his agonies would end while the nuns chanted...”

I remembered the inscription on that column; I understood what had become of that pubescent

I remembered the inscription on the pillar, and I understood what had happened to the pubescent dreamer whose friends still awaited him every day since the moment of his disappearance... And I asked myself who his master could be! And I applied my eye to the grating even more enthusiastically!

“The walls stood back to let him pass. The nuns, seeing him take flight into the air with the wings he had kept concealed beneath his emerald robe, silently replaced themselves beneath the lids of the tombs.

He departed for his celestial abode, leaving me here. That is not fair. The other hairs remained on his head and I lie in this lugubrious room on a floor covered with clotted blood and shreds of dry meat. This room is accursed since he entered it. No one comes in here. Yet I am imprisoned.”

dreamer, whose friends still waited every day since the moment of his disappearance... And I asked myself who his master could be! And I glued my eye to the grate with even more excitement!...

“The walls parted to let him pass; the nuns, seeing him take flight, into the air, with the wings he had until then hidden under his emerald robe, retreated in silence beneath the cover of the tomb.

He left for his celestial home, leaving me here; this is not fair. The other hairs stayed on his head: and me? I lay helplessly in this wretched chamber, on the floor covered with clotted blood, with strips of dried meat; this chamber has been damned, since he came into it; no one enters, but I am trapped.”

This passage is one of the longest and most descriptive, disturbing passages of the original, marking the conclusion to the third chant, approximately halfway through the novel. I wanted to preserve its status as the “worst” scene of the text, because I believe that, with its mixture of sex and violence, it stands as the most memorable scene of the entire work. Naturally, I did not want to diminish the affect of this passage on the reader, since its affective load is precisely what makes it memorable. The source text features a good number of descriptions of smells (interestingly enough), but not a lot of visual imagery, most notably of the flaying. This is an

ideal piece of the source text to focus in on and to slow down, especially because the source text notes specifically that it occurred over an extremely long period of time (“quelques heures” for a flaying). The source text tells us about, rather than showing us, the flaying that occurred. The majority of the source text imagery shows us the *results* of the flaying, and not the flaying itself.

The imagery surrounding the way in which the first man exits from that small window was extremely important to conserve and to draw out. Though it may not seem like it has any use, it actually sets the scene for what the flayed man will have to do later in the passage. Being hyper-specific about the imagery in this paragraph will pay off when the flayed man must repeat the motions later in the text. The reader will already have a solid image of how someone must leave the brothel, and I will not have to repeat the specifics later in the passage. This is why I added more detailed descriptors to this image. I used verbs that easily evoke an image in the reader’s mind, such as “wriggle,” “scramble,” “crawled” and “kicked,” as opposed to Wernham, who simply used the rather passive “appear.” I also used language connected with the body such as “cavities,” “mouth” and “the grasp of that metal contraption” to foreshadow the later events of the passage connected to an innocent man’s body. As most of the imagery in this passage is a slow detailing of events, my additions also had to slow down the pace of the narration in order to fit in with the existing imagery and camouflage my modifications.

In the scene of the flaying (which, incidentally, connects us right back to our theory with Robertson and the scene from Ovid’s *Metamorphosis*), I wanted to describe as much detail as was possible from the position of the hair. It is a unique perspective that it has, only being able to see the bottom half of the flaying, and having to infer the top half. I wanted to impart the visual of the skin slowly descending, inside out from the shoulders as it creeps into the view of the hair.

The difference in perspective is important, because it offers a change from what might typically be seen in horrific works (to use the term broadly). This uncommon point of view contributes in part to the horror of the passage by subverting the reader's expectations, or by offering a different perspective to what is usually seen, thereby taking the reader somewhat by surprise. It catches the reader off guard and thusly provokes a kind of vulnerability, an openness that I can exploit to increase the affect of the scene. After all, shock and horror go hand in hand (this being the founding theory of the movie jumpscare). Many of the tropes of horror imagery and body horror have become too familiar to any given reader, especially in such an over-saturated market. Sometimes, all it takes to make horror more real in the reader's mind is to provide a perspective that they do not expect, or that is not often seen. If familiarity breeds contempt, then this fresh perspective catches the reader's attention and renews their interest in the scene. It avoids the over-indulgence of presenting the scene in its full light. Instead, I work with the position of the hair in the source text to provide an interesting point of view of the horrific image.

I also added the sounds of the victim's screams into this scene, incorporating more of the senses to create a more real scene. In addition, I noted the point at which he fell silent, which adds a sort of dreadful quiet to the entire scene, in contrast to the earlier screaming. Another sound that I evoked in my translation was that of the orange being peeled. Not only does this simile give the reader a visual image of the flaying, and the way in which the master peels back the skin of his victim, but it also imparts a sort of textured sound. When peeling an orange, the peel catches a little on the flesh of the fruit, as the fibrous pith tries to hold the entire thing together. It makes a very distinct sound that everyone is familiar with. I wanted to bring both the image and the sound into my translation with relation to peeling skin from muscle, the pith here being replaced by the skin's fibrous connective tissues. Peeling an orange also releases its juices,

drawing a further parallel between the orange and the body. Thus, the sounds that I added to the flaying serve to make the passage more real, both by adding realistic screams and by making a poignant comparison to an orange.

These additions all linger on an image that was ignored in the source text, slowing the reader and forcing their attention to the slightest details of the flaying. My additions to this passage, more than any other, are an example of the “fractalisation of space at an ant’s pace” (Eco, 2004, p. 105, my emphasis). I am reinforcing to the reader, over and over, the horror of the scene that unfolds slowly before them, without affording them the chance to look away. This is also why it is important that I had already described the setup to the man crawling out from the brothel: it allows me to pour this kind of heavy imagery onto the reader, and then to ease up on the imagery while letting their previous knowledge create the horror for me. Essentially, I have taken a step back from the imagery, but am allowing the reader to imagine the scene for themselves, based on their prior knowledge of the setting that I have emphasized previously. The flayed man is removed from the view of the hair, but the reader is still able to track his terrible path through the brothel as he tries to exit. The reader already knows what must happen as the flayed man attempts to leave the brothel, and I can use that to my advantage to not bombard the reader too constantly with imagery that is so horrific that they would become apathetic. This means that the reader remains emotionally invested in the scene, despite my additions to the imagery and the increased affect they promote.

In terms of the lexical networks of this passage, my translation constructs a network that is more sexual than Wernham’s. Little allusions to sex, such as “penetrate that house,” “crime lays with vice,” the narrator gluing his eye to the grate with “excitement,” and describing the

movement of the master's head into the armpits as a "thrust" all help to reinforce the sexual overtones of the scene. It is especially uncomfortable because the combination of sex and violence is more disturbing than merely violence alone, as has been discussed above. This dual violation of the body politic, both with the violence against the body and by revealing body parts normally kept private, disconcerts the reader further. The two aspects act in concert to disturb a reader more than one could on its own. Therefore, I intentionally built a lexical network that subtly (and not-so-subtly) drove home the sexual nature of this passage.

My additions to this scene focus on slowing down the narrative pace and making the reader absorb each horrific detail of the scene. The flaying, of course, takes centre stage in terms of imagery, but I also use the existing imagery of the man squirming out from under the grate to increase the affect of the flaying. I am thusly able to balance the reader's experience of horror by using hypotyposis intermittently, warding against any potential apathy they may feel, preventing them from disconnecting emotionally from this scene. The hair's unique perspective on the scene allows me to experiment with an unusual point of view. This helps to combat a reader's potential familiarity with horror tropes and imagery, and therefore to increase the affective impact of this scene on the reader. Thus, in this scene that is so crucial to the source text's overall terrifying impact, I have used hypotyposis in several places to augment the affect of my translation on a reader, to draw out the time during which they experience horror as an emotion, and to emphasize the terrible mixture of sex and violence inherent in this scene.

5.4 Parallel Text 4: Transcreation, Psychological Horror and Changes that

Modify the Plot

The fourth and final passage for discussion is from the drawn-out conclusion to the work, in which Maldoror stalks the stranger Mervyn before ultimately murdering him:

Voici ce qu'il fit : il déplia le sac qu'il portait, dégagea l'ouverture, et, saisissant l'adolescent par la tête, il fit passer le corps entier dans l'enveloppe de toile. Il noua, avec son mouchoir, l'extrémité qui servait d'introduction. Comme Mervyn poussait des cris aigus, il enleva le sac, ainsi qu'un paquet de linges, et en frappe, à plusieurs reprises, le parapet du pont. Alors, le patient, s'étant aperçu du craquement de ses os, se tut. [...] Le boucher est revenu, et a dit à ses camarades, en jetant à terre un fardeau : « Dépêchons-nous de tuer ce chien galeux. » Ils sont quatre, et chacun saisit le marteau accoutumé. Et, cependant, ils hésitaient, parce que le sac remuait avec force. « Quelle émotion s'empare de moi ? » cria l'un d'eux en abaissant lentement son bras. « Ce chien pousse, comme un enfant, des gémissements de douleur, dit un autre ; on dirait qu'il comprend le sort qui l'attend. » « C'est leur habitude, répondit un troisième ; même quand ils ne sont pas malades, comme c'est le cas ici, il suffit que leur maître reste quelques jours absents du logis, pour qu'ils se mettent à faire entendre des hurlements qui, véritablement, sont pénibles à supporter. » « Arrêtez !... arrêtez !... cria le quatrième, avant que tous les bras se fussent levés en cadence pour frapper résolûment, cette fois, sur le sac. Arrêtez, vous dis-je ; il y a ici un fait qui nous échappe. Qui vous dit que cette toile renferme un chien ? Je veux m'en assurer. » Alors, malgré les railleries de ses compagnons, il dénoua le paquet, et en retira l'un après l'autre les membres de Mervyn ! Il était presque étouffé par la gêne de cette position. Il s'évanouit en revoyant la lumière. Quelques moments après, il donna des signes indubitables d'existence. Le sauveur dit : « Apprenez, une autre fois, à mettre de la prudence jusque dans votre métier. Vous avez failli remarquer, par vous-mêmes, qu'il ne sert de rien de pratiquer l'inobservance de cette loi. » Les bouchers s'enfuirent. (Lautréamont, 1874, pp. 322-324)

It may seem as though this is one of the more tame passages, especially in terms of horror imagery, and indeed it is. The reason I chose it was because of the ideas it conveyed, the potential for imagery to be greatly expanded upon in this passage. One of the characteristics of

this scene that enhances the horror of the original is the active participation of several strangers in Mervyn’s torture, though they do not know it. They are convinced that his cries are merely those of a sick dog. This ties into the powerlessness of the victim that is often used as a pillar of body horror, but also adds the horror of being an unwitting participant in horror. This scene is fascinating because nobody but Maldoror has control over the situation, both sides have been somehow fooled into participating. In my translation, I wanted to examine what would happen if they had gone through with it, so to speak. What if the fourth man had not spoken up? What if the men had struck the “dog?” What if they had succeeded in killing it?

Wernham’s translation (chant 6 strophe 7, n.p.)	My translation
<p>This is what he did: he unfolded the sack her was carrying, opened it, and, seizing the youth by the head, thrust his entire body into the envelope of cloth. He tied up the opening with his handkerchief. As Mervyn was uttering loud cries, he raised the sack like a bundle of linen and struck the parapet of the bridge with it several times.</p> <p>Then the victim, becoming aware of the cracking of his bones, was silent. [...]</p> <p>The butcher has returned and says to his comrades, throwing a burden on the ground: “Hurry up and</p>	<p>Here is what he did; he unfolded the sack he was carrying, pulled it open, and, grabbing the young man violently by the hair, shoved his entire body into the canvas envelope. He tied, with his handkerchief, the extremity that served as introduction. As Mervyn was letting out piercing shrieks, he lifted the sack above his head, as he would a bundle of laundry, and slammed it, several times, against the parapet of the bridge.</p> <p>So, the victim, noticing the fracturing of his bones, fell silent. [...]</p> <p>The butcher returned, and said to his companions “Let us hurry and kill this mangy</p>

let's kill this mangy dog." There are four of them, and each seizes the usual hammer. And yet they hesitate because the sack moves violently.

"What emotion takes hold of me?" exclaims one of them, slowly lowering his arm.

"This dog utters cries of sorrow like a child," says another. "You would say he knows the fate awaiting him."

"It's their habit," replies a third, "even when they are not sick, as is the case here, it is enough that their master stay away a few days from home for them to start howling in a manner which, to say the least, is hard to bear!"

"Stop! Stop!" cries a fourth, before all the arms are raised in rhythm to strike the sack firmly this time. "Stop, I tell you. There is a fact here that escapes us. Who told you that this cloth enfolds a dog? I wish to make sure."

So, despite the laughter of his comrades, he unties the package and draws forth one after another the limbs of Mervyn! He was practically stifled by the discomfort of his position. He fainted upon seeing the light again. A few minutes later he gave indubitable signs of life. His savior said:

"Next time, learn to be careful even in your trade.

dog." They were four, and each grabbed his familiar hammer. And yet, they hesitated, because the bag was writhing with such force.

"What emotion takes hold of me?" cried one of them, slowly lowering his arm.

"This dog, like a child, wails in pain," said another "It is as if he understands his fate."

"It is in their nature," replied a third. "Even when they are not sick, as this one is, their master has only to leave the house for a couple of days before they begin to howl in a way that, honestly, is hard to bear!"

And thus, the four butchers, being relieved by the comment of their companion, at once raised their arms and began to deliver, with practiced ease, solid strikes to the sack. It took only one or two blows before the sack began convulsing violently, such that it was difficult for any one man to deliver the final blow to the head of the dog. His torment being thusly extended, Mervyn let out such cries as to make even the most hardened of criminals falter in his task. Yet the butchers' hesitation did not return, intent as they were on finishing their work; they would go home and forget this harrowing experience by the next morning.

You almost witnessed for yourselves that it is useless to practice non-observation-of that law.”
The butchers fled.

The sack, once a dirty off-white, had begun to redden with the blood of the victim, which seeped from the surface of the sack, that had at first contained it, and spilled onto the floor, covering the boots of the labourers; the sounds of their hammers having changed from the dull thud of steel on flesh into a wet squelch. Flecks of blood were now spraying back onto the faces of the butchers, but still, they did not stop.

The muted snap of bone pierced the air, accompanied by a fresh cry from inside the sack, but still, they did not stop.

The sack fell suddenly still, as one of the men at last crushed Mervyn’s skull, striking him just above the right ear, mercifully ending his nightmare; and surely the dog must by now have perished, but still, they did not stop.

Rhythmically, they pounded the limp sack, as if listening to music that only they could hear, until finally, the conductor lowered his hands. In a trance, the four men each grasped a corner of the overly heavy sack, and silently dragged it into the yard. Each one wiped his hands and face, and returned home after a long day’s work. Not one of those men would ever mention the long, blood-stained hair that they

	saw from the opening of the sack, which was firmly connected to a distinctly human skull.
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This is the passage in which I take the most freedom in my translation, conveying not only imagery that did not exist in the original, but events that did not take place in the source text. These events draw out the scene and also change the events of the text, as Mervyn is killed in this strophe instead of the final strophe of the text. Were I to translate the entire text, this change would necessitate the rewriting of the final strophe. The structure of this strophe is similar to that of a fable, where the men in the source text do actually open the sack and see that it is Mervyn. There is even the line following line, which makes clear the moral of the story: “Le sauveur dit : « Apprenez, une autre fois, à mettre de la prudence jusque dans votre métier. Vous avez failli remarquer, par vous-mêmes, qu’il ne sert de rien de pratiquer l’inobservance de cette loi »” (Lautréamont, 1874, p. 324). My alterations do not in any way change the moral of this little story, but instead, they increase the consequences of the butchers’ actions, making even the didactic aspect of this scene more impactful, if less obviously spelled out for the reader. My choice to remove that particular phrase also makes the entire scene less childish, less silly. The line is mainly reminiscent of Aesop’s fables, stories for children where the moral of the story is clearly stated at the end of each fable. By removing this, the tone of the entire passage is immediately made more serious. There is not the relief and release of tension at the end of my translation, due to my changing the end. In the source text, you can almost laugh by the end of the passage, but in my translation, that is not the case at all.

In addition, my rewriting of the end of this scene allows for far more imagery to be added to the passage. Sights, sounds, smells and sensations make up the bulk of my additions to the

text. Naturally, the hardest aspect of this type of addition is keeping the syntax and the style of the source text. It has to blend seamlessly with the rest of the translation, which rather closely follows the source text in terms of structure. Ducasse's writing lends itself well to horror, because of his tendency to write clauses with increasing specificity. As an example, from the second passage we examined: "Mes pieds ont pris racine dans le sol et composent, jusqu'à mon ventre, une sorte de végétation vivace, remplie d'ignobles parasites, qui ne dérive pas encore de la plante, et qui n'est plus de la chair" (Lautréamont, 1874, p. 203). He begins by describing his feet, then broadens the scope slightly by describing the area from feet to stomach. He then zooms in on that plant-flesh, noting its composition down to the smallest of parasites that inhabit and feed off of it. Similarly, my additions to the passage follow the same kind of pattern. For example:

The sack, once a dirty off-white, had begun to redden with the blood of the victim, which seeped from the surface of the sack, that had at first contained it, and spilled onto the floor, covering the boots of the labourers; the sounds of their hammers having changed from the dull thud of steel on flesh into a wet squelch.

I begin by describing the sack as a whole, as it once was. I then zoom in on the blood that seeps through the sack and onto the floor, tracing its path as it covers the men's boots. In addition, I bring in another sense (hearing) that the blood has influenced, zooming out once more to bring the reader back to a full appreciation of the scene. The details force the reader to consider things that they might not have thought of, describing the scene in agonizing detail so that the reader cannot look away or ignore any aspect of it. They are forced to witness the smallest details of the scene, unable to escape, while the end of the sentence zooms back out to encompass the entirety of the image. This kind of large to small (to large) exploration of imagery is entirely in line with Ducasse's style, and is highly effective in forcing the reader to be attentive to the imagery.

I used the repetition of “but still, they did not stop” in order to emphasize two things: firstly, to give the impression that this beating is happening over a long period of time, with the use of “still”; secondly, by reaffirming that they have not stopped, I am slowly destroying the reader’s hope that they might realize what they were doing and stop. Ducasse has used this kind of poetic repetition in other strophes, notably in chant 1 strophe 10, when he repeats “Vieil océan” (1874, pp. 23-32) and in chant 3 strophe 5 when he repeats the melodic “Ne fais pas de pareils bonds ! Tais-toi...tais-toi...si quelqu’un t’entendait !” (1874, pp. 174-181). I felt thusly justified to use this kind of repetition in this passage, for the above-mentioned reasons. I also increased the length of each sentence before each successive repetition. In so doing, I increased the length of time the reader must spend before reading the confirmation that the brutality continues. This increases the time during which the reader must anticipate the phrase, a phrase that they are fully anticipating by the third and longest sentence. This is effective in evoking horror in the reader because they are, at least by the third sentence, anticipating a terrible, terrifying future. As they continue to read, there is still hope that the men might stop, but with each repetition, that hope is dimmed. It is clear by the third repetition that the line is coming, but despite this, the reader hopes that things will change. Thus, the repetitions in my additions draw out the time in which the reader is held in fearful ambivalence, while also amplifying the continuously horrific nature of the scene.

I liked the idea that, at some point during the beating, or perhaps after, the men each realized that they were beating a human to death, but that it was too late to stop. If they were to have stopped, they would then have had to take accountability, or maybe Mervyn was too far gone by the time they realized he was not a dog. It also gives the impression that each individual at some point realized what he was doing, but hoped that the others would not catch on. Their

silence is also a hint of this, nobody wanting to be the one to speak out and implicate the entire group, hoping that the others had not caught on. This is a more psychological horror, one that slowly dawns upon the reader due in part to the repetitious nature of my addition. This is why I made sure to describe the unmistakable human hair and head at the end, to make it clear that the men realized, at some point, what they had done.

In these various ways, my additions to and rewriting of this passage increase the affective power of horror on the reader. Though, were I to take this translation approach to the entire text, it would necessitate a rewriting of the final strophe, this passage becomes more affective through both lexical and plot-related changes. Removing the explicit moral of the story at the end of the passage changes the tone from light-hearted and childish to quite serious. My additions to the end of the passage especially serve to darken the tone even more, forcing the reader to pay attention to the gristly details of the beating. The repetitious nature of my addition of those final paragraphs also creates a rhythmic dread and anticipation in the reader, as they must fearfully anticipate the continued beating.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Throughout this experimental translation of *Maldoror*, I have used hypotyposis to extend the period in which the reader is caught in ambivalence, as well as to increase the affect of my translation in comparison to both the source text and to Guy Wernham's translation. This act of logopoeia is part of the translation methodology called transcreation, in which I am afforded the freedom to change and add to the source text. After a thorough self-analysis in comparison to Wernham's translation, the conclusion of this thesis is that hypotyposis has proven to be an extremely effective tool to increase the affect of horror imagery on the reader. Drawing out the time during which the reader is in an ambivalent state of mind, waiting for the conclusion to a scene or for a fuller understanding of the image before them, is how one draws out horror. It increases the time during which the reader must fearfully anticipate the future.

As I translated, I was surprised by how hesitant I was to change or add to the text. I suppose the training I have received is not so easily shed, even when I am intentionally trying to do so. This kind of exercise requires a certain faith in one's own writing, and Translation Studies and general audience expectations alike normally tout the invisibility of the translator (despite recent trends to the contrary in academic circles). A "good" contemporary translation, to most, is one that cannot be distinguished from an original text — and this conception is not one to simply dismiss or make fun of. When a translator is intentionally *not* invisible, this is usually theorized as simply leaving strange, "foreign" words and/or syntax in the target text. Most readers would not realize the assuredly vast, great cultural and linguistic importance of leaving a transliterated source language word, but would instead wonder why they had paid for a translation they cannot

understand. There is also a certain legitimacy that is brought to my additions if they cannot be detected. Ducasse is a fantastic author, and while I cannot hope to reach his level of skill, I can at least camouflage some small additions here and there, in a pale imitation of his style. This is, of course, aided by the fact that he did not write my translation; I did, making it already a combination of mine and Ducasse's styles. I aimed to camouflage my additions because this does have an effect on the reader's experience of horror. Any text that is too jarring or that is obviously written by another author in another era snaps the reader out of their experience of the image. This decreases the affect of horror on the reader by destroying their immersion in the scene, and, as has been seen, this works to the detriment of the emotional effect of the text.

As an experience of the grotesque, horror and body horror are enhanced by the depictions of the sensations that create the "real-in-the-instant" in a reader (Folkart, 2000, p. 233). Sights, sounds, tastes and smells, as well as textures and pain, all contribute to the reader's immersion in the scene, to their suspension of disbelief. The reader empathizes with the body horror, since everyone has a body and knows (or can imagine) pain, and is transported by these descriptions into the scene itself, so to speak. This analysis has shown that hypotyposis, when used in key places to bring out the important, grotesque aspects of the source text, can be an extremely effective tool in increasing the effect and affect of horror on a reader. Lexical networks are constructed and added to through this method, increasing the specificity of the imagery and thus bringing the entire scene closer to the real, lived experience of the reader. Through a careful balance of drawing the reader in and horrifying them, the reader can sustain this increased affect through the longer text without becoming apathetic.

Though transcreation is used regularly in some fields of translation, perhaps its use should be expanded, or at least considered, in the literary field for particular purposes. I

recognize that I am able to add freely to this text partly due to the fact that my experimentation is taking place well after the author's death. My translation is hardly the first translation of this work, so there is no expectation for me to stick very closely to the source text. There are many other options for a reader who wants a more "faithful" translation. Further, this academic analysis justifies my translation style in and of itself, which would be more difficult to do in a commercial translation. That being said, the results of this analysis could be used to argue that transcreation has its place in literary translation, and that it should be considered one of a literary translator's tools when they translate.

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