CONSUMPTION MARKETS & CULTURE

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Consumption Markets & Culture

Aims and Scope

CMC: Consumption, Markets and Culture focuses on consumerism and the markets as the site of social behavior and discourse. It encourages discussion of the role of management and organizations in society, especially in terms of production, consumption, colonialism, globalization, business performance and labor conditions. Combining theories of culture, media, gender, anthropology, literary criticism and semiology with analyses of business and management, the journal is international in its scope and iconoclastic in its aims. The editors consider marketing to be the ultimate social practice of postmodernity, blending art and commerce and requiring the constant renewal of styles, forms and images. I :d Educating readers about the conscious and planned practice of signification and representation is, thus, the journal's primary aim; its second is to take part in inquiring in and construction the material conditions and meanings of consumption and production.

Notes for Contributors can be found at the back of the journal.

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Paradisal Discourse: A Critical Analysis of Marketing and Consuming Hawaii

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The marketing of certain tourist destinations can be analyzed as discourse that conveys meaning to the consumer and to the consumed. This discourse, which I refer to hereafter as paradisal discourse, is a combination of Orientalism, travel writing, discourse of the Primitive, and diverse forms of Otherness. This paper begins with an exploration of discourse as a tool of knowledge and of power, illustrated through a detailed assessment of Said's *Orientalism* and other relevant works and concepts. The discourses of "Orientalism," "primitivism" and travel writing are likened to the paradisal discourse found in the marketing of certain types of tourist destinations. The second section of the paper presents an historical and cultural analysis of the concept of paradise in Western society, summarizing the elements which, over time, have come to form this distinctive discourse. The third section of the paper assesses the way in which this discourse forms the framework by which a specific tropical paradise, Hawaii, is marketed and consumed today.

INTRODUCTION

There is a rather complex dialectic of reinforcement by which the experiences of readers in reality are determined by what they have read... A text purporting to contain knowledge about something actual... is not easily dismissed. Expertise is attributed to it. The authority of academics, institutions, and governments can accrue to it, surrounding it with still greater prestige than its practical successes warrant. Most important, such texts can

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create not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe. In time such knowledge and reality produce a tradition, or what Michel Foucault calls a discourse... (Said 1978, p. 94).

In the context of marketing, discourses convey meaning to the marketer and to the consumer. In Western paradisal discourse, the historically and culturally embedded concepts of "paradise" provide a framework for the marketing and consumption of certain types of tourist sites. Marketers effectively utilize and augment this paradisal discourse by describing the paradise consumers may expect in travelling to such sites. Indeed, paradisal discourse suggests a particular type of ideal state-both geographical and psychological-which an individual may desire to experience or consume. Just as the participants in any discourse anticipate and experience a reality created by that discourse, so the "consumers of paradise" are influenced by the reality created through paradisal marketing discourse.

In discursive analysis, representative examples are chosen for illustration of the discourse and its elements. As such, this paper begins with a small number of relevant works which analyze texts and the cohesive discourses they form as tools of knowledge and power. The discourses of Orientalism, travel writing and primitivism are then likened to the paradisal discourse found in the marketing of certain types of tourist destinations. This section concludes with a consideration of distancing of Other through time and sexuality, followed by a brief discussion of myth and its role in this context. The second section of the paper presents an historical and cultural analysis of the evolving concept of paradise in Western society, summarizing the elements which have formed Western paradisal discourse. The paper closes with an assessment of the way in which Western paradisal discourse forms the framework by which a specific tropical paradise, Hawaii, is marketed and consumed today.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Orientalism and Otherness

Said (1978), following Foucault (1970,1977,1978), suggests that texts politically and materially affect the world.' In his pioneering work *Orientalism,* Said (1978) assessed the way in which Western/ Occidental texts have portrayed "the Orient" in terms of peripherality,

marginalization and Otherness. This discourse of "Orientalism " is based on the opposition of Self vs. Other as manifest in the contrast between Europe and the Orient, with "the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, 'mind,' destiny, and so on" (Said 1978, p. 3). Said indicates that this tendency to Otherness is universal, where time, objects, people and especially space are divided between "ours" and "theirs."

The Otherness found in Orientalism is not just a matter of differences among equals, however. Rather, the Orientalist discourse implies power, hierarchy, and hegemony. In Orientalism, the West dominates the East; Europe dominates the Orient:

> The relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony... There are Westerners, and there are Orientals. The former dominate; the latter must be dominated... the essential relationship, on political, cultural, and even religious grounds, was seen... to be one between a strong and a weak partner (Said 1978, pp. 5, 36, 40).

Orientalism serves, both historically and currently, to justify colonial and neo-colonial varieties of political and economic power and domination. However, such power is not just a military, political or economic fact; it is an act of power by virtue of representation. As Europeans began to "learn about" the Orient, to represent it, in some ways to create or invent it, they exercised power over it. This power was and is derived through knowledge and an assumed authority based on that knowledge. Foucault indicates that representation as an act of power is part of the human condition, relegating the object which is known and represented to a subordinate position vis-a-vis the knowledgeable superordinate: "To have such knowledge of such a thing is to dominate it, to have authority over it" (Said 1978, p. 32).

Of course, such hierarchy and dominance, accompanied by essentializing tendencies, is not a phenomenon unique to Euro-America. Dumont (1970, 1977), for example, describes an hierarchical India that contrasts with the individualist West. Similarly, Creighton (1995) shows the way in which aspects of political and economic dominance pervade Japanese construction of 'the West.' Thus, hierarchical perspectives are often a part of the human condition, particularly when confronting Other.

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Western paradisal discourse is also an hierarchical system of knowledge opposing Self and Other. As in Orientalism, Western paradisal discourse privileges the European/ Westerner as superordinate and dominant, while local residents of the paradisal tourist site are Other, subordinate and dominated. Again, the hierarchy is manifest equally in politico-economic terms *and* as representation and knowledge. The European/ Western tourist wields political and economic power while, at the same time, he or she seeks to create and define the tourist site through a knowledge that is both culturebound in discourse and is supported by tourism marketing practices. Thus, the economic and representational acts of power interact and support one another.

In Orientalism, since the Orient is Other and peripheral, Europe/ Western society *defines itself* as the center, the core, the standard against which Other is assessed and judged. While it is typical for Europe to be seen as "better" and dominant, occasional reversals of a particular type occur. For example, in the work of impressionist painters such as Gauguin and author/ philosophers such as Rousseau, Asia, the Orient and the Other are depicted as representing the good that is thought to be missing in European civilization. Such depictions tend to be romanticized, however, and continue to define Europe as the point for comparison, as well as the source of knowledge from which comparisons derive. Europe retains its dominance and superiority within the Orientalist representational hierarchy.

The binary opposition of Oriental/ Occidental is consequently *mutually* defining and reflexive. Through Orientalist discourse, the Orient is described, discussed, categorized and characterized, *and* Europe/ Occidental/ West is correspondingly defined. Thus, both sides of the binary opposition constitute one another. Furthermore, those on each side of the opposition may accept, at least to some degree, both the differentiation and the hierarchy. Not only do Europeans come to see Orientals in a particular way, with certain characteristics; Orientals may come to see *themselves* in the same terms.

We will see that this is often, but not always, the case in paradisal-based tourism, where a particular local identity is created and/ or reinforced by tourist perceptions and expectations and by marketing practices. However, resistance to the received superordinate position of the tourist or other dominant actor has been noted by Miller (1995) and Lee (1988), among others. Ekholm-Friedman and Friedman (1995) also note such resistance and negotiation on the part of hosts

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at the paradisal tourist location of Hawaii, which is the focus of this study. Kahn (1995) calls for a more nuanced assessment of the discourse of cultural difference and of resistance, negotiation and alternative interpretations, suggesting a focus on postcolonialism and subaltern studies, for example. Anticipating discussions of resistance to tourism, Hannerz suggests that "Locals evolve particular ways of handling tourists, keeping a distance from them" (1990, p. 242). Thus, it is important to recognize the abilities of those classified as Other to choose, manipulate and incorporate elements of the dominant culture, as well as to resist incursions. This recognition accurately depicts Other as active, rather than as passive, since a representation based on passivity further marginalizes.

Although exhibiting some superficial differences over time, the core or "latent" discourse of Orientalism has remained unchanged, consistent and distinctive for centuries. Said delineates tropes (patterns of images and elements) within Orientalist discourse wherein the Orient is portrayed as: Sensual and unboundedly sexual, feminine, romantic, passionate and exciting, tempting, dangerous and threatening, ancient, beautiful, attractive, mysterious, fertile, maternal, desirable and desirous, macabre and secret, primitive, barbaric, stupid, backward and degenerate, uncivilized, passive, inorganic and unable to self-generate, subordinate and weak, an object for Western scrutiny and penetration, a place for escape, a display, distant, without depth, unchanging, coherent and uniform, strange, different, exotic, odd, and perverse. In tourism marketing of paradisal sites, many of these tropes are to be found also, suggesting that paradisal discourse may be a form of Orientalism. In fact, Said indicates that the Orient is sometimes referred to as "Eden or Paradise" (1978, p. 58; see also Table 1; Belk (1993) has similarly documented reference to Shangri-La or Samballa).

Like the paradisal tourist destination, the Orient is a place and an experience to be consumed, perhaps is even an *object* for consumption that the Westerner "is entitled either to own or to expend (or both)" (Said 1978, p. 108). Yet the Orient is to be consumed in a particular way in which the consumer/ observer remains a detached spectator, and that which is consumed resembles a wondrous piece of art or a spectacle. The Orient is "like a theatrical, fantastic library, parading before the anchorite's gaze;" the Orient is to "be marketed for a Western consumer, be put before him as one among numerous wares." (Said 1978, pp. 118, 250). Through the acts of Orientalist

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observation, marketing and consumption, the Orientexists primarily in relation to the Occident. Thus, "In all cases the Orient is for the European observer... " (Said 1978, p. 158, emphasis in the original).

Moreover, the European form of observation is distinctive; it is detached, scientific and categorizing in character. By categorizing, the unknown and Other are made known and domesticated. By categorizing hierarchically, European dominance is assured. And, by couching the categorical observations in scientific terms, Orientalist characterizations acquire further legitimacy and authority and verify "scientifically" the superiority of the West vis-a-vis the Orient. The hierarchy of Europe over the Orient was and is:

> ... considered logical and inevitable... scientifically apprehendable and empirically analyzable... always to raise Europe or a European race to dominion over non-European portions of mankind... (Said 1978, pp. 232-233; similar instances of the use of scientific categories in representation of Other can be found in the "native villages" of America's World Fairs-see Rydell 1984, 1993).

Much of what specifically characterizes Orientalist discourse is found in Western paradisal discourse as well. Orientalist discourse and Western paradisal discourse are based on the opposition of Self and Other, on a hierarchy of representation and knowledge that is both predicated upon and manifest through power. Just as the Orient and the Occident are mutually defined in the reflexive process of Orientalism, so the tourist and the host of paradisal sites define themselves and one another through the paradisal discourse found in Western culture and furthered through marketing. As the Orient is to be observed and consumed by the Occidental Orientalist, so the paradisal site is to be observed and consumed by the tourist. Finally, as science is invoked to legitimize Orientalism and its dictates, so marketing and the profit it engenders are summoned to justify tourist marketers' paradisal discourse.

It is important to note that Occidentalism, as the obverse of Orientalism, is similarly homogenizing and simplifying in the conceptualization of Self and Other. Carrier notes that "self-definition through opposition with the alien" is a human universal, and the "essentialist, dialectical definition... is not a unique event" (1995, p. 3). Similar oppositional and essentializing elements characterize both Orientalism and Occidentalism. For example, Carrier suggests that" 'The West' may call up images of capitalist logic and markets full

of autonomous actors" (p. 16). Yet Carrier's essay (1995, pp. 85-108) on Mauss indicates the Occidentalist characterization of the West as a system based entirely on market/ commodity exchange ignores the numerous gift transactions and the realms in which they occur in Western society. The works of Nadel-Klein (1995) and Lindstrom (1995) also raise the issue of the actual location of The West. "Such essays show that The West" has been essentialized and represented as undifferentiated and monolithic in ways similar to the Orientalism described by Said.

Travel Writing

Another important scholar whose work informs this investigation is Pratt (1992), who has written extensively about travel writing and the shaping of identities. In some ways, travel literature in general is similar to the paradisal discourse found in the marketing and consumption of tropical paradise tourist destinations in particular (see Table 1 for summary of travel writing tropes). Both travel writing and tourism take place in the context of a journey and include a specific type of confrontation with and representation of Other. In add]tion, both tourism and travel writing bear the marks of liminality, a condition of social suspension of status and roles, of daily obligations and responsibilities (Graburn 1977; Lett 1983; Moore 1980; Vester 1987).

Travel texts are generated within "contact zones"—"social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination " (Pratt 1992, p. 4). Texts derived from contact zones create maintain, and justify a specific political, economic and social order whereby Western society dominates, marginalizes, and peripheralizes the Other of Asia and the Americas. Hence, European travel writing, like Orientalism and diverse forms of Otherness, involves a hierarchy of cultures. The travel writing of the European expansionist period has reflected and shaped the imperialist endeavors of Europeans, European perspectives on the Other, and European perspectives on themselves.

Pratt also emphasizes the mutual determination and identitybuilding in texts, wherein Europe "was constructed from the outside in as much as from the inside out" (Pratt 1992, p. 6). Again, in the process of representing the Other in texts, European society reflects upon and defines itself:

> ...the imperial metropolis... habitually blinds itself to the ways in which the periphery determines the metropolis-beginning, perhaps, with the latter's obsessive need to present and re-present its peripheries and its others continually to itself (Pratt 1992, p. 6).

By describing Other, the travel writing of European society describes what Europe *is not* and, often by extension, what Europe is. In travel texts, as in Orientalism, Europe defines itself as the eyes through which Other is seen and presented, as the gauge by which to measure Other, as the superordinate point in the hierarchy, as the center of civilization, as expansionist, imperialist, and expropriating. We shall see that paradisal discourse concerning tourist destinations also defines the West as central and provides it with specific characteristics by virtue of what paradise is and what the West *is not.*

In the travel literature discussed by Pratt, Other *defines itself* through the appropriation of meanings derived from Europe. Pratt uses the term "transculturation:"

> to describe how subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture (Pratt 1992, p. 6).

Thus, as Other perceives the definitions placed upon it by Europeans, Other changes its own self-definition. With respect to tourism marketing, members of host societies often adopt the ascribed and expected behaviors, perspectives and representations envisioned by tourists to be associated with the host society as tourist destination (Basu 1995; Firat 1995). Some scholars have even described this phenomenon as "invention" or "creation" of culture (e.g., Boorstin 1964; Debord 1970; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). Thus, a form of Pratt's "transculturation" is often characteristic of observed culture change and self-definition at tourist sites (however, see Ekholm-Friedman and Friedman 1995).

Pratt also analyzes the apparent absence of local human residents in some travel writing where the focus is upon the "natural" landscape. Despite the clear presence of homo sapiens implied in the mention of villages, for example, travel writers in this genre generally describe the landscape as though humans are altogether absent. This is "a strange, highly attenuated kind of narrative that seems to do everything possible to minimize the human presence... The residents of the country... turn up in the narration mainly as traces on the landscape" (Pratt 1992, p. 59). Lofgren (1989,1990,1995) also has

noted the relationship between landscape, nationalist tendencies and tourism in the nineteenth century; he suggests, for example, that romanticization of nature and landscape were part of an evolving nationalist discourse. Similarly, in paradisal discourse involving the marketing and consumption of tourist sites, the beauty of the landscape, the flora and fauna are highlighted. Humans may go unmentioned entirely, local human residents may be characterized as "primitive," and/or visiting humans are portrayed as moving romantically through an idyllic landscape. The potential tourist is invited to imagine him/ herself in the paradisal environment, where the landscape and the local population. are to be consumed primarily through observation. Similarly, Hannerz (1990) places tourism in the context of the cosmopolitan/ local distinction. He suggests that, unlike cosmopolitans who seek immersion and participation and exhibit a "willingness to engage with the Other" (p. 239), modern tourism "is largely a spectator sport" (p. 242).

Primitivism

In *Gone Primitive* (1990), Torgovnick assesses Western concepts and portrayals of 'the primitive.' Like Orientalism and travel writing, primitivist discourse begins with the opposition of Self vs. Other, manifest further in romantic conceptualizations of the primitive. Rousseau's image of the "noble savage," with its inherent contradictions, is invoked; "primitives" are portrayed as "gentle, in tune with nature, paradisal, ideal-or violent, in need of control... noble savages or cannibals" (Torgovnick 1990, p. 3; see Table 1 for a summary of primitivist tropes; see also Price 1989; Price and Price 1992).

Torgovnick, beginning with an analysis of the works of Bronislaw Malinowski (1922), indicates that Western assessments of the primitive are voyeuristic, sexual, in search of Other, hierarchical, genderbiased, and self-defining:

> Primitives are like children, the tropes say. Primitives are our untamed selves, our id forces— libidinous, irrational, violent, dangerous. Primitives are mystics, in tune with nature, part of its harmonies. Primitives are free. Primitives exist at the 'lowest cultural levels;' we occupy the 'highest' (Torgovnick 1990, p. 8).

The tropes of primitivism share much with Orientalism and travel writing, invoking evolution and superordination/ subordination, authoritarian knowledge as power, the domination-based dichotomy

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of observer-observed, and coincident characteristics of sexuality and seduction, mystery, danger, male power, lack of change and uniformity, and overall Otherness. Like both Orientalism and Pratt's travel writing, reflexive definition occurs: "For Euro-Americans, then, to study the primitive brings us always back to ourselves, which we reveal in the act of defining the Other" (Torgovnick 1990, p. 11).

Another point of interest in our comparison of primitivism and Otherness with paradisal discourse is a specific acquisitive behavior. Both primitivism and tourism generate certain consumption and marketing behaviors. Torgovnick describes the collecting of "exotic objects" for display and use by Euro-Americans. In a similar fashion, paradisal tourists collect or acquire souvenirs that are reproduced objects derived from local "primitive" cultures and inhabitants. In both instances, fascination with the object is derived from the intrigue and mystery ascribed to the primitive Other. In both cases, acquisition, often with attendant notions of conquest, is the result.

In addition, it is not just the objects which are marketable; it is the society and its residents. Again, this is the case both with primitivism and with tourist marketing and consumption of paradise. Torgovnick claims the primitive becomes "a generalized, marketable thing" (1990, p. 37). In paradisal tourism marketing, it is often the entire experience of primitive Other-Other society, Other people, Other culture, Other behaviors, attitudes and beliefs-which is marketed.

A further similarity between primitivism and paradisal discourse emerges in the concern with the liminal. Like travel writing and the tourist experience, primitivism offers a form of escape, where contact with the primitive is basically "a fantasy-projection of the man in the pinstripe suit or on the assembly line, caught in a system he had not created and could not control" (Torgovnick 1990, p. 43). In an effort to elude daily responsibilities and burdens, individuals seek the experience of the primitive through literature and art; in an effort to gain similar diversion, tourists seek the paradisal tourist experience.

Thus, as tools of knowledge and power, the discourses of Orientalism, travel writing and primitivism have much in. common. All are based upon the opposition of Self vs. Other, and all have hierarchical implications, with the West as superordinate, central and dominating. In addition, all three discourses are reflexive, appropri-

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ating meaning and defining both Self or the West *and* Other or the Non-West. Finally, many of the discursive tropes are shared; sexuality, mystery, danger, liminality, lack of change, exoticism and romanticism are all pervasive elements of these discourses.

Related Concerns

Fabian (1983) has discussed the distancing of Other which occurs through the use of temporal tropes. Focusing on anthropological discourse, Fabian suggests the discourse functions "to keep the Other outside the Time of anthropology" (p. xi). In constituting Other through temporal tropes, using terms such as primitive and savage, Other is implied to be inferior or less developed than the societies from which the anthropologist originates. Fabian characterizes this as an "oppressive use of Time" (1983, p. 2); Kahn (1995) describes it as relegating Other to a "temporally anterior" status.

It is important here to re-emphasize the gendered nature of tourism. Enloe (1990), like Torgovnick, notes gender and sexuality biases in tourism. She notes, for example, that American military imperialism laid the foundations for tourism development in places such as Cuba and the Phillipines, where "American men were exerting their manliness in defeating Spanish, Cuban and Filipino troops," and tourism development in these countries resulted from "world-wide progress generated by a civilized sort of American masculinity" (1990, pp. 26-27). Advertisements for travel to non-Western societies portrayed masculinity and femininity in specific ways: "The local men are militarized in their manliness; the local women are welcoming and available in their femininity" (1990, p. 32).

Finally, the concept and role of myth must be considered briefly. Myth can serve many functions in constituting society, ranging from descriptions of creations and origins to justification for beliefs, attitudes and behavior (c.f. Malinowski 1948). Early anthropologists such as Boas (1916, 1935) studied myth as literal reflections of the mythologizing culture, an approach that is useful for the present study. Thus, the emphasis on Self / Other, nature vs. culture, and both the danger and the exotic and erotic allure of the primitive all point to the characteristics of Western culture, seeing itself as "civilized," cultured and protected. In this case, as in the discourses described above, analyzing paradisal discourse as myth points to the reflexivity of identification, wherein Western society defines both itself and Other in the same context, at the same time.

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Levi-Strauss (1995) has consistently emphasized the manner in which myth can resolve or mediate binary oppositions. If ==paradisal discourse is analyzed as myth, emphasizing the components of a place of abundance, separate and isolated from the everyday world,== requiring a journey or the Grace of God to reach, wherein leisure and pleasure abound and society's ills are vanquished, the Western cultural oppositions of good and evil, nature and culture, God and Satan, leisure and toil, abundance and scarcity are all joined and resolved.

Finally, the Western myth of encountering paradise must be fully contextualized in the European encounter with Otherness, clearly revealed in the context of European anthropology (Stocking 1991; see also Baudet 1965, Todorov 1984, Torgovnick 1990). Stocking discusses this =="mythic realm in which the European anthropological encounter with 'otherness' is enacted, again and again"== (1991, p. 9):

> A set of archetypal situations and experiences, residues of several thousand years of Western history— including the Garden of Eden, the Rousseauian natural state, and the Columbian first encounter— define a kind of anthropological 'primal scene' in terms of which the experience of fieldwork is pre-experienced in imagination. Its myth, like any other, will vary with the teller, but every hearer will recognize the plot: the anthropologist venturing bravely across the sea or into the jungle to encounter an untouched people, there to be stripped of the defensive trappings of civilisation and reborn in the study of a simpler culture, and returning with a grail of scientific knowledge and a vision of alternative cultural possibility (1991, pp. 9-10).

Bartra suggests, however, that ==the concern with barbaric Other== was a European cultural notion "considerably prior to the great colonial expansion," developing indigenously on the European continent ==based on notions of *European* wild men== (1994, p. 4). In such a case, ==the mythical foundations of Otherness would seem to be an outgrowth of the European culture,== developing prior to travels by anthropologists, missionaries, explorers and colonizers venturing forth to "exotic" societies.

Tourist paradisal discourse is remarkably similar to the described experiences of anthropologists and others. ==The tourist experience is pre-imagined,== and the components of the journey and the experience, including the return, parallel that of the European or American anthropologist. The myth of tourism to paradise, like

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the mythologized experience of anthropological fieldwork, involves an intimate examination of and encounter with the opposition of Self/ Other.

The next section presents an analysis of paradisal discourse as found in Western society and as perpetuated through the marketing of paradisal tourist sites. Western paradisal discourse shares much with Orientalism, travel writing, primitivism and mythology of the Self/Other. Paradisal discourse, like the other discourses discussed, is based on Otherness, is hierarchical and reflexive, and involves elements of sexuality, mystery, danger, liminality, lack of change, exoticism and romanticism.

PARADISAL DISCOURSE

The Other takes on a particular character in tropical paradise tourist sites. This inquiry seeks to assess the representations of paradise found in Western literature and in the marketing and consumption of such sites. In the following analysis, Western paradisal discourse emerges as having a specific form highly similar to the discourses discussed by Said, Pratt and Torgovnick. With Cook's "discovery" of the Hawaiian Islands, the tropes of paradisal discourse were applied to an actual geographic site. In the marketing and consumption of Hawaii today, Hawaii and its inhabitants are Other, primitive, and paradisal.

The following analysis assesses the tropes found specifically in Western paradisal discourse. As Said suggested in his study of Orientalism, it is not necessary to peruse every text within the extant literature on the concept of the Western paradise in order to determine characteristic tropes within the discourse. Rather, representative examples can be examined for typical patterns (Said 1978, p. 71). Thus, while the author, using a snowball sampling method, read and assessed the works of Baudet (1965), Buck (1993), Duncan (1972), Eliade (1952), Giamatti (1966), Hahn (1976), Jacoby (1980), Joesting (1972), Manuel (1965), Mumford (1928), Patch (1950), Sahlins (1985), Sanford (1961), Stead (1955), Tuchman (1978) and others, the presentation in the following section is based on *representative* tropes as found *across* the sample of works, rather than on a summary of each individual work. The works chosen are representative, rather than exhaustive, of the topic.

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Table 1: Tropes of Orientalism, Travel Writing and
Primitivism

Examples of Orientalist Tropes (based on Said 1978):
Sexual: Sensual, freely sexual, romantic, passionate, penetrable, desirable and desirous, perverse,
tempting;
Female: Feminine, maternal, fertile;
Alluring: Exciting, attractive, mysterious, secret, a display, strange, different, exotic, odd, beautiful;
Primitive: Barbaric, stupid, backward and degenerate, uncivilized, ancient;
To Be Feared: Dangerous, threatening, macabre;
Uniform and Not Human: Unchanging, coherent, without depth, inorganic and unable to self-generate;
Hierarchical: Known, represented, dominated, categorized, observed, marketed and consumed,
peripheral;
Binary and Reflexive: Mutually defining of Self and Other, core and periphery, binary opposition.

Examples of Travel Writing Tropes (based on Pratt 1992):
Liminal: During a journey, involving liminal states and contexts;
Hierarchical: Maintaining and justifying inequality, Western domination over subordinated Other, reflecting and shaping imperialist
endeavors;
Binary and Reflexive: Mutually defining, mutual determination and identity-building, transculturation as a phenomenon, binary
opposition of Self and Other;
Absence of Humans: "Natural" landscape, humans only as traces.

Examples of Primitivist Tropes (based on Torgovnick 1990):
Binary and Reflexive: Self vs. Other, mutually and self-defining;
Hierarchical: Evolutionary, superordination/ subordination, authoritarian knowledge as power, domination-based dichotomy of
observer/ observed
Sexual: Seductive, sexual, male power over female.
Primitive: Backward, "lowest cultural level," unchanging over time;
In Need of Control: Violent, dangerous, free, irrational, savage, cannibalistic
Ideal: In tune with nature, gentle, harmonious.

* In each case, tropes are representative examples rather than exhaustive. In addition tropes overlap with one another, as do the characteristics within and between tropes. The reader is invited to consult the works of Said (1978), Pratt (1992) and Torgovnick (1990) for a detailed description and discussion.

> Man seems always to have cherished, in vision or imagination, strange thoughts of a mysterious country to which he longs to go. Whether this takes the form of a supposed realm of delight which he may actually wish to visit... or whether it is like a memory out of the past or a dream of the future, he has his ideas of a golden age in the perfect milieu, or of a utopia, or of a region he will attain to after death if he fares well and the gods are propitious. So whether as an escape from reality or as an instinctive resource, he has brought forth from his imagination, and perhaps from actual visions, and perhaps, too, the subconscious, all the many images of the Isles of the Blessed, the Earthly Paradise, the Pied Piper's country inside the mountain, the garden on the mountain top, the heavenly city in the skies, and the realm under the earth or under the sea. Descriptions of such places are found widely distributed in the literature of every nation (Patch 1950, p. 1).

Beliefs in the existence of paradise, as well as attendant characteristics of that paradise, vary from one society to the next. Cross-cultural comparisons show that the actual location of paradise may be difficult to ascertain in some societies-it may be located somewhere on this earth, near or far from present living areas, or it may be beyond the earthly realm. Western society historically has followed both strategies: Paradise is heaven, outside the earthly domain; yet paradise-like places can be found on earth. In the last few centuries, Westerners have come to believe that these earthly paradisal sites can be visited and enjoyed.

In addition, the paradisal concepts particular to each culture sometime reflect daily life and, at other times, involve a suspension of the perceived qualities of life on earth. The following analysis shows the Western paradise to be a place essentially *unlike* that occupied in daily life. In the Western paradise, rules and obligations are largely suspended, resources are abundant, and hardships associated with quotidian earthly existence are lacking.

The Western earthly paradise contains the elements of beauty, liminality, isolation, climatic warmth, unfettered sexuality, bountiful environment, leisured pace, and the exotic, unusual, and different (see Table 2 for presentation of the tropes of Western paradise as they evolved over time). Historically, the perceptual integration of these traits with one another led to the conclusion that the earthly paradise must be either an island or an isolated mountain valley. The islands of the South Seas and various other specific locations were eventually categorized as paradise-on-earth, with concomitant pro-

cesses put into place for attendant marginalization and com-modification of those sites as an object for consumption on the part of Western tourists.

The Western concept of an earthly paradise notably contains elements of Other and primitive, with attendant ramifications in terms of hierarchy, power, definition of Self and Other. Moving beyond early treatments based in theology, it is essential to note the continued evolution in the Western concept of paradise as contact with Hawaii and other "earthly paradises" occurred. The experiences and resultant texts derived from those contacts not only tapped into extant paradisal discourse, but reinforced and introduced further elements into that discourse. In the marketing and consumption of Hawaii today, the elements of paradisal discourse form the dialogic bedrock between the tourist and his or her expectations and interpretations of the tourist experience.

Although it would be possible to trace the development of the concept of paradise in other societies or religions such as Islam (see, for example, Blair and Bloom 1991), the focus specifically on Western discourse anticipates the Western experience of tourism to Hawaii, elaborated upon through informant quotes in the following section. Individuals from non-Western societies may be more likely to experience Hawaii in ways that are non-paradisal (see, for example, Keown 1989, Nitta 1992). Exploration of the paradisal discourses of other societies and the possible ways in which the Hawaiian tourism experience relates to such discourses is beyond the scope of this paper.

The Evolution of the Western Concept of Paradise

Duncan (1972), Giamatti (1966), Patch (1950) and others have attempted to summarize the history of the Western tradition concerning an earthly paradise. Homer was the first known Westerner to describe a paradise-like place; other Greeks and Romans echoed Homer's description. Subsequently, early Judeo-Christian writers offered theological and literary explorations of the vanished Eden. With European expansionism, travel and exploration writing became an avenue for the dissemination of knowledge about foreign, exotic places as Other. Flowing out of a consistent historical discourse, the spaces encountered by European travelers and then reported upon in their travel writings were often described as paradisal. The descriptions furthered the conceptualization of these

spaces and their inhabitants as Other, as existing in a place and form unlike that of the everyday existence of Europeans.

Homer, Greeks and Romans

In Homer's description of the Elysian Fields, Otherness is expressed spatially, temporally, climactically, and in terms of the suspension of "ordinary" life:

> Elysium is faraway-at the world's end, beyond Ocean. Like the lost paradise, it is removed from ordinary human life, but is an abode of the blest. The climate is perfect; there is a gentle west wind, but no snows or storms. Life is always pleasant, a 'drearn of ease' (Duncan 1972, p. 20, assessing Homer).

Recall that these dimensions, particularly the emphasis on the spatial foundation of Otherness, are also critical in Said's analysis of Orientalism. Also note this early reference in Homer to "Ocean," beyond which Paradise lies. This maritime aspect of the idyllic land would be recalled immediately upon the European "discovery" of the South Pacific Islands and Hawaii some 3,000 years later.

Homer combined these elements with a description of the unfettered and satisfying sexuality and abundant natural setting in Calypso's Grotto. Allured into an idyllic life by the charms of Calypso, Odysseus encountered a place which reflected the fertility of nature and of humanity:

> grass, shade, and water— meadow, forest, and stream— in an image that connotes rest and satisfaction, peace and harmony... A landscape whose caves and spring and luxuriant growth reflects the generative power of nature, becomes the setting for human love and sexuality (Duncan 1972, pp. 23-24).

A lush environment of plenty and of unlicensed sexuality were combined with a life of leisure, connected notions whereby a human was no longer bound by everyday concerns in finding food and shelter, or in satisfying basic human needs for survival and reproduction. Everything was provided here by nature and by the nymph, Calypso.

Later Greeks and Romans continued to describe paradise as located on an island(s), hence isolated, exotic and Other. Pindar and Hesiod, for example, discussed Kronos' Islands of the Blest; Sicalus indicated they were islands "over which the sun passed directly," and Horace described the islands as "fruitful, clear, and temperate"

(Duncan 1972, pp. 21-22). The island motif dominated in Greek and Roman culture and was later reinforced in the Celtic and Germanic traditions, eventually becoming pan-European (Patch 1945). Like Homer, these Greek and Roman writers described the residents of the earthly paradise as free from social fetters and the bonds of an earthly human body in the form of disease, death, conflict, and societal restrictions on sexuality and notions of beauty: "All the inhabitants were beautiful, healthy and promiscuous, living in perfect concord and dying voluntarily at 150" (Duncan 1972, p. 22).

Thus, the earliest known writers in Western society laid the foundation of paradise as Other. The related elements of isolation, leisure and an abundance which precluded illness and want were already part of this discourse approximately 3,000 years ago. Like the "latent Orientalism " described by Said, we shall see that many of these basic elements of Western paradisal discourse have remained constant over time.

Judeo-Christianity

In the Judeo-Christian tradition, flowing out of theological conceptualizations of Heaven, the Garden of Eden was considered to be paradise *on earth.* In Eden, guiltless sexuality, freedom from work and want, and an abundance of natural resources predominated. With the expulsion from Eden and the "Fall from Grace," the loss of open sexuality, leisure and abundance was emphasized as poignant and traumatic, bringing humanity to a miserable state of guilt, sin, and hard labor. However, Eden was still believed to exist somewhere on earth, its inaccessibility heightened by the unworthiness of humanity. This belief in the existence of an earthly Eden continued and was elaborated upon in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

The Judeo-Christian paradise on earth was thought to be isolated from the rest of the world by a nearly insurmountable barrier-conceptualized physically as a great sea or mountain and morally as humanity's sins and lack of fortitude and ambition:

> The Garden of Eden too had an earthly existence which often appeared on maps, located far to the east, where it was believed cut off from the rest of the world by a great mountain or ocean barrier or fiery wall (Tuchman 1978, p. 60)... in some normally inaccessible part of the earth, which might become the goal of man's search and, in a literal as well as metaphorical way,

the object of his dreams... the dominant twin characteristics of the ancient and medieval Christian earthly paradises were their desirability but inaccessibility (Giamatti 1966, pp. 15, 127).

Thus, the element of physical and moral isolation was emphasized repeatedly in Judeo-Christian paradisal discourse (see also Tuan 1993).

An imaginative geography and spatial foundation for Otherness, similar to that found in Orientalism, emerged early in the Western world view as part of paradisal discourse. This spatial dimension would become the foundation for an expanded conceptualization of Other. Existing in isolation, inaccessible and secluded, the earthly paradise was a metaphor for the negation of everyday existence. Symbolic boundaries emphasized the separation of daily life, with its toils, hardships, and societal limitations, from a place made ever more alluring by its obscurity and lack of access. The Otherness, initially expressed spatially, became Otherness manifest in virtually all aspects of human existence.

In the Judeo-Christian tradition, another facet of the refutation of everyday existence was an abundance of resources, an abundance so great that toil was no longer necessary. The lush environment produced a bountiful natural crop and provided food and shelter with ease; the endless variety of flora and fauna stimulated the senses of man and met the human needs for aesthetics and beauty:

> In the earthly Paradise grow every kind of tree and flowers of surpassing colors and a thousand scents which never fade and have healing qualities. Birds' songs harmonize with the rustling of forest leaves and the rippling of streams flowing over jeweled rocks or over sands brighter than silver. A palace with columns of crystal and jasper sheds marvelous light. No wind. or rain, heat or cold mars Paradise; no sickness, decay, death, or sorrow enters here (Tuchman 1978, p. 60).

The abundance of nature and the fulfillment of needs was concomitantly augmented by a general negation of difficulties in life. If paradise provided food, shelter and beauty, then also, surely, other ills incumbent upon humans in daily life would vanish as hunger, could and ugliness had:

> ...an Elysium; with perfect climate, perpetual springtime, a sweet west wind; fecund earth, shade and water... communal and personal harmony, bliss and ease (Giamatti 1966, p, 32).

The overall effect of this abundance was to place humans in a state free from responsibilities and difficulties.

Hawaii as Paradise

During the European Age of Discovery and expansion, explorers literally set out to locate the earthly paradise:

> ...notions about paradisal islands at the ends of the earth [were] reinforced by travel reports from such as Columbus and Amerigo Vespucci. Cruising near the mouth of the Orinoco River, Columbus himself believed on the basis of climatic observations that he was somewhere near the earthly Paradise (Jacoby 1980, p. 191).

The exotic lifestyles of natives in lands "discovered" by the Europeans during this period fueled the Western imagination. The image of "the noble savage" living a life free from want, vice and the accounterments of corrupt civilization became established, and the search for paradise surged forward with each confirming description spread by explorers returning from westward ventures.

With Cook's "discovery" of the Hawaiian Islands and other archipelagoes of the South Pacific, the exact location of "Paradise on Earth" appeared to have been found. Combining all of the elements of Western historical idealizations of earthly Paradise, it appeared the islands had merely been waiting for European discovery-ever there beyond the oceanic barrier, tropical islands with bountiful environments and landscapes of incredible beauty. Reports of the islands filtered back to the European continent, and the precise location of paradise in the Pacific Ocean became established in the European world view:

> ...for the last hundred and fifty years all the great European literatures have vied with each other in exalting the paradisiac islands of the Pacific Ocean... the Earthly Paradise still believed in by Christopher Columbus... turned into a South Sea island in the nineteenth century (Eliade 1952, pp. 11-12).

The islands were isolated, perhaps more than any other place on earth prior to the invention of human air travel. The descriptions of an earthly paradise as remote, inaccessible and separated by a great barrier, congealed with the geography of the archipelago. Visitors arrived only after long, exhausting journeys on an often treacherous

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ocean; they were struck by the utter beauty of the landscape, surrounded by a desolate seascape— a literal green jewel in the midst of endless watery horizons:

> The 1,500-mile-long strip of islands emerged in utter loneliness, for Hawaii is the most isolated of all major island groups in the world (Joesting 1972, p. 2).

The islands were portrayed as reflecting the Western archetype of paradise in many ways; they were warm, bountiful and promised a life free from anxiety and need, and full of leisure and sexuality. The latter fit in well with evolving notions about "the sexual life of savages" as well as perceptions of sexuality in the Garden of Eden. Stories circulated in America and Europe of:

> ...the delighted dream of languishing man, of 'the naked girl laughing in the transparent water, the wet crimson blossoms washing from her drowned hair,' or the mournfully savage hopes of a lawless liberty of man oppressed by man; the longing for happy days in those who still believe in an earthly Eden (Stead 1955, foreword; see Crick 1989 for a discussion of the same phenomenon in tourism).

Similarities with Torgovnick's primitivist discourse abound here. Rousseau's noble savage is invoked; the primitive inhabitants of the Hawaiian islands are found to be sexual and sensual, childlike and available for conquest by the West, mysterious and exotic. Torgovnick describes "the primitive as the sexual" (1990, p. 14); primitive women are "sexually volatile" and in need of "severe control" by Westerners (Torgovnick 1990, p. 99). Sexuality predominates in Said's Orientalism as well, where there is an "almost uniform association between the Orient and sex... not only fecundity but sexual promise (and threat), untiring sensuality, unlimited desire" (1978, p. 188). Again, the sexuality is boundless; Oriental women "express unlimited sensuality" (Said 1978, p. 207).

The European yearning for unfettered sexuality may represent a desire for freedom from basic social constraints and a return to the Garden of Eden, where adult humans, like children, were provided for, loved, and knew no "evil:"

> ...over there, in the "island," in that "paradise," existence unfolded itself outside Time and History; man was happy, free and unconditioned; he did not have to work for his living; the women were young, eternally beautiful,

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and no "law" hung heavily over their loves. Even nudity in that distant isle, recovered its most aphysical meaning— that of perfect humanity, of Adam before the Fall (Eliade 1952, pp. 11-12).

While the travelogues of the early visitors to Hawaii were read eagerly, few could afford the journey to Hawaii until the second half of the 20th century. In the meantime, the homology of the Hawaiian Islands as paradise continued in the descriptions of those who had seen the islands and in the imaginations of those who had not. The notion that people would pay to come to the islands for a relatively short visit as part of a vacation from their daily activities was present surprisingly early:

Ever since the Hawaiian Islands had been discovered by Westerners there were people interested in seeing what the place looked like... Perhaps Henry Whitney was the first man to think of tourism as being a distinct business in itself. In 1875 he wrote The Hawaiian Guide Book... The 1890 version began: "The Earthly Paradise! Don't you want to see it? Why, of course" (Joesting 1972, p. 261).

Time and time again, the Hawaiian islands presented images and evoked feelings in Western visitors that resonated with these culturally ingrained notions of an earthly paradise full of Otherness. The paradisal images of Hawaii were spread both in written form and through visual means. In 1888, James Williams established a photographic tabloid called "Paradise of the Pacific," which depicted Hawaii "as a land of brilliant sunsets, palm-fringed lagoons, and friendly maidens;" this tabloid was published well into the 1950's (Joesting 1972, pp. 261-262). Schmitt indicates the most popular theme of all movies produced in the first half of the twentieth century was "interethnic " sexual relations; many of these liaisons took place in the South Seas (1968; see also Whittaker 1986, p. 19). According to Stephen (1993a), "Tourism charged the islands with sexual possibility in the form of alluring females, the preeminent sign of the South Pacific" (p. 15; see also Gibson 1993 and Stephen 1993b).

The elements which make up the Western concept of paradise developed over time, as traced here, and were culturally reconfigured within the context of the changing world. Western paradisal discourse began with the works of Homer and other Greeks and Romans. Then, the Judeo-Christian Garden of Eden became an earthly paradise of unspecified location. Eventually, the earthly paradise was believed to be the newly discovered Pacific Islands, including

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Hawaii. From the moment the Hawaiian Islands were discovered, they became an object for consumption on the part of Europeans and, eventually, of mainland Americans. Potential visitors were invited to consume the experience of paradise by visiting the islands, entering into sexual relations (real or fantastical) with the native inhabitants, participating in the creation and re-creation of paradise in Hawaii through the consumption of visual images and vistas. However, from the perspective of these Western consumers, consumption of Other often meant marginalization of Other. Through the constructed realities of consumers and marketers, the warm, tropical islands of Hawaii continue to be seen as paradise on earth and as Other, exotic and primitive.

Table 2: Western Paradisal Discourse Tropes and Times

Greek and Roman
Distant, warm climate, pleasant life without illness, idyllic, maritime, unfettered sexuality, fertility of nature and of humanity, island, exotic, liminal.

Judeo-Christian Eden
Guiltless sexuality, freedom from want and illness, abundance of natural resources, an earthly paradise

Later Judeo-Christian
Isolated by an insurmountable barrier, negation of everyday existence (toils, hardships, societal limitations, illness), abundance of resources, beautiful and stimulating, liminality.

European Age of Discovery
Exotic, noble savages, life free from want, unspoiled and uncorrupted by civilization, primitive, beyond the ocean, tropical, islands, isolated, bountiful environment, beautiful landscapes, open sexuality, fertility, liminality

Modern Marketing of Paradisal Tourist Sites
Hawaii as paradise, romantic, adventurous, exotic, isolated, beautiful, alluring natives, ancient, abundant, island with associated topographical features, lush flora and fauna, noble savages, unspoiled, native spectacles

THE MARKETING AND CONSUMPTION OF HAWAII

We have seen how the Western concept of paradise developed historically in belief systems and in literature. The purpose of this sec-

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tion is to analyze the cultural manifestations of Otherness in the current context of Western marketing and consumption of tropical "paradise" locations, with particular reference to Hawaii. Within the construct of the tourist paradise are included numerous manifestations of Otherness involving exoticism, savagery and sexuality. Moreover, the marketing and consumption of such tourist locations embodies not only the relegation of local human inhabitants to exotic Other; it involves the transformation of *nature itself* into something which exists for the consumption of the tourist. Thus, paradisal Other is a distorted image, where "savage" natives frolic freely among abundant flora and fauna, life is easy and carefree, sexuality abounds, and where modernization, acculturation, pollution, even mere change from the past are ignored and undesirable. As we shall see, the tourist him/ herself may actually feel that any deviation from the expected paradisal experience is a tragedy, perhaps even a crime against nature, the noble savage, and the local culture.

Marketers and local inhabitants often work together to further the image and experience of paradise to meet the expectations of incoming tourists. For example, elaborate and extensive hotel grounds are built in isolation from modern settlements. To meet the demands of the tourist, native dance and folklore productions artificially combine and elaborate upon styles and customs which were historically separate, different, and/or less complex. In the process, the created image of paradise may also influence the impressions local residents have of themselves and of their home.

Today, the notion that Hawaii is truly an earthly paradise is promulgated in the paradisal discourse of the Hawaiian travel industry. Over and over again, the visitor is reminded that he or she has chosen to visit "paradise." Furthermore, the elements of "paradise" which are emphasized in the marketing of Hawaii reinforce these preconceived cultural notions of what paradise is, what Hawaii is, and how the two interact and coincide symbolically with one another.

Advertising Copy and Visual Images

The images and copy presented in print ads and in travelogue films reflect the historically developed components of the Western concept of "Paradise." Just as Orientalism "invents" the Orient, so paradisal discourse in tourism marketing "invents" Hawaii as paradise. Movies, television shows and books, as well as the stories and photo-

graphs of friends and relatives who have visited Hawaii, stimulate the homology. Then, as the tourist-to-be makes plans, travel brochures remind him or her of the "Paradise" about to be encountered.

The images and phrases used in these brochures and other promotional materials are consistent with the Western concept of Paradise. Examples within a collected sample of ads show the use of the word "Paradise" directly: "...discover romance and adventure in the exotic beauty of this tropical paradise;" "Come Share the Dream of My Tropical Paradise." Reference is made to exoticism, the allure of the natives, isolation and beauty: "Discover a different world... a world of private caves, natives hearts filled with aloha, a world where the sun sets each evening just for you!" A particularly interesting example emphasizes the paradisal elements of sensuality and freedom, isolation, dream-like, lush, romantic and naturally beautiful, all at the same time:

> JUNGLE LOVE— Imagine it all. Only 15 minutes from Waikiki, but a million years away. Perhaps you've been here some dream ago. Deep in an age old jungle. Alone or with someone special. Under a rainbow. Surrounded by wild green bamboo. Along cool rustling streams. Beside a waterfall. Alive with blossoms of unknown origin and world renowned beauty. Mystery birds worthy of a thousand pictures. Lush… tropical... sensual... lovely (Sample ads, available from author).

Direct allusions to the paradisal nature of the Hawaiian tourist experience are found also in the actual names given to tourist attractions, sites and businesses in the sample of Hawaiian ads. Paradise Park and Paradise Cove Luau, Paradise Express (a t-shirt shop), Maui Menus: Palate Paradise, Hana: Heaven on Maui, Maui Tropical Plantation— A Hawaiian Paradise, and the Seven Sacred Pools are all examples.

On a flight to Hawaii, the visitor may begin with a "pre-experience" of the islands he or she is about to visit. Hawaiian music plays in the background, while tropical fruit drinks and cocktails are offered. Airline stewards and stewardesses don uniforms in bright floral prints and loose, flowing fabrics. On one observed flight, a film entitled "Hawaii" was shown; the cinematography included underwater scenes and lengthy periods where a single image filled the screen for long, relaxed moments. In order, the following images were presented: Large tropical fish; pristine beaches; hibiscus, orchids and other flowers, including the "Bird of Paradise;" fan palms; birds in flights against a bright blue sky; driftwood, waves, and sea

foam on the beach; views through drifting clouds of mountainous volcanic islands; deep moss-covered canyons; tumbling waterfalls; sea cliffs; multi-stranded colorful kites soaring and dipping in the air; sea frothing around rocks; bunches of bananas; acres of pineapples; lone cacti; the jungle canopy; windsurfers and sailboats; palm trees and leisurely swimmers. Kuter indicates the "travel film... incorporates the aspects of paradise, beauty and magic that might be considered wishful thinking," and that "documenting paradise" is a "goal of travel films" (1975, p. 65). The paradisal discourse found in the marketing of Hawaii in film and ads reinforces the notion of Otherness, with its attendant tropes; this presentation of paradisal images in pre-consumption periods and during the early stages of the consumption process further stimulates the homology of Hawaii as paradise.

In Hawaii, native culture is reconfigured to maintain the image of Hawaii as paradise. Luaus are prepared, hula dances, Hawaiian music, and "educational activities" are all performed for the entertainment of the tourist (Buck 1993). The mainland American tourist to Hawaii seeks the noble savage, the inhabitant of an unspoiled paradise. At the same time, traditional Hawaiian cultural practices are altered to preserve the myth of Hawaii as paradise:

> Almost everything in Hawaii communicates through a system of codes that tourism, and the public and private institutions that support tourism, have constructed over years of selling Hawaii as paradise... The production of paradise is an all-encompassing code that revalues everything in the islands... The now-dominant myth of Hawaii appropriates Hawaiian music as a signifier of a tourist paradise... The ideological work of any dominant myth is to make itself look neutral and innocent and, in the process, to naturalize human relationships of power and domination. This is what the dominant myth of Hawaii as paradise does so well... hula is accompanied by the audience's consumption of lomi lomi salmon, poi, pork, Mai Tais, Blue Hawaiis, Chi Chis, all of them-food, drink, dance, and music-served up as signifiers of paradise (Buck 1993, pp. 180, 4-5; however, see Ekholm-Friedman and Friedman 1995).

Fully within the context of Otherness, Hawaii is described as romantic, exotic, a land of sexual fantasy, secluded and different. Images of natural flora, fauna and landscapes predominate; where present, humans are portrayed as primitive and as living in isolation and leisure. Tourists from mainland United States expect Otherness, primitive and paradisal, to be an integral part of life in or travel to

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Hawaii. This perception is reinforced, and perhaps in some cases precipitated, by effective marketing techniques on the part of goods and services marketers in the Hawaiian tourist industry (see Keown 1989 and Nitta 1992, however, for a discussion of Japanese tourism to Hawaii.

Tourist Descriptions of the Hawaiian Paradise

The data presented below suggest that Western tourists, apparently drawing upon both embedded cultural concepts and tourism marketing messages, associate Hawaii with paradise. In this part of the study, 211 randomly selected households in a major urban center in the western United States (not in Hawaii) were phoned by are independent researcher. Respondents were from 21 to 90 years old; 96 were male and 115 were female. In addition, open-ended written questionnaires were administered to a convenience sample of 253 students of various backgrounds and academic interests at a large university also in the western United States. These respondents ranged in age from 18 to 53; 138 were male and 115 were female. In both samples, informants were asked to "indicate a word, words or a phrase that best describes Hawaii to you." Respondents to the written questionnaire were additionally asked to elaborate upon the meaning of the word or phrase given. Respondents' answers were then analyzed as discourse; terms and phrases were grouped into encompassing tropes or patterns of images and characteristics.2

Researcher-generated tropes encompass more than one respondent term; so, for example, in the category headed by the word "beautiful," the terms "awesome" and "gorgeous" were also included. In addition, respondents themselves often presented words or phrases together. For instance, physical features frequently appeared in conjunction with one another in a given informant's response: "sun, ocean, mountains,... lava tubes" (F, #76).3 Thus, bases for combining respondent terms into tropes or patterns of terms included researcher/ research assistant discussion and triangulation on perceived similarities of terms, as well as grouping on the part of respondents.

Respondent data yielded the following tropes in paradisal discourse concerning Hawaii: Tropical/ warm; island flora, fauna and topographical features; natural abundance; beauty; exoticism; sexuality; leisured; and paradise, the latter interpreted as encompassing many of the meanings expressed and included in the other tropes. A

separate trope of "touristed" in a negative sense was also encountered and is analyzed (see Table 3).

Description of Tropes

As in the advertising and travel film discussed earlier, references to geographical features and landscape, flora and fauna predominate in the respondent descriptions. As Pratt suggests is endemic to travel writing, nature is perceived to be relatively untouched by humankind. The "abundance" of nature recalls both the Orientalist emphasis on fertility and the primitivist freedom from want and necessity. Like Homer's Elysian Fields and Calypso's Grotto, all is provided in Hawaii. In Hawaii, as in Eden, nature is beautiful and bountiful:

> Beautiful, natural... very green and lush with waterfalls and beaches (F, #321).
> A tropical paradise— a lush, living, growing wilderness... (M, #189).

Variations on "beautiful" included glowing, awesome, lovely, and gorgeous. Again, respondents often grouped these terms together:

> Awesome and beautiful... beautiful climate and scenery (M, #375).
> ...beautiful... The water is gorgeous there (F, #291).

Most prominent were adjectives related to the tropical climate, often with specific reference to warmth and moisture, sometimes accompanied by the names of actual plants and/or animals:

> ...very jungly and hot, humid... (F, #159).
> Tropical, warm, humid, rainforests or a lot of greenery, animal/plant life native (and unique) to the place (F, #343).

Thus, separately or in association with reference to tropical warmth, were descriptions of the flora and fauna and mentions of topography and actual geographical features. The latter included repeated references to beaches and sand, sea or ocean, surf and waves, and wind or breeze, all physical features of an island, isolated and secluded as laid out in Western paradisal discourse:

> ...the warmth of the white sand on the beach... the blue sea water sloshing onto the shore (F, #337).

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Table 3: Tourists' Paradisal Discourse
Sample Terms as Collapsed into Named Tropes

Trope	*Sample Terms*
Tropical Warm	Tropical, warm, moist, rain, humid
Island flora, fauna and topography:	Island, beaches, sea, ocean, wind, breeze, waves, rocks, surfing, sky, water, palm trees, shells, sand, fruit, pineapples, seafood, coconuts, vegetation, waterfalls
Natural Abundance:	Lush, abundant, nature, green
Beauty:	Beautiful, glowing, awesome, gorgeous
Exotic:	Exotic, unusual, unique, different, many cultures, "Aloha," natives, hula, Polynesian, muumuus
Sexuality:	Romantic, sexual, sex, love
Leisured:	Relaxing, "hang loose," peaceful, magical, basking, vacation, freedom, drugs, refreshing, remote, secluded, carefree, time, restful, away, isolated
Paradise:	Paradise, heavenly, tropical paradise, paradise on earth
Touristed:	Commercial, exploited, crowded, expensive, conspicuous consumption, tourist trap, touristy, tourist paradise

> Sweet, hot, sandy beaches, breeze, rain... rolling waves (F, #319).
> ...volcanoes and big rainstorms (F, #321).

Reference to exotic or different and to specific things or behaviors which themselves seemed indicative of exoticism were common. Like Orientalism, travel writing and primitivism, the opposition of Self vs. Other is foundational here. Respondents provided the term "exotic," along with explanations of what they meant by this term, and/or things specifically related to Hawaiian culture; Otherness is apparent in their responses:

> Exotic, heritage... I see a place and a people full of history and heritage and   many traditions and customs (F, #274).

> Exotic-enchanting environment containing peoples of a mysterious nature. I always think of exotic people as having very large and very dark eyes (F, #310).

Humans were almost always mentioned within the context of the Otherness of local "exotic" culture. In addition, descriptions of native life were often coupled with references to sexuality or sexual freedom, notably on the part of male respondents. However, an emphasis on sexuality went beyond reference to natives to include personal sexual freedom and the sexuality of non-natives as well:

> ...parties, natives, dancing women in grass skirts" (M, #20),
> Nice, good super beaches, half-naked girls, coconuts and Island fun (M, #135).

Again, the discussed discourses are brought to mind. Said indicates the Orient was/ is a place which "exuded dangerous sex," where "freedom of intercourse" abounds (1978, p.167). Torgovnick describes primitivism as concerned with "rampant sexuality" (1990, p. 104). Pratt analyzes the emphasis on sexual intercourse with "natives" or "slaves" in some examples of travel writing. Within Western historical paradisal discourse, references to sexuality are also abundant; Eden is a place without shame concerning nakedness and a place of guiltless sexuality (until "the Fall"). Thus, survey respondents provided descriptions which resonate with the trope of sexuality expressed in Orientalism, primitivism, travel writing, and the historical paradisal discourse of Western society.

Another important trope in the data is represented by terms and phrases which the researchers categorized as "leisured." These terms

characterized Hawaii as a place of relaxation, a place that is restful, calm and away from daily life:

> Hawaii is a place far away from *everyday trials* and tribulations. It is a resting place mainly for relaxation without worries *(F, #345).*
> ...a beautiful and relaxing place where one can forget about the outside world *(F, #314)* .
> ...away from the fast-paced lifestyle and to a place of quiet, relaxing and satisfying surroundings *(M, #149).*

The emphasis on leisure and the abrogation of daily responsibilities in Western paradisal discourse— Homer's Elysium and Calypso's Grotto, as well as the Judeo-Christian Eden, for example— is found here in informant quotes concerning Hawaii.

A trope of particular interest in the data is actual reference to "paradise." "Paradise" encompasses all other tropes in paradisal discourse. Many respondents used the specific word "paradise" to describe Hawaii, alone or in short phrases such as "tourist paradise," "island paradise," "tropical paradise," or "'heaven," but also sometimes in longer sentences and descriptions:

> A place that exists under the climatic and scenic conditions that most people ideally envision as paradise. Soft, humid air, warm days, warm nights; a plush green landscape that invites even the most discriminating of critics to the wild untamed beauty of its waters, both inland and coastal. Perhaps the greatest beauty is caught in the simplicity and contentment found in the native Hawaiian life, where one's greatest concerns can be found with nature, the elements and the family (M, #11).

Like Western historical paradisal discourse, tropes include warm *warmth,* abundance, nature, simplicity, and freedom from want.

In a follow-up question on the written survey, informants were asked to *elaborate* upon the meaning of the word(s) or phrase given in response to the original request that they "indicate a word, words or a phrase that best describes Hawaii." Table 4 provide further examples of the ways in which informants elaborated upon the meaning of Hawaii as "paradise." The various categories of warmth and tropicality, lush flora and fauna, island characteristics, beauty, exoticism, sexuality, and leisured are all encompassed in the term "paradise" as applied descriptively to Hawaii. Thus, "paradise" may be seen as a totality of the other tropes. Because of the encompassing nature of this trope, assessed through its

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Table 4: Respondents' Elaborations on Meaning of "Paradise"
[Paradise is...]

heaven... aesthetically pleasing, in all aspects.

a place to vacation at and spoil yourself at. Indulge yourself in the splendor of the atmosphere.

a place far away from everyday trials and tribulations. It is a resting place mainly for relaxation without worries. Paradise is a word describing the perfect environment of hot sun instead of cold snow and warm sandy tropical beaches. Paradise refers to a place you would like to be at the present time.

numerous sandy beaches, tall palm trees and for some reason a sunset.

very lush, tropical and being there would create a very healthy feeling.

beaches, sky blue water, people always surfing, and enjoying the good life. Paradise to me is a place where I can spend 24 hours in the water, enjoying the sun, and the phenomenon of the underwater world. Hawaii has a lot of those aspects.

a warm, beautiful place that's almost "perfect" in looks and climate. It's a place I want to visit in the near future.

a place where people fall in love and everything is beautiful around them. It seems like it is the perfect place to be. Always warm.

beautiful, warm, exotic... Warm, and carefree!!

the beauty of the tropical island... there is much to see and also places to relax by the ocean alone, in tranquility.

a lush jungle paradise with quiet beaches.

vacation paradise... what a wonderful vacation spot it is

beautiful and colorful... you need an unlimited amount of money or the "paradise" runs dry

someplace beautiful and worth seeing. Someplace you would love to stay. Warm, sunny, beaches, romantic

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It's an island where it is peaceful and calm. You can kick back and relax. People are there to wait on you and attend to your needs. The coves have crystal blue water with small waterfalls in some of them. Lots of tropical flowers and fruits. Away from everyday hassles of day to day living.

so beautiful and peaceful and a place where all people would want to go to get away from the hustless and bustles of life for a while. A place of privacy because of the isolation that the ocean gives it.

paradisiacal areas where time and space seem to stand still. And also the city for all your needs to be met.

a land of eternally warm weather, beautiful beaches, exotic plants and sights, friendly people, and high real estate prices.

a place of "milk and honey" where the climate makes life bearable and exciting

a peaceful place that you've always wanted to go to get away from the daily life.

the best thing since sliced bread. It's just great, that is if you like sun, warm water, great food, and friendly people

a place that exists under the climatic and scenic conditions that most people ideally envision as paradise. Soft, humid air, warm days, warm nights a plush green landscape that invites even the most discriminating of critics to the wild untamed beauty of its waters, both inland and coastal. Perhaps the greatest beauty is caught in the simplicity and contentment found in the native Hawaiian life, where one's greatest concerns can be found with nature, the elements, and the family.

a heaven away from the hustle and bustle

the ideal, beautiful islands that one could forget all their worries and responsibilities on and merely bask in the sun and enjoy the entertainment, beautiful environment and tropical culture

to me, Hawaii is a place I would love to get away to. It has a great climate and plenty of beach.

it's gorgeous there, especially outside of Honolulu (because it's too commercial there).

components, expanded informant descriptions, and intermingling with other categories of terms, "paradise" appears to be homologous
with Hawaii. For many mainland American consumers, invoking cultural constructs in their consumer behavior and attitudes, Hawaii is paradise.

Some informants suggested Hawaii is a place to be avoided. Aversion to Hawaii is indicative of a "paradise lost" mentality, and emphasis is placed on overcrowding, pushy salesmanship, and the loss of beauty, nature and culture. All of the informants who expressed this aversion had actually visited Hawaii. The following are examples of the trope of "touristed:"

> ...almost entirely geared to the tourist industry... overcrowded... the vendors were pushy... over priced (F, #57).

> I feel that Hawaii is all plastic hula girl lamps— fake lei's (sic) and fat, vacationing business men (or Gidget & her friends). I fear tourist traps (F, #8).

These responses may even be interpreted as a "Snake" in the Garden of Eden; the snake is commercialism, perhaps tourism itself, seen as destructive of the very elements it seeks to use as attractions. If paradisal sites such as Hawaii are perceived to exist primarily for the pleasure of those in the West, then their "loss" to something other than "paradise" is to be mourned by Western tourists. This sentiment of "paradise lost" is also reflected in the following informant quotes:

> ...the annual tourist rate increases and the true "get away to paradise feeling" decreases (M, #23).

> Hawaii has been exploited continually since Cook's discovery in 1779. The missionaries brought disease and literally destroyed a culture, epidemics and their religious puritanism which demoralized the people. Now the exploitation of the land is a tragedy. Converting cane fields and forests to housing tracts. I'm speechless (M, #41).

It is ironic that the search for and consumption of paradise may actually lead to the destruction of paradise. Of course, concerns with the negative impact of tourism, particularly with the destruction of culture, are not new (see Belk and Costa 1995; Crick 1989; Greenwood 1989; Machlis and Burch 1983; Rossel 1988; Turner and Ash 1975; Urry 1990a, 1990b). Still, at a ratio of more than 65 to 1, most impressions of Hawaii were overwhelmingly positive.

Thus, cultural conceptualizations of Hawaii as paradise developed historically and are reinforced by those who have been to Hawaii or by those who describe it, the latter including marketers of Hawaiian tourism. Hawaii is Eden, an earthly paradise, where natural beauty abounds in a setting of tropical warmth, life is free from needs and full of desires, and the exotic Other is approachable, even consumable. The respondents in this study have been shown to partake of the American or Western cultural system which homologizes Hawaii and paradise. It appears they seek paradise in a touristic journey to Hawaii; if paradise is not found, they experience a sense of paradise lost.

DISCUSSION

Liminality and Tourism

Tourism is often liminal, representing a time and space where daily obligations, responsibilities, roles and activities are suspended. Many theorists have commented on the liminal qualities of the tourist experience, emphasizing the sacralizing nature of tourism (MacCannell 1976), its ludic nature and rejuvenating function (Lett 1983), and negation or inversion of everyday activities and roles (Gottlieb 1982; see also Cohen 1988; Graburn 1977; Mergen 1978; Moore 1980; Shields 1990; Turner 1974; Turner and Turner 1978; Urry 1990b; Vester 1987).

In many ways, the tourist experience itself is a *pilgrimage*. The tourist journey is similar to Turner's (1977) prime example of the liminal period (the pilgrimage); tourists are liminal personae (pilgrims). Theilmann (1987) suggests, in fact, that the *original* form of tourism was medieval pilgrimage. The study presented here suggests that the long, transoceanic journey to Hawaii, organized activities such as luaus and hula performances, the use of symbols in the marketing of Hawaii as paradise, and the EuroAmerican myth of Hawaii as paradise all conform to descriptions of pilgrimage centers and liminality as well.

An important component in the contention that tourism involves liminality is the structural existence of a "ritual threshold or *limens*," beyond which lies the liminal space (Moore 1980, p. 208). Hawaii's secluded location and the abrogation of daily work activities and responsibilities while in Hawaii fit well with the concept of a threshold and liminality in the time and place beyond that threshold.

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In addition, the cultural perception that the destination is somehow sacred in and of itself, that is, that Hawaii is an earthly paradise, strengthens the association between tourism to Hawaii and pilgrimage. More markedly than non-paradisal-like tourist destinations, tourism to Hawaii, culturally interpreted as travel to and consumption of paradise, may best be seen as a sacred pilgrimage. In fact, Hawaii as a tourist destination represents double liminality. As a tourist experience, a trip to Hawaii involves liminality; as a representation of the earthly Paradise, Hawaii is again liminal.

Hawaii as a liminal space and experience serves to marginalize further the place and its people. Not only is Hawaii to be commodified and consumed, it is to be relegated to a type of non-space, available to the mainland American tourist for respite from reality. Perceptions of the people and the landscape draw upon the mythical past and re-create the past in the present. Marketers present Hawaii as paradise, and tourists expect and experience Hawaii as a liminal vacation spot, further sacralized through its association with the Western concept of "Paradise." If the tourist wishes to further avoid the reality that is everyday life in the Hawaiian Islands, he or she can participate in the consumption of the hyperreal to a greater extent, moving beyond the ads, the travel films, the names and rhetoric of the tourist sites, to the spectacle of luaus, native dancing, and the hotel resort bubble (see Boorstin 1964; Debord 1970; Eco 1983; Rossel 1988).

The Tropes of Paradisal Discourse, Orientalism, Primitivism and Travel Writing

Similar, even identical, tropes are found in the historical paradisal discourse of Western society, in the marketing of Hawaii, and in the associations reported by participants in the surveys. Forming a distinctive discourse, the tropes of paradise often are also similar to those found in Orientalism, primitivism and travel writing.

Yet the similarity goes beyond the tropes themselves and must be analyzed in terms of implications, meaning and power. As with Orientalism, primitivism and European travel writing, Western paradisal discourse expresses an hierarchical relationship between Western society and paradise-like tourist sites. The Western tourist is superordinate, central, knowledgeable, the gazer and the consumer, economically superior, representative of white male power,

advanced, tame, in control of sexuality, civilized and involved in daily responsibilities. <mark>The paradisal tourist site and its residents arc subordinate, inhabitants of a peripheral time and space construed as existing primarily for the consumption experience of others,</mark> know and represented by the West, to be gazed upon and consumed, objects for commodification and consumption, dependent upon the economic whims of the "dominant" tourist, to be penetrated and controlled, backward, natural and lush, lacking in human presence, characterized by an uncontrolled sexuality, primitive, resident in a liminal space and living at a leisured pace.

As in Orientalism, primitivism, and the places described by travel writers, there are mysterious and appealing aspects to paradise, sometimes encoded within the same tropes. <mark>For example, uncontrolled sexuality may be alluring, at least for a period of time.</mark> Power derived through domination, scrutinization, penetration and consumption may come to those who visit such a place. In addition, the lush environment and the general liminality provide a restful experience for the Western tourist, seeking escape from everyday obligations and workday responsibilities. <mark>Thus, Hawaii is both desirable *and* Other. It is, in fact, desirable *as* Other.</mark>

Tourism as Confrontation with Other

It may be that tourism is a consumption and marketing phenomenon which *always* involves some kind of confrontation with Other, be it Other space, Other time, Other people, Other cultures, Other experiences. This expanded use of the concept of Other brings us incisively to the perspective that Other *is whatever the human subject and his/her daily existence is not.* Thus, in experiencing an abrogation of responsibilities, of everyday life, in entering liminality in the tourist experience, the tourist is dealing with what he or she is *not.* The separation from home, the journey, the temporary residence in other space, the confrontation with other environments, experiences and people emphasize both the parameters of Other and the definition and identity of Self.

The host society, on the other hand, may reconfigure to meet the needs and demands of the guest, may respond through cultural alterations in marketing and production for tourist audiences and consumers, may even begin to see "self" and "culture" as valuable primarily for consumption by tourists (although this is not always the case; see McKean 1989). <mark>In the end, the host culture may define</mark>

itself primarily in terms of the perceptions of the tourist. Thus, the confrontation with Other occurs in both directions, experienced by both host and guest, thus by both marketer and consumer, and by both marketing and consuming societies or groups. The mutually defining, reflexive aspects of Orientalism, primitivism, and transculturation in the contact zone are brought to mind.

In the Hawaiian Islands, tourism marketers and many local residents have absorbed the description and definition of their home as paradise and engage with the potential consumers, the visitors, travelers, tourists, in the commodification and sale of Hawaii. In this sense, marketing of Hawaii exemplifies "autoethnographic expression... in which colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that engage with the colonizer's own terms" (Pratt 1992, p. 7); emphasis in the original). In the context of marketing, transculturation occurs quite clearly. The marketing of self as tourist destination, of one's home as tourist site, involves some appropriation of meanings from the dominant culture, thereby providing the customer with the expected consumption experience.

Again, the interaction between host and guest societies, represented by individuals but culminating in and from larger cultural effects, is often asymmetrical. In the situation of tourism from the West to paradise-like sites, the power bias, the asymmetry, typically skews in the direction of the guest, giving the tourist a superordinate position vis-a-vis the host. The tourist may experience Other as desirable for tourist purposes, as a spectacle to be viewed, as an object to be consumed. In these cases, the power bias is maintained and furthered; the Otherness of the host and of the guest is solidified. Of course there are instances in which the local knowledge and experience of residents place them in a more powerful position vis-a-vis tourists, overcharging tourists for services and goods, taking advantage of monopoly provision of products, or utilizing other forms of power (see Bowman 1989; Cohen 1971, for example).

This study has focused on the Otherness inherent in the historically developed concept of paradise in Western society and in the marketing and consumption of tourist destinations, particularly Hawaii, as paradise. Paradisal conceptualizations serve to relegate Hawaii and its inhabitants to the subordinated and consumed Other; they maintain the colonial and neo-colonial stereotype of the exotic and primitive as an object for commodification and consumption. It may even be said that the consumption, marketing, and historical representations of Hawaii and other tropical tourist

destinations as paradise all interact dialectically in a way which, while *appearing* to maintain the sanctity of Hawaiian culture, in fact facilitates cultural coercion, commodification, and conquest. As Western science legitimized Orientalism, primitivism and the hierarchy inherent in European travel writing, so the financial gain derived from successful marketing and the pleasure derived from consumption of the subordinated Other legitimize the paradisal discourse of Hawaiian tourism.

NOTES

1. I would like to thank a former Ph.D. student in Economics, Solomon Nomala, on whose committee I served, for stimulating me to re-think a critical approach to my study on Hawaii.
2. By first asking informants to provide the word, words or phrases which best describe Hawaii to them, followed by a statement calling for elaboration of their own answers, informants were encouraged to perform a type of analysis themselves. They were asked to delve into the deeper meaning and significance of the phrases they chose, and to thus bring the deeper meaning to the surface and make it more accessible. Respondents also provided data on household income, number of trips to Hawaii, and items/services purchased: the latter were not analyzed in this study, however.
3. Informants are identified by gender (M or F) and informant number.

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Consuming Desires: Performing Gender in Virginia Woolf's *Orlando,* Neil Jordan's *The Crying Game* and Sally Potter's *Orlando*

Peter Stokes[*]

This essays examines how twentieth century queer practices— such as queer literature, queer theory, and queer film— attempt to resist and reconfigure the historical legacy of compulsory homosexuality and the commodification of gender. I begin by tracing the ways in which the eighteenth century discourse on masquerade offered resistance to the limited, culturally sanctioned array of gendered subject positions of the time in order to evaluate the effectiveness of postmodern modes of resisting and reconfiguring gender construction and consumption at the close of the twentieth century. I argue that the postmodern discourse on gender performance improves upon the eighteenth century discourse on masquerade as a strategy for reconceiving resistance to the hegemonic legitimation of compulsory homosexuality, and that by queering our conception of gender construction in this way we may consummate our desire for a wider array of social/ sexual desiring positions without reinscribing them within an unself-critical consumerism.

In *Sexual Underworlds of the Enlightenment,* Terry Castle argues that while eighteenth century England largely condemned the practice of travesty at masquerades, "it also found in them an intimation of a quintessential modern truth: that culture was an affront to 'nature'-non-transcendental in origin, shaped by convention, the ultimate product of fashion" (Castle 157). Culture is henceforth to be understood as a construct, in contradistinction to "nature," which is

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henceforth to be placed within scare quotes so as to signify our doubts as to the very existence of such a thing— this, in scare quotes, is our modern "truth." Here, in the masquerade of culture, where one might play the part of man or woman, one could never again seem to *be* man or woman. The masquerade, "through its stylised assault on gender boundaries," Castle argues, "played an interesting part in the creation of the modern 'polymorphous' subject— perverse by definition, sexually ambidextrous, and potentially unlimited in the range of desires" (158). Since these masquerades were attended by persons of all stations and social rank, they offered an opportunity for transgressing class and gender differences en route to delimiting new hybridizations of social/ sexual desire. Thus, while the game of sexual discourse continued to run very much to the advantage of men (who were less frequently vilified for taking part in such proceedings than women), Castle argues that "the masquerade offered contemporary women a subversive— if temporary— simulacrum of sexual autonomy" (169).

In short, the masquerade offered both men and women a temporary liberation from the constraints of hegemonic patriarchal society in which sanctioned definitions of culture, nature and truth were coequal with a compulsory heterosexuality. In what sense, then, can the masquerade be said to offer these subjects a subversive potential-one in which the constraints of straight culture are overthrown by a constraint-smashing polymorphous libidinousness? As Michel Foucault argues in "Sexual Choice, Sexual Act," when one attempts to conceive of liberation, the question "is not whether a culture without restraints is possible or even desirable but whether the system of constraints in which a society functions leaves individuals the liberty to transform the system" (Foucault Politics 294). Where, then, are we to locate the means for modifying a system of compulsory heterosexuality articulated discursively through the disciplinary naturalization of a particular, limited number of gendered subject positions which themselves masquerade as ontological essences?

Is the answer to be found in, what Castle calls, a "potentially un-limited... range of desires" (Castle 158)— in what might be described as the n-gendering of a limitless number of desiring subject positions? Or is this not simply the other—"subversive"— side of the same disciplinary system? The problem with subversion is that it fails to deconstruct the oppositional tensions which are the foundation of that disciplinary system. As Jacques Derrida points out, "To deconstruct the opposition, first of all, is to overturn the hierarchy at a

given moment" (Derrida 41). There is, however, a still more important step: "we must also mark the interval between inversion, which brings low what was high, and the irruptive emergence of a new 'concept,' a concept that can no longer be, and never could be, included in the previous regime" (42). Rather than speak of subversive agents, then, we would do better to speak of, as Castle almost suggests, "perverse" agents— where perversion suggests an indefinite, though not unlimited, number of partial, multivalent resistances within contested fields of power. The result of this perversion is a *queering* of power relations that avoids the trap of binary thinking, since, as Eve Sedgwick explains:

> The force of the word queer operates against both assimilationist politics and separatist identity definitions. Those two have often gone together: the notion that one is unproblematically of this group or that group makes tokenization easier, makes a whole variety of assimilationist practices easier. My happy fantasy about queer is that it would function as an identity resisting the two at the same time, through the same movement. (Sedgwick 28).

The very fantastical quality of the term, however, is, in certain respects, cause for concern. In *Bodies* That Matter, Judith Butler comments at some length on the cautiousness of her own use of the term "queer," which she considers "necessary as a term of affiliation" but one that, like all identity categories, "will not fully describe those it purports to represent" (Butler *Bodies* 230). My use of the term here is informed by this caution. In fact, I find the term useful precisely because of this instability. As Sedgwick points out, "The word 'queer' itself means *across*— it comes from the Indo-European root— *twerkw*, which also yields the German quer (transverse), Latin *torquere* (to twist), English *athwart"* (Sedgwick *Tendencies* xii). As a verb, it also suggests *to puzzle*— thus the term is useful to me insofar as it problematizes our familiar understandings of gender. I do not intend to reify the term, but rather to install it as one site for the contestation of and reconfiguration of gender differences as these are consumed in the postmodern moment. I understand the critical agency leveraged in this way to operate neither as a collusion with limits nor as a revolutionary emancipation from limits but as the deployment of a partial resistance within contested fields of power where every agent is always at least a double agent. The success of this critical agency is provisional, contingent on a consistent investigation of its own modes of representation.

In reading Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* (1928), Neil Jordan's *The Crying Game* (1993), and Sally Potter's *Orlando* (1993)-each of which attempts, partly through masquerade, to enact a queering of this compulsory heterosexuality-I want to locate the queer agency available in these performances of gender. Since the subject of this agency, as Judith Butler argues in *Gender Trouble,* "is not *determined* by the rules through which it is generated because signification is *not a founding act, but rather a regulated process of repetition,"* agency is "located within the possibility of a variation on that repetition" (Butler *Gender* 145)*.* Butler offers drag as but one example of such a performative agency. Since the publication of *Gender Trouble,* however, drag has sometimes been taken— wrongly, Butler now maintains— as the paradigm for performativity. Drag for Butler— and this is a point I will return to later-may in fact offer something closer to what masquerade, as Castle describes it, offered the women of eighteenth century England: merely the simulacrum of a performative critical agency vis-a-vis the hegemonic commodification of a limited number of legitimate gendered subject positions. In reading these texts, then, I want to perform a critique that resists both the essentialist, ontologizing model of gender difference and the productivist dispersion of limitless differences— a critique that is both queer and queering, articulating indeterminancies through counter-inscriptions and performative repetitions that do not reify or naturalize those performances.

As a set of texts— one literary and two filmic— arrayed at both ends of the twentieth century, Woolf's *Orlando,* Jordan's *The Crying Game* and Potter's *Orlando* enable us to examine what's at stake in the accumulating discourse on gender construction at this end of the twentieth century. While Woolf's *Orlando* valorizes an androgynous blending of gender and sexual differences, it refuses an outright deconstruction of those differences, thereby leaving them ontologically intact. Woolf's protagonist learns that the edicts of compulsory heterosexuality ("the person was of his own sex, and thus all embraces were out of the question") can be fooled by a performative compliance with those disciplinary strictures ("they acted the parts of man and woman") while still exercising one's own desires via this same performance ("From the probity of breeches she turned to the seductiveness of petticoats and enjoyed the love of both sexes equally") (Woolf 38,179, 221). Agency, in this case, is cast as a limited success: a confined safe space that circulates within but does not radically alter the culturally hegemonic institutions which put

compulsory heterosexuality into place— what Castle rightly describes as merely a simulacrum of sexual autonomy. Sally Potter's filmic reconstruction of Woolf's hero/ heroine at this end of the twentieth century— which concludes not on the eleventh of October, 1928, but in *our* present, with Orlando driving off on a motorbike— is at once vastly reductive of the original and far more perversely disruptive. Neil Jordan's *The Crying Game* constitutes another challenging rewriting of the problematics of compulsory heterosexuality by positioning its protagonist as a heterosexual whose sexual transformation enacts, rather than proselytizes for, a sexual indeterminacy which marks neither gender nor sexuality as an ontological category, but rather as, in Judith Butler's words, "a *stylized repetition of acts*" (Butler 140).

Woolf's novel is, of course, a fictive biography and this frame is not without consequence. Like a well meaning New Historicist, Orlando's biographer is forced to make do with sometimes sketchy source materials: "burnt papers and little bits of tape," or other "tantalising fragments" (Woolf 126). Where such records happen to have been "lamentably incomplete," the biographer reports, "it has been necessary to speculate, to surmise, and even to make use of the imagination" (119). In these moments of narrativistic self-reflexivity we see Woolf's most explicit critique of subjectivization. Writing constructs subjects without recourse to "truth." Discourse is performative: it produces subjects rather than describes them. Thus, when a person of indeterminate gender arouses Orlando's interests, it is convention rather than truth which would have all embraces "out of the question" should that person prove to be of Orlando's own sex (38). And it is this particular convention, compulsory hetero sexuality, which likewise consigns such embraces to the realm of possibility once it is determined that the person, Sasha, is in fact a woman. Recognizing this, the heretofore feminized Orlando does not hesitate to perform his duty: "his manhood woke" and "he grasped a sword in his hand" (40). It is the securing of differences, finally, which marks and underscores identifiable gender positions rather than *a priori* "truths." Again and again, Woolf's novel will argue that outside of the circulation of regulatory discourse people are in fact not gendered at all.

For Woolf, discourses, rather than subjects, are discontinuous. Thus, in Woolf's novel, Orlando can "become a woman" and remain "in every other respect... precisely as he had been. The change of sex, though it altered their future, did nothing whatever to alter their

Identity" (138). The centuries, rather than Orlando, have changed. Nevertheless, as a woman, Orlando comes to see for the first time that the properly calibrated performance of gender is attained only "by the most tedious discipline" (157). While still a man, Orlando is visited by the Archduchess Harriet. Still smarting from Sasha's disappearance, Orlando foreswears love and consequently ignores the Archduchess. As a woman, Orlando invites the still persistent Archduchess in for a glass of wine. With a suddenness not unlike Orlando's own gender transformation, the Archduchess becomes an Archduke: "in her place stood a tall gentleman in black. A heap of clothes lay in the fender" (178). Harry confesses to the deceit he has practiced on Orlando: rather than submit to the regulatory discourse of convention, he has chosen to perform the gender that would allow him to maintain, his attraction for Orlando. While Orlando is a man, Harry will play the part of Harriet. Once Orlando assumes the position of woman, the time is right for him to play the part of Harry: and so, together, "they acted the parts of man and woman" (179). Thus, Orlando returns to her wardrobe of men's clothing and visits prostitutes masquerading as a man until finally flinging off "all disguise" and admitting that she is "a woman" (217). No longer forced to cancel her affections in the face of convention as she had once been willing to do with Sasha, Orlando is now able to enjoy "the love of both sexes equally" (221).

Convention, as it turns out, however, is not so easily outman-oeuvred. When the spirit of her age demands marriage, Orlando performs "in spirit... a deep obeisance to the spirit of her age" by marrying a ship's captain named Marmaduke Bonthrop Shelmerdine and bearing him a son (265). Such obeisance, however, need not be self-cancelling: "She was married, true; but if one's husband was always sailing round Cape Horn, was it marriage? If one liked him, was it marriage? If one liked other people, was it marriage? And finally, if one wished, more than anything in the whole world, to write poetry, was it marriage? She had her doubts" (264). In Woolf's novel, finally, agency is not limited to masquerade: Orlando "need neither fight her age, nor submit to it; she was of it, yet remained herself. Now, therefore, she could write, and write she did. She wrote. She wrote. She wrote" (266). Orlando returns, in secret, to her first lovepoetry, that "secret transaction, a voice answering a voice" (325). Once again, Woolf's novel invokes the power of writing to disturb notions of "truth" and redistribute differences en route to constructing new definitions of subjectivity and producing new subjects

gendered in different ways, thereby delimiting new modes of social/ sexual desire. Yet the novel's queer agency is limited in two fundamental ways. First, the novel's *telos* is itself gendered. Orlando the man becomes Orlando the woman, with the latter clearly valorized as the better model for an androgyne subjectivity. Shelmerdine is still out there "sailing round Cape Horn" after all, and men are thus largely excluded from this closed circle of secret transactions. Ultimately then, Woolf's novel locates its critical leverage in the reinscription of a separatist politics. Second, by limiting its characterization of writing to a "secret transaction," writing, in this novel, stands little chance of radically altering the larger economy of hegemonic discourse which sanctions compulsory heterosexuality. Secret writing may in fact, like the secret spaces of the masquerade, remain circumscribed within the dominant disciplinary matrix of power, defining the limits of transgression rather than crossing them.

By contrast, Jordan's *The Crying Game* argues for a disruption of this larger economy of hegemonic discourse. Like Woolf's novel, Jordan's film takes as its starting point for this disruption the self-reflexive turn. Opening to the sound of "When A Man Loves A Woman," the camera pans away from a Ferris Wheel and follows the line of a train trestle, enacting a self-reflexive reeling up of the film. Again, we are reminded of the productive power of narrative and this filmic baring of the device operates as an instructive critique of mere escapist entertainment. The subject of Jordan's film, in fact, offers anything but a respite from a more complicated world. It concerns, as Jordan describes it, "a British soldier held hostage by an IRA activist" (Jordan xii). "The attraction of such a theme"-Jordan explains-"the friendship that develops between two protagonists in a conflict, that grows paradoxically deeper than any other allegiances, lies in the broader history of Anglo-Irish relationships: two cultures in need of each other, yet at war with each other" (xii). Within such a friendship, Jordan continues, "lay an erotic possibility, a sense of mutual need and identification" (xii). While acknowledging a certain debt to Frank O'Connor's "Guest of a Nation" and Brendan Behan's *The Hostage,* both of which address this same concern, Jordan distinguishes his own work from theirs. In those cases, as he describes it, "both stories ended tragically" (xii). Jordan's narrative, by contrast, moves toward another sort of conclusion: "With *The Crying Game I* brought the erotic thread to the surface. Instead of two, there were now three. A hostage, a captor, and an absent lover. The lover became the focus for the erotic subtext, loved by both men in a way they

couldn't love each other. And the story ended with a kind of happiness" (xii).

The Crying Game, then, takes a more complicated view of the mechanisms through which gender differences are articulated. Where Woolf's critique demonstrates that independent subject positions are defined by securing differences between gendered pairs, Jordan's critique relativizes differences by introducing triangles of increasingly indefinite terms. The first of these triangles is configured in the constellation made up of Jody, Jude and Fergus: first Jody holds Jude's hand in one of his own while urinating with the help of the other, and soon after Jude lures Jody into his kidnapping by offering him her body, which Jude later claims to have accomplished by thinking of Fergus. This first triangle is marked by its bifurcation, then, into heterosexualized pairs (Jody/Jude, Jude/Fergus) with Jude as the pivot— the first of two feminized points of references Jody and Fergus will have in common. The film's second triangulation of differences is anticipated in Jody's sharing of his wallet photo of Dil with Fergus. Again, the penis is invoked as the site around which these differences are inadequately marked. Fergus is left with no choice but to help the bound hostage urinate by handling Jody's penis. In the face of Fergus' discomfort, Jody remarks, "It's amazing how these small details take on such importance... " (193). When Fergus balks at helping Jody back into his trousers, Jody admonishes Fergus for his prudishness. "It's only a piece of meat," Jody reminds him (193). This second triangle is also marked by a seemingly heterosexualized distribution of pairs (Jody / Dil, Dil / Fergus) with Dil as the pivot-the second feminized point of reference around which Jody and Fergus, according to Jordan, organize their inability to love each other. The last of these triangles is distributed across the constellation made up of Dave, Dil and Fergus. Dave is the troublesome figure Dil turns aside in order make space for Fergus. Enraged at his castaway status, the vituperative Dave declaims angrily from the street below Dil's apartment, referring to Dil at one moment as a "dyke carrot cunt" (219). In this highly compressed, transexualized characterization, the film anticipates its by now famous secret. Dil is not all that she seems— a point which is underscored in the films third invocation of the penis, when, during an erotic scene between Dil and Fergus, as the screenplay dryly phrases it, "we see, in a closeup, that she is a man" (229). In the aftermath of this third phallic intrusion, Dil, like Jody, has to deal with Fergus' discomfort, marked most dramatically by Fergus' subsequent bout of nausea. "A girl has

feelings," Dil later reprimands Fergus (237). To which Fergus replies, "The thing is, Dil, you're not a girl" (237). "Details, baby, details," Dil reminds him, echoing Jody's earlier commentary on the exaggerated importance of such things (237).

Where the film begins straightforwardly enough, then, with "When A Man Loves A Woman," it concludes ironically with "Stand By Your Man." As Dil visits Fergus in prison, the film ends with what Jordan characterizes as "a *kind* of happiness, because it involved the separation of a prison cell and other more profound separations, of racial, national, and sexual identity. But for the lovers, it was the irony of what divided them that allowed them to smile" (xii-xiii, italics mine). Unable to cross the invisible barriers of power which forbid these lovers to consummate their desire for one another, Fergus and Dil find, through the quasi-visible materiality of the Plexiglas at the visitor's table, the safety to smile in spite of the profound distances still between them. The smile prompted by this irony, however, is not without its costs. As with Woolf's novel, the queer agency of *The Crying Game is* limited by its gendered *telos.* In this case, however, rather than moving from a masculine to a feminine ideal as with Woolf, we move from a feminine object of desire (the Dil of the wallet photo) to a feminized object of desire, the womanly man, with the latter clearly valorized as the ideal model for gender indeterminancy. Ultimately, the film locates its critical leverage in the reinscription of an assimilationist politics-the belief that, as Fran Michel puts it in her commentary on the film in *Cineaste,* "the only good woman is a man" (Michel 34). In this respect, the ironic resonance of "When A Man Loves A Woman," to borrow a phrase from Michel, "enacts a cruel misogyny" (34)— at least insofar as such a love, for Jody and Jude, ultimately ends in death. Fergus is, after all, able to recover from the shock of realizing that the object of Jody's desire is in fact a man. As Dil puts it to Fergus, "even when you were throwing up, I could tell you cared" (Jordan 234). However, Dil's shock at discovering that the object of desire which lured Jody to his death was in fact a woman— "those tits and that ass" as Dil puts it (265)— ultimately motivates Dil's murder of Jude. As Michel argues, we're meant to read Jude as "a heartless, selfish, unattractive bitch" and see Dil as an image of "undemanding goodness compounded of the most painful elements of masochistic femininity" (Michel 34). As such, Michel continues, "The film invites us to compare Jude with Dil— as women, as people in disguise, as sexual objects, as partners for Jody and Fergus— and Jude comes off much the worse for the

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comparison" (34). Convention, as it turns out, is not so easily outmanoeuvred. Certainly one might ask what powers at play in cultural discourse lead Jordan to take it for granted, from the very start, that a powerful woman is a dangerous thing or that Jody and Fergus couldn't love one another without relegating that love to a subtext.

Sally Potter's *Orlando,* finally, likewise offers no escape from these powers-a fact made evidently clear by the popular press' reaction to the film and to Potter herself. In a *Vogue* interview with Potter, Mira Stout reports that in Potter she half expected to find "a female Schwarzenegger" (Stout 138). Luckily for Stout, Potter is, in the flesh, only a "slight redheaded figure" (138). In an interview with *Rolling Stone,* Potter justifies her casting of Quentin Crisp as Queen Elizabeth with the claim that Crisp "is the true queen of England" (Travers 90). *Vogue* characterizes this decision merely as "a camp twist" (Stout 140). *Vogue* goes so far as to credit the film with "an inspired coupling of naturalistic cinematography... with high artifice production design" and in so doing misses a perfect chance to read the latter as a critique of the former by insisting, instead, on a heterosexualized synthesizing of the two (140). *Newsday* warns its readers that *Orlando* "will be a nightmare for those overly concerned with their own polymorphous potential," but finally succeeds in making the film safe for those readers with, presumably, secure monomorphic potential by characterizing the film's gender-crossing lead actress, Tilda Swinton, as "a sexy Renaissance madonna " (Anderson 75).

It doesn't help, of course, that Potter's own film is, in several instances, vastly reductive of the original text. In this *Orlando,* Sasha is simply a woman and Harry is simply a man. Neither of these positions is in anyway indeterminate. As a result, perhaps, the filmic Orlando never seems to enjoy the love of both sexes equally. In fact, the film's most disastrously misconceived simplification of the original may well be its positioning of Orlando's heterosexual interlude with Shel as both the first sexual experience of her long life and seemingly the most ecstatic experience of that life. At its weakest moments the film seems to be arguing that it is merely historicizing a shift in the location of the androgynous ideal from the Elizabethan male to the modern female. As Potter explains it to the *Village Voice,* "The notion that [Woolf] puzzled with most deeply was of the androgynous mind. The mind of the artist... is neither male nor female" (Taubin 62). Androgyny, then, becomes a matter of an undifferentiated sameness rather than an indefinite difference, a transcendent third term synthesizing the two original terms rather than deconstructing

their relation. Consequently, no critique of the hegemonic discourse on gender appears to be present. Power simply moves from one spot to another without disturbing a thing and the mind, apparently, is elsewhere.

Despite all this, Potter's film does a number of things— all of them in the last few minutes— that turn out to be in some ways more perversely disruptive than anything in Woolf's novel. To begin with, Orlando writes and publishes a novel. Thus, where the subject of Woolf's novel is fictively the subject of a biography, the subject of Potter's film is fictively the subject of a text of her own construction. More importantly though, Potter declines to have Orlando bear Shel a son and instead gives Orlando a daughter. When asked by Pat Dowell in a *Cineaste* interview if, "since the idea of finding true meaning in motherhood is a fairly common end in popular fiction and films for women," it wouldn't be better "to just jettison the idea of motherhood," Potter responds, "I thought it was much more interesting for Orlando to have a daughter than a son because... it would mean that Orlando would lose her property" (Dowell 16-17). But more than this, Potter argues, giving Orlando a daughter suggests that it's "time for women to take up our inheritance, an inheritance of a different kind. That's why the daughter is, at the end, playing with a little movie camera" (17). Just so, in this final self-reflexive turn, Potter's film offers itself as a critique of the constitutive role story telling plays in subjectivization. The young child is on her way to becoming the subjectivizing agent of her own discourse-Orlando looks into the child's camera and smiles. In this instance, Potter's film offers an opportunity for reconfiguring the consumption of social/ sexual desire in a way that is, I think, more substantially destabilizing than masquerade alone.

In a recent interview with Liz Kotz, Judith Butler attempts to correct what she considers to be the "bad reading" of *Gender Trouble,* which is, she adds, "unfortunately... the most popular" reading:

> The bad reading goes something like this: I can get up in the morning, look in my closet and decide which gender I want to be today. I can take out a piece of clothing and change my gender, stylize it, and then that evening I can change it again and be something radically other, so that what you get is something like the commodification of gender, and the understanding of taking on a gender as a kind of consumerism. (Butler "Body" 83).

Performance, Butler argues, is something more than posing, something more than imitating or mimicking. In order for a performance "to be subversive of heterosexual hegemony," Butler continues, "it has to both mime and displace its conventions. And not all miming is displacing" (84). Butler acknowledges that her own theorization of agency in *Gender Trouble* relied too heavily on the potential she located within miming: "I may have made a mistake by using drag as the example of performativity, because many people have now understood that to be the *paradigm* for performativity, and that's not the case" (84). Instead, Butler argues, "Performativity has to do with repetition, very often with the repetition of oppressive and painful gender norms to force them to resignify. This is not freedom, but a question of how to work the trap that one is inevitably in" (84). In Butler's most recent work, *Bodies That Matter,* she tries, as she puts it, "to clarify the notion of performativity. I don't actually talk about parody or drag very much; I talk about citationality. There are forms of citing and resignifying oppressive norms which are not necessarily theatrical" (89).

What's at stake here in Butler's clarification of her notions of performativity and critical agency is the manner in which, as Foucault puts it in *The History of Sexuality,* "sex is 'put into discourse'" (Foucault, *History 11).* Insofar as discourse is constitutive of the subjects it represents, we have choices to make about the discourses we engage in and the kinds of interventions we attempt through them. Agency is available to us recursively, in what Butler describes as a variation on a repetition— where the play within citationality enables subjects to force oppressive norms to resignify in new ways. Writing, then, should be understood as a performative mode of agency which, rather than describing subjects as they "truly" are, functions as a means of *producing* subject positions— even subject positions heretofore unimaginable. Keep in mind, however, as Foucault, Butler and Potter each emphasize, that agency is not the same as freedom (think of Potter's Orlando losing the rights to her property), but rather a means for working the trap one finds oneself in (think of Potter's Orlando smiling into the lens of her daughter's camera). In order to perform a genuine variation on these discursive repetitions, one thing we might try to do is reconceive agency as queer agency— the practice of perverse agents resisting totalizing and tokenizing identity definitions in the same move. What the three texts I have examined here suggest is that, as we prepare to perform these choices, we might benefit from resisting the allure of casting the problematics of

discursive formations in binary terms— such as those offered up by compulsory heterosexuality. There are ways of rethinking gender construction in the postmodern moment, through writing as well as other media, that will enable us consummate our desire for a wider array of social/ sexual desiring positions without reinscribing them within the unself-critical consumerism of an already too limiting number of culturally sanctioned sexualities and genders. Think perversely. Consume perversely. This is what I mean by queeringwhere signifiers such as "queer," "queer straight," "bitch," "family values," "nigger," "white pride," and "dead white males" are being redeployed each day in conversation, in national magazines, in shopping malls, and on the nightly news as the agents of new meaning and new subjectivities. Only the other day, in the town where I live, I saw a person wearing a pair of black Dr. Martens, a short black skirt and a black DYKE PRIDE T-shirt walk out of the Army-Navy store just off Main Street. Had there been a camera there to record the event, I would have looked into it and smiled. In lieu of that, I'll settle for trying to restage the appearance of this new embodied subject position with its own consuming desires here for you in writing.

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Deconstructing Consumption Text: A Strategy for Reading the (Re)constructed Consumer

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This paper argues for the introduction of deconstructive analysis of consumption text, defined as narratives co-constructed by consumers and researchers. This strategy for reading the (re)constructed consumer is presented by addressing four questions: What is deconstructive analysis? Where does it come from? How does it differ from earlier modernist (New Critical and structural) analysis? What can it contribute to consumer research? The paper briefly summarizes the French origins of deconstruction and argues for its application in consumer research based on the second-generation applications of American deconstructive critics. It examines the challenge to Western logocentric thought by comparing the ontological, axiological, epistemological, and practical assumptions of deconstruction with those of the New Criticism and structuralism. The paper ends with the implications of deconstruction for discovering problems, gaps, and omissions in consumer research text.

The consumer needs to be studied as a participant in an ongoing, neverending process of construction that includes a multiplicity of moments where things (most importantly as symbols) are consumed, produced, signified, represented, allocated, distributed, and circulated (Firat and Venkatesh 1995, p. 259).

However the topic is considered, the *problem of language* has never been simply one problem among others. But never as much as at present has it invaded, *as such,* the global horizon of the most diverse researches and the

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most heterogeneous discourses, diverse and heterogeneous in their intention, method, and ideology (Derrida [1967a] 1976, p. 6).

INTRODUCTION

Firat and Venkatesh's call for research on the consumer as a participant in knowledge construction requires consideration of the problem of language— itself a symbolic "thing" used by consumers and researchers to express the reality of experience. They note that the alignment of postmodernism with poststructuralism raises the issue of "deconstruction of the consumer" (1995, p. 241), a language-based analytical task not yet undertaken. Insofar as consumers have been (re)constructed out of words, deconstruction encourages close examination of the assumptions underlying the. process and product. To actualize this task, I propose adapting deconstruction as a "strategy" (Derrida's word) of reading consumption narratives-those accounts in which consumer experiences are retold by researchers. This application of Derrida's philosophical inquiry is indebted to the second generation of deconstructive critics (see Stern 1996).

The application of deconstructive strategy to consumers' narratives (verbal rather than numerical data) has only become possible in the 1990s, for these narratives have barely a decade's worth of history in the journals of record— *Journal of Consumer Research* and *Journal of Marketing*. With one exception (Levy 1981), consumer narratives first made their appearance in 1987. The accounts are co-constructed by the participants (consumers and researchers) such that the "unwritten behavior, beliefs, values, rituals, oral traditions, and so forth become fixed, atomized, and classified as data" (Van Maanen 1988, p. 95). However, the prose itself has rarely been problematized (but see Joy 1991; Stern 1990), for in accordance with the legacy of positivism (Lodge 1971; Meamber and Venkatesh 1995), research language is presumed to be "fixed"— transparent, neutral, universal, and correctly comprehended by all enlightened readers.

The aim of deconstructive analysis is to *unfix* the language of consumer experience, allowing "multivalent readings" to expose "contradictions, contestatory marginal elements, and structured silences" (Kellner 1995, p. 112). In this way, the grip of a single ideological voice is broken, and the surface "meaning" of language is disassembled to reveal gaps, contradictions, and assumptions (Rosenau 1992). Disrupting taken-for-granted assumptions is a means of

stimulating multiperspectival criticism capable of liberating a field (Firat and Venkatesh 1995; Kellner 1995; Sherry 1991).

Perhaps the most liberating poststructuralist analysis of language emanates from the deconstructive critics. Derrida's readings of Western meta-physics undermine cherished assumptions about the nature of language, society, and the self ([1967a] 1976, [1967b] 1991, [1967c] 1978, [1972] 1982) germane to the study of consumption-one of the newer social sciences. His strategy of reading aimed at displacing the Western fixation on "the history of truth... the truth of truth... [and] the concept of science or the scientificity of science" ([1967a] 1976, p. 3) based on faith in language as a repository of captive meanings. Faith in scientificity permeates the study of consumers to such an extent that no matter whether data is numerical or verbal, the language in which it is expressed rests on the assumption of determinate meaning.

To question this assumption, let us rethink language as an open ended and fluid process rather than as a concretized product. Derrida condemned the privileging of referential language as "the system of a writing and of a reading which we know is ordered around its own blind spot" ([1967a] 1976, p. 164). His fondness for poking at blind spots uncovers the hidden assumptions that shore up received habits of thought. Blind spots can be exposed by looking at the relationship between a discipline's texts and the ideological worlds they inhabit (Eagleton 1991). These relationships surface not only in favored themes— an obvious focal point— but also in the "style, rhythm, image, quality, and form" (Eagleton 1991, p. 6) used to express themes. Here, it is essential to keep in mind that deconstructive critics view all language as "literary," advocating literary analysis of non-fiction works.

DECONSTRUCTION: A LATECOMER TO CONSUMER RESEARCH

Deconstructive analysis has already enlightened critiques of social science disciplines such as ethnography (Van Maanen 1995), sociology (Richardson 1995), and marketing research (Smircich and Calas 1992; Calas 1993). It has also influenced management theory (Gephart 1996) by contributing alternative interpretations of human behavior (Rosile and Boje 1966) especially pertinent to the study of gender (Gherardi 1995). In marketing research, recent critiques of Philip Kotler's marketing concepts advocate "textual analysis" (see Meamber and Venkatesh 1995, p. 248; Brown 1997) to examine power

and ideology at work in language, analyzing foundational works much as Derrida did philosophical and literary ones. However, deconstructive analysis has not yet had comparable influence on consumer research, which in this respect lags somewhat behind allied fields. Thus, its newness in the field of consumer research somewhat ironically reinforces the marketing definition of a product as new (to the firm, not to the world).

THE STRUCTURALIST LEGACY

Perhaps the late entry of deconstruction-a poststructural approach-is traceable to the dominant influence of structuralism (Levy 1981; Stern 1995) on analysis of consumption narratives. The procedure used since Levy's 1981 article about food consumption involves three steps: identification of binaries (see Levy 1981); examination of key oppositions (Jakobson 1973; Jakobson and Halle 1971); and reconciliation of conflicts. Structuralist outcomes posit reconciliation as a consequence of the processes of transformation (each binary moves toward its opposite) and of mediation (the opposites are incorporated into a gestalt entity). Structuralist analysis has been augmented by semiotic analysis (Hirschman and Stern 1994), syntactical analysis (Hirschman 1988), and feminist analysis (Stern 1993). However, the goal of convergence is presumed, and differences between binary terms are expected to be resolvable (Hirschman 1988).

In contrast, the goal of deconstructive analysis is divergence, and binary differences are presumed irreconcilable. Yet even though deconstruction is now inscribed on consumer research's genealogical map (Firat and Venkatesh 1995), application has not progressed beyond analysis of advertisements (Stern 1993, 1996). Thus, its potential for liberating the research canon has not been vivified. To make a case for deconstructive analysis as a radical leap forward, let me begin by stepping back. Only by comparing deconstructive analysis to its predecessors can we see where it came from, what it can do, and how it can change the study of consumer behavior.

AN APPLICATIONS APPROACH

It is important to reemphasize that my object of analysis is the construction of the consumer via the written word. This follows the prac-

tice of pragmatic American literary critics rather than that of European philosophers (see "Plato's Pharmacy," [1968] 1981). The American adaptation of Derrida's strategy was the work of the "Yale School"— critics such as Paul de Man (1971,1979), Geoffrey Hartman (1983), J. Hillis Miller (1982), and Harold Bloom (1975). To this action-oriented group, what to call deconstruction— "paradigm," "theory," "method,"— was of less interest than what to do with it. Derrida considered the American emphasis objectionable and complained about the appropriation of his term "in certain circles (university or cultural, especially in the United States) [as] a methodology for reading and for interpretation" (1983, in Kamuf 1991, p. 273). Nonetheless, from the outset Derrida applied his "theoretical matrix.... and critical concepts" as a method of analysis ([1967a] 1976, p. Ixxxix).

I follow the applications route by proposing deconstructive strategy as an analytical approach to the language in which consumption is represented. In line with Brown's firm statement that *"marketing research is inherently representational"* (1995, p. 260), the sub-discipline of consumer research is considered "representational" in the sense that consumer experiences are presented to reading audiences via verbal formulations (as distinct from, let us say, dramatic enactments to spectator audiences). The paper begins with a historical overview of the passage from mid-twentieth century modernist language inquiry (New Criticism and structuralism) to more recent poststructuralist inquiry. It next presents a systematic examination of differences among the approaches. It concludes by proposing, deconstructive analysis as a means of exposing hidden assumption J in consumer research about topics worth study, narrative construction, and presentational style.

A NOTE ON "TEXT"

Note that the term "text" has been avoided so far, a deliberate postponement to forestall controversy at the outset. Most of the controversy stems from Derrida's dictum— *"there is nothing outside the text"* ([1967a] 1976, p. 158)— the source of the generalized premise that "everything is text" (Rosenau 1992). This seems too unspecific for consumer research. An alternative, proposed in Hirschman and Holbrook's *Postmodern Consumer Research: The Study of Consumption as Text,* (1992) is that "text" be considered a synonym for "para-

digm," "ideology," or "theory." Here it is defined as a philosophical position "shared by a group of researchers, used to represent material phenomena" (p. 56).

I prefer to use the term in a related but somewhat narrower sense, focusing more specifically on the representation of experience in words. This accords with Meamber and Venkatesh's usage, for their "critique of the field based on the examination of basic texts" (1995, p. 248) refers to the words-on-a-page. Thus, I define "text" as that which consumers produce and signify, and researchers represent, allocate, distribute, and circulate (1995, p. 259). In line with Derrida's own habit of treating singular nouns as plurals (Marx and communism, for example, 1994), I also use the singular term to refer to a multiplicity of accounts.

In taking these accounts as the object of study— the construction to be deconstructed— I focus primarily on non-positivist research text, especially that which has been co-constructed by the researcher and the consumer. The articles that comprise this kind of text have been critiqued primarily in terms of alternative methods of collection of verbal data (see Belk, Sherry, Wallendorf 1988; Heisley and Levy 1991; Thompson, Locander, Pollio 1989) rather than in terms of alternative methods of language analysis. The most publicized controversies have centered on the collection process (see Gould 1991; Wallendorf and Brucks 1993; Gould 1995), with little attention to analytical approaches to consumers' words (but see Joy 1991; Stern 1995) and the researcher/ consumer relationship represented in the published work.

Nonetheless, the need for closer study of text is evident-notice the changed "look" of the major consumer research journals published in the last fifteen years. From 1981 on, when Levy's *Journal of Marketing* article signaled the new look, articles began to appear in the *Journal of Consumer Research* (although not in the *Journal of Marketing*) with long indented blocks of consumer-generated prose interspersed among passages of researcher-generated prose. The printing convention marked the introduction of individual consumer voices into the disciplinary canon, with articles in the ethnographic, phenomenological, and introspective traditions (Gould 1991) now appearing in journals that previously published articles in which only one voice-that of the researcher-was expressed.

In contrast to traditional univocal text (Brown 1995), polyvocal accounts of consumption phenomena resemble dramatic scripts or

novels. They are distinctive not only in the way they are constructed (out of many voices, including the researcher's) but also in the way they are represented to readers (by means of margin shifts). Unlike the univocal research perspective represented by unbroken columns of prose, margin shifts indicate multiple voices, researcher/ consumer dialogue, and diverse points of view (see Kellner 1995). These passages are examples of "invaginated" text, Derrida's term (1979) for "the lineage of the two *recits* which are forever intertwined and intersected" ([1986] 1992, p. 238) in a text whose borders are unfixed. The process is such that each participant adds to the other, replaces the other, and opposes the other in an ongoing play of inclusion, exclusion, and subversion. In this way, consumer research accounts (scientific text) resemble literary productions (artistic text), and Derrida's strategy of reading and writing ([1967a] 1976) adds literary analysis to the methodological mix.

This addition encourages a renewed return to Levy's pioneering interpretive work. Fifteen years ago, Levy pointed out the value of taking consumer remarks (the protocols) "as a literary production we might interpret in ways comparable to those of . . . literary critics" (1981, p. 49). He implemented this by performing structural analysis based on Levi-Strauss's binary oppositions. Derrida's use of Levi-Strauss to introduce deconstruction to American audiences in his 1966 lecture suggests that Levy's article can be read as a foreshadowing of alternative perspectives. To derive the genealogy of post-structural alternatives, we now turn to a historical summary of the critical perspectives that preceded them, using articles in the *Journal of Consumer Research* to illustrate the analytic path.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The American Heritage: New Criticism

American deconstructive critics draw from two traditions of literary analysis first developed in Europe, especially France. One tradition was the French analytical procedure known as *explication de texte* or "explication" (Stern 1989b), imported to American classrooms by the New Critics, who called it "close reading." It became the dominant method used to teach and interpret fiction from the late 1940s to the early 1960s. Another was the analytical approach to language relationships derived from Saussure's structural linguistics (see Stern

1989a, for review), which became increasingly influential from the 1960s on. In order to understand the application of deconstructive analysis to fields other than literary criticism, we must examine its roots.

Most textual analysis of marketing and consumer research has been influenced by the New Critical procedure (see Brown 1997 for review) introduced by Stern (1988). Note that both the New Critics and their deconstructive heirs begin readings with the same question: "what is **in** the text?"

However, whereas the former aim at convergence of meanings, the latter aim at exposure of underlying dissension. That is, the New Critics assume that a text's ambiguities will eventually converge on a singular unity, but Derrida and his followers do not. Rather, they consider text an abyss ([1967a] 1976, p. 163) in which meaning hovers between what is there (presences) and what is **not** there (absences)— what the text conceals.

One consequence of the deconstructive expectation is the production of distinctive "newreadings" (Abrams' term, 1991) that reestablish the text as the focus of poststructural concern. In this way, deconstructive analysis challenges the dominant "reader response" criticism of the 1970s and 1980s (Bleich 1975; Fish 1980; Suleiman and Crosman 1980; Tompkins 1980). The latter was introduced in consumer behavior research by Scott (1994), who dealt (as did Stern) with advertisements. However, deconstruction and the applied analytical strategies it has spawned in various fields turn away from the reader's role in constructing meaning (as well as from the New Critical emphasis on self-enclosed text) to emphasize the infinitely open play of words. Bloom sums up the deconstructive bent as follows: "There are no texts— if by texts we mean the autonomous, selfenclosed poetic objects of the New Critics— but only relationships between texts" (1975, p. 3).

Nonetheless, it is essential to remember that every deconstructive hunt for textual absences is based on New Critical analysis of presences— one can only look at what is not there after one has carefully examined what is there. This is exemplified in a recent critique of marketing "based on the examination of basic texts" (Meamber and Venkatesh 1995, p. 248) that begins with careful analysis of the key concepts in Kotler's work ("product," "exchange," "transaction," "needs," "wants," "production," and so forth). These concepts are set forth to be challenged philologically and ideologically by reexaminations of construct definition and theoretical framing. That is,

just as "one feature of Derrida s criticism is a patient and minutely philological *explication de texte"* (Miller 1976, p. 335), so too is it a feature of critiques of marketing paradigms. In this regard, let us keep in mind Abrams's comment that deconstructive readings are grounded in "the sustained close reading of literary texts [that] had almost no precedent before the New Critics showed us how to do it" (1991, p. 334). When deconstructive critics demolish the errors of the past, they use New Critical tools.

European Influence: Structuralism

just as they use these tools to smash the New Critics' boundaries, so too do they burrow inside structural systems to undermine them. Derrida fought the system from within by "borrowing all the strategic and economic resources of subversion from the old structure, borrowing them structurally" ([1967a] 1976, p. 41). His introduction of deconstruction was framed by two well-known critiques: that of Saussure in Of *Grammatology* (1967a) and that of Levi-Strauss ([1967c] 1978). He challenged Levi-Strauss's structuralist elaboration of self-enclosed language systems ([1949] 1969, [1964] 1969]) derived from Saussure's linguistics ([1916] 1959), which was the model for structuralist literary criticism.

Derrida's 1966 lecture undercuts the logic of Levi-Strauss's application of Saussure's method, denying the appropriateness of Levi-Strauss's use of linguistic analysis of sentences as a model for "grammatical" analysis of mythic narratives. He judges Levi-Strauss's desire to "transcend the opposition between the sensible and the intelligible by operating… at the level of signs" ([1967b] 1991, p.14) to be impossible. The reason is that no sign that can evade the play of opposites is conceivable, for signs live "only on this opposition" ([1967c] 1978, p. 281). Thus, despite praising Levi-Strauss's "respect for structurality, for the internal originality of structure" ([1967c] 1978, p. 291), Derrida insists that deconstruction alone can address the paradox of language play. In so doing, his strategy undermines structuralism by putting "into practice an *overturning* of the classical opposition *and* a general *displacement* of the system" (1972 [19821, p. 329).

The deconstructive mission was to problematize text by revealing it to be a bundle of contradictions and omissions, ultimately unable to account for itself fully because of "warring forces of signification within the text itself" (Johnson 1981, p. xiv). What

Derrida proposed was not another route for escaping the problem of unstable meaning, but a thoroughgoing revolt against the Western imperative of stability. Deconstructive criticism destabilizes the structuralist system that empowers "invariable presence... essence, existence, substance, subject... transcendentality, consciousness, God, man, and so forth" ([1967c] 1978, pp. 279-280). Derrida considers this overthrow a liberating act, one that lets loose the play of language. His affirmation of joy is presented as far more satisfying than the structuralists' "saddened, *negative,* nostalgic, guilty, Rousseauistic side of the thinking of play" ([1967c] 1978, p. 292).

Although consumer research is not the richest metier for joyous language, Morris Holbrook (1995) and Steven Brown (1997) provide noteworthy exceptions. Unlike most other researchers, even those whose ideas are liberatory, Holbrook and Brown rebel against the constraints of textual "shoulds" (authors should not use puns; should not cause readers to laugh aloud; should not criticize the person but only the idea). By introducing word play in research accounts, they subvert the privileged "serious" language inherited from marketing's birth disciplines— economics and mathematics. The use of puns, double entendres, irony, *ad hominem* and *ad feminem* nicknames draws attention to the slipperiness of meaning (Brown's "Lisrelites"; Holbrook's "Catastrophe and Dogmatism").

In sum, deconstructive criticism aims at unseating traditional Western philosophy by denying the finite meaning of language, the status of universal truth, and the oppositional hierarchy that fixes dominance/ subordinance in language. Instead, it "tears a text apart, reveals its contradictions and assumptions" (Rosenau 1992, p. xi) and undoes its constructions to clear the way for liberatory polyvocal and non-hierarchical perspectives.

Deconstruction or Destruction?

Derrida views deconstruction as a stimulus for new ideas. He compares the irreconcilable structuralist/ poststructuralist (or modern/ postmodern) rupture in social science to the anticipatory state of prebirth and advocates eagerness in awaiting the birth. His exuberant cry flings the gauntlet at those who fear "the as yet unnameable" outcome of the pregnancy. Despite the risk attendant upon the birth of a new "nonspecies," one that might take on the "terrifying form of

monstrosity" (1967c [1978], p. 293), Derrida finds the prospect exhilarating.

His detractors do not agree, for from the outset deconstruction has been denounced "as a terrorist weapon" or dismissed as "a harmless academic game" (de Man 1979, p. x). Derrida acknowledged the frightening aspect of moving from the known to the unknown when he chose the term "destruction" in the first version of *De la grammatologie* (Spivak 1976, p. xlix). Nonetheless, he was alluding to the "positive destruction" that Heidegger espoused as a necessary preliminary act of stripping away the textual surface to render its internal character visible. Even though Derrida replaced the term with "deconstruction," his strategy continues to be condemned as negative.

In addition, his idiosyncratic style has irritated even friendlies—the verbal antics make his writings notoriously difficult to understand. By the mid-1970s, neither translation into English nor regular American lectures increased accessibility: as one Yale graduate student said after attending a Derrida lecture, "I understood maybe 10 percent of what he was saying" (Stephens 1994, p. 22). Still, let us consider de Man's counter-argument—"however negative [deconstruction] may sound, [it]... implies the possibility of rebuilding" (1971, p. 140).

Admittedly, it is easy to see why readers might rebel against engaging with a book that begins ("Outwork, Prefacing," in *Dissemination,* 1981) with the statement: "This (therefore) will not have been a book" (p. 3). Similarly, Brown's proposed title *for Postmodern Marketing Two* (1997), *Kotler is Dead,* provokes the reader. Still, we have to bear in mind that fashions in writing style change and that the admixture of humor, word play, authorial asides, and caricature evoke an earlier era of criticism. Derrida (and Brown after him) mingle the stylistic devices associated with literature and once considered legitimate in critical writing (think Alexander Pope, for example) with painstaking critiques of the foundations of the disciplines they attack. Because criticism has taken so somber a turn in the twentieth century, the unconventional merger often irritates audiences, especially those grounded in the modernist tradition.

To understand the shift that deconstructive analysis requires, we now turn to a systematic consideration of its roots in prior approaches to language. We compare the New Critical, structuralist, and deconstructive modes of analyzing consumption text by discussing **ontological assumptions** about the nature of reality,

language, and the self; **axiological assumptions** about paradigmatic goals and research aims; **epistemological assumptions** about knowledge generation and paradigmatic roots; and praxis or practical assumptions about how analysis should proceed (Table 1).

Table 1: Summary of Critical Approaches

Basic Assumptions	*New-Criticism*	*Structuralism*	*Deconstruction*
ONTOLOGY			
Locus of Reality	Art	Science	Text
Locus if Language	Poetry	Speech	Writing
Analytical Unit	Poem	Sign	*Différance*
Qualities of Text	Fixed marks-on-page Stable meanings Ambiguity→ unity	Arbitrary signs Relatinal Opposites reconciled	Play of d*ifférance* Unstable meanings No reconciliation
Meaning Outcome	Eventual Convergence Future Agreement	Convergence Socially constructed	Divergence No Agreement
Truth	Knowable	Unknowable	No such thing
The Self	Freedom with responsibility	Determinism	Total freedom
AXIOLOGY			
Overriding Goal	Establish autonomy of art	Enable scientific analysis of art	Erase binary art/ science
Research Aim	Defend literature against scientific nitpicking	Allow sciences to inform literary crticism	Subvert categories Displace logicentric thought
EPISTOMOLGY			
Knowledge Generation	Explicate Poem	Identify/ reconcile binaries	Deconstruct the deconstruction
Paradigmatic	Humanism	Empiricism	Skepticism
PRAXIS			
How-to	Close Reading: define words rhythm/ rhyme imagery paradox	Analyze structure: signs (words) signifiers (sounds) Signifieds (concept) binary relations	Deconstruct: dismantle binary disrupt hierarchy expose power reject closure

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ONTOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

Locus of Reality Prior to deconstruction, critical approaches to interpretation were based on a distinction between the domains of "art" and "science," a binary accepted in consumer research as well. That is, research accounts fall under the aegis of science, and publication in widely read journals conforms to standards set forth by empirical researchers bent on studying the real world. In this regard, the border between the real world and the imaginary one was drawn by the New Critics, who elevated literary "art" as an aesthetically pure and autonomous domain of self-enclosed reality set apart from the more mundane everyday world. The New Critics defended the autonomy of artistic text against the clumsy intrusions of science by relegating each to a separate realm, hierarchically ranked, with art the finer one. Literary criticism was viewed as a rarified activity because it was close to the higher reality.

In contrast, structuralist critics welcomed linguistic science as a source of analytical insights into text, for they considered scientific precision necessary to advance all forms of inquiry, literary as well as nonliterary. The influence of structural criticism on consumer research is profound, for the binary framework, the examination of oppositional forces, and the search for convergence underlie the privileging of science as the proper category for this research. Even the paradigm shift from empirical to ethnographic research rests on the assumption that scientific analysis is best— the arguments about legitimacy mostly concern natural versus social science approaches, not, let us say, the appropriateness of prose versus that of poetry as a medium of representation.

However, the advent of deconstruction raises the issue of alternative perspectives, for the hierarchy of art versus science has been disavowed by Derrida and his followers. They turned away from both the New Critical and the structuralist camps to perform literary criticism on the only locus of reality they accept— "text." Derrida's refusal to accept boundaries between the categories of inside-art and outside-art (see Wellek and Warren 1956) is the basis of his advocacy of literary analysis as the only critical mode capable of avoiding the cramped rule-laden practices of other disciplinary discourse (Culler 1982). He approaches every text as if it were a literary one, paying attention to ambiguity, word play, and indeterminate meanings.

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Similarly, Levy's "idea of taking the consumer protocol as a kind of story to be interpreted" (1981, p. 52) is boundary-spanning in that it invokes literary criticism as a respectable contribution to consumer research. From this perspective, the language is itself worthy of analysis, for it reproduces the historical and institutional arrangements that we accept as reality (Calas and Smircich 1992). Insofar as the realities of social institutions are inseparable from their representational practices, studying them as literary phenomena can contribute to understanding.

Let us take as an example a metaphor in a consumer research text— Hetrick and Lozada's critique (1995) of Stern's "old liberal feminist position" as "different packaging" for modernist ideas. The critique aims at revealing her hidden modernist agenda and blindness to the *"deconstructive thrust"* of postmodernism. Yet can we not read the new thrust/ old package as a sexual metaphor? The young, masculine, penetrating postmodernist (the deconstructive phallus) takes aim at the old, feminine, superficial modernist package (the passive womb). Ripping open the package allows the advent of "changes that the postmodernists advocate, which notably include the demise of the author, and the subsequent empowerment of the reader" (p. 254). The mother dies in childbirth, but she does leave behind "multiple sources of resistance" (future thrusters) to take up the task of "enlightenment of wo(men)" (p. 254). The metaphoric affirmation of energetic maleness versus acquiescent femaleness reinforces the patriarchy while ostensibly castigating it, for the metaphor argues against the article's claims. In this way, "deconstructive criticism... shows how ideological projects fail, or undercut their own messages and intentions" (Kellner 1995, p. 114).

Locus of Language Discussion of metaphor highlights the crafted nature of research accounts: thoughts are transformed into writing by researchers. This suggests a need to consider the deconstructive challenge to the logocentric assumption of speech as the originary form of language. Derrida argues for writing as the locus of language. He points out that the speech/writing hierarchy is based on the illusory superiority of speech as the repository of presence/ absence and immediacy/ representation. His argument takes aim at Western Philosophical thought, grounded in the supremacy of speech since Aristotle's dictum: "Spoken words are the symbols of mental experience and written words are the symbols of spoken words" (in Derrida [1967a] 1976, p. 30). Derrida undermines the binary by claiming that speech is no more present than writing. To

provide evidence of the Western distaste for absence, distance, and contradiction, deconstructive reading strategy deals with hitherto ignored moments in a text that reveal gaps between what is articulated (the signifier) and what is mentally constructed (the signified).

Attending to gaps is an alternative way of framing Levy's question: "If consumer responses are stories (or parts thereof) that tell about the family, how shall the stories be interpreted?" (1981, p. 50). The deconstructive answer is that there are so many thought/ speech / writing gaps that interpretation can not be stamped "final"— it is open-ended, infinite, and indeterminate. Consider a few places where the constructed text shows fissures: what consumers think versus what they say; what they say versus what the researcher writes; what each co-researcher in a team thinks, says, and writes; what a researcher writes versus what the peer community allows him/her to print; what the researcher means versus what the readers accept as meaning; and so on. Once language is conceived of as unstable, the "continuing dialog with consumers" (Levy 1981, p. 60) can be seen as a shifting play of speech/ writing. From this perspective, the dialog is a literary production, with the "how" of data construction requiring much more analysis than it has received.

Analytic Unit One problem is where to begin. If we set out to analyze verbal data, we must begin somewhere. Yet if everything is inside-text, what is the basic analytical unit from which to start? Deconstructive critics condemn the Western preference for fixed starting points and neat analytic units, viewing this as additional proof of the favoritism accorded linearity, order, and presence. Derrida refuses to accept absolute justification of a starting point, no matter whether it be the New Critics' figure of speech (metaphor, symbol, irony) or the structuralists' sign. Instead, he states that the "beginning" is *"wherever we are:* in a text as where we already believe ourselves to be" ([1967a] 1976, p. 162).

However, in practice, Derrida sets forth a basic analytic unit, for he often begins deconstructive readings with a philological explication of the double-edged word on which the text hinges-for example, "supplement" ([1967a] 1976), "pharmakon" ([1968],1981), and "hymen" ([1970] 1981). This "key" word is used to unlock *différance gaps* between the signifier and signified, authorial blind spots, and absences of meaning repressed by Western insistence on presence and convergence. If we follow his practice, we can take a key word in a. consumer research account either from its title and/ or its metaphorical usage as a place to start.

For example, look at the title of Firat and Venkatesh's (1995) article based on postmodernism as a theoretical alternative to modernism, dominant in consumer research. "Liberatory" is the first word, alluding to the unmasking of modernism so that postmodernism can encourage the "reenchantment of consumption." As Derrida says (A *Derrida Reader* 1983, p. xiii), "already we see a difficulty with that title." If we begin with structural analysis, liberation/ enslavement and reenchantment/ disenchantment imply oppositions in a hierarchy that ranks the first term as superior to the second. The hierarchy echoes the earlier words "emancipatory" and "imagination" in Murray and Ozanne's (1991) article. They presented critical theory to consumer researchers as a programmatic research agenda capable of releasing "constraints on human freedom and potential" (p. 129). Both sets of authors promise joyous research that engages researchers in improving society.

Now turn to the metaphors. Murray and Ozanne advance critical theory as "a concrete method" (p. 142), albeit not "a single or unified approach" (p.129), that "challenges researchers to envision a life free from constraints" (p. 142). Firat and Venkatesh urge researchers to "opt for multiple theories of consumer behavior" (p. 261), for "the joys in doing research must be found... in capturing many exploratory moments" (p. 261).

Here deconstructive criticism reveals ideological texts as "sites of tensions and dissonance even when they seem most harmonious and ideologically successful" (Kellner 1995, p. 114). The metaphors of "concrete" and "capturing" are anti-liberatory: they reference prisons, slavery, and enclosure, not freedom, openness, and joy. As such, they undercut their own messages, implying that restructuring of the research process may be more akin to reforming prisons rather than abolishing them. Thus, the injunction to "begin where we already believe ourselves to be" ([1967a] 1976, p.162) should stimulate readers to pause and consider the conflicts simmering under the language. Concrete methods and captive moments support conservative modernist ideology even though the messages call for radical overthrow.

Qualities of Text The capacity of language to express multiple meanings at the same time, which the New Critics called "ambiguity," was viewed as a temporary way station on the road to unity (Empson 1947). This view was predicated on faith in the "organic unity" of artistic text-a summation of fixed meaning inscribed by generally accepted symbolic repertoires (Johnson 1980). Even though

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the structuralists evaluated the New Critical reliance on eventual resolution of ambiguity as a bit optimistic (Kurzweil 1980), they too searched for finite meaning. However, they turned away from meaning locked into a self-enclosed text to meaning as an outcome of socially agreed-upon construction.

In contrast, deconstructive critics view ambiguity as irreconcilable. Their readings deny any system of self-enclosed language based on agreed-upon meaning, for they dismiss not only the possibility of unity as the end of critical inquiry, but also its value as a goal. When meaning is postulated to be an endless language game, it can only stop provisionally, not end. Hence, the fixity that the New Critics sought in the text and that the structuralists sought in the word is denied-the most salient quality of text in deconstructive terms is ongoing play. Derrida describes the game as one "in which whoever loses wins, and in which one loses and wins on every turn" ([1972], 1982, p. 20).

The play of intertextuality can be seen in a deconstructive reading of Levy's question, "Is hierarchy real?" (1981, p. 60). If text is seen as more self-representational (about itself) than representative of the external world (Kneale 1994), the traces of non-present meanings or absences intrude "in an "intertextual 'interval' where everything is thrown into doubt" (Harpham 1982, p. 36). Note that Levy's question itself is hierarchical, for it assumes that "real" is superior to "not real," at least in the area of consumer research results. Further, the question assumes an answer. Yet a deconstructive response to the question-"Why are you asking the question?"-makes no such assumption. Whereas New Critics and structuralists aim at really good questions and answers, deconstructive critics emphasize the folly of the questioning habit.

Meaning Outcome Questions of indeterminacy and ambiguity raise the issue of proper research outcomes. The New Critical and the structuralist expectation of meaning outcomes rested on the assumption that divergence was temporary. However, in a sharply opposing view, the deconstructive critics view convergence as temporary. In fact, deconstructionists attack the fixation on fixedness of all earlier critical approaches, which are considered hopeless efforts to locate meaning in the author, the reader, the self-enclosed text, or the context. Insofar as multiple and contradictory meanings are always in motion, no singular or universal meaning can be located.

Questioning "Outcome" If divergence is encouraged, is it even possible for a deconstructive analysis to have an outcome? Accord-

ing to articulation theory, "a discourse incapable of generating any fixity of meaning is the discourse of the psychotic" (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, p. 112). To distinguish between raving and research it is necessary to posit "partial fixations" of meaning, for "even in order to differ, to subvert meaning, there has to be a meaning" (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, p. 112). American literary critics reiterate the notion of a provisional outcome, and de Man anchors his argument for a finite set of possible but contradictory meanings by appealing to a real-world context rather than by circling endlessly in philosophical debate. He illustrates the stopping point by means of an example that resonates in consumer research (1979, p. 9):

> I take the first example from the sub-literature of the mass media: asked by his wife whether he wants to have his bowling shoes laced over or laced under, Archie Bunker answers with a question: "What's the difference?" Being a reader of sublime simplicity, his wife replies by patiently explaining the difference between lacing over and lacing under, whatever this may be, but provokes only ire.

Analysis of Archie's question ("What's the difference?") reveals "two meanings that are mutually exclusive: the literal meaning asks for the concept (difference) whose existence is denied by the figurative meaning" (1979, p. 9). However, de Man makes a crucial distinction between Archie, an ordinary man who "muddles along in a world where literal and figurative meanings get in each other's way" (1979, p. 9), and Derrida, a philosopher in quest of the meaning of meaning. If Derrida were to ask Archie's question, his reply might be "that we shouldn't even try to find out" because asking itself is not meaningful (1979, p. 10).

Nonetheless, consumers and those who study them are often more like Archie, intent on muddling along and reaching closure. De Man comments on this need: "The confusion can only be cleared up by the intervention of an extra-textual intention, such as Archie Bunker putting his wife straight; but the very anger he displays is indicative of more than impatience; it reveals his despair when confronted with a structure of linguistic meaning that he cannot control and that holds the discouraging prospect of an infinity of similar future confusions, all... potentially catastrophic in their consequences" (1979, p.10). His proposal of "extra-textual" solutions to infinite textual problems enables a temporary end to a reading, not a permanent one.

For the most part, published articles by consumer researchers buy into the "extra-textual" stopping point, for a standard closing is the "limitations" section. This is a conventional means of attaining closure by acknowledging the imperfections of the present work's outcome (the limitations require additional inquiry) and the faith in future works' capacity to overcome limitations. However, as Wells points out, the notion that "mentioning limitations makes them go away" (1993, p. 493) is a myth, and he blames "the system" for perpetuating a practice that "leads to knowledge that consists of dubious conclusions" (p. 493). Researcher myths are accorded low truth value, for Wells warns us to "forsake mythology" (1993, p. 491). He points out that "consumer research has its own myths, inherited from the past. These myths isolate researchers from reality and impede discovery of how real things really work" (p. 491).

The implicit binary— "reality/myth"— privileges discovery of "real things" and denigrates myths as obstructive. But the dominant myths that consumer research has inherited— the positivist legacy— are themselves proper subjects of deconstructive analysis. The claim that some myths are more conducive to discovery than others involves implicit affirmation of the reigning paradigm, more in need of fine-tuning than skeptical questioning. To a deconstructive critic, the more interesting issue is the ideological insistence that only by forsaking mythology can researchers discover reality. Alternative perspectives are squeezed out when one ideology dominates, defining reality in accordance with its own myths while denigrating alternative ones.

Truth Here, Americanized deconstruction— pragmatic, optimistic, action-oriented— encourages the articulation of truth as provisional. Berman summarizes the distinction between Derrida's and de Man's views: "for de Man... truth cannot be grasped. For Derrida, truth cannot even be imagined" (1988, p. 246). Derrida claims that the only purpose of asking "what is truth?" is to show that the question is unanswerable, and his readings aim at exposing paradox by undoing texts to highlight their logical irresolvability. However, de Man and most other deconstructive critics stop short of pronouncing truth unimaginable, accepting partial and transitory glimpses as symptomatic of the human condition. In his spirit, no research paradigm has a lock on eternal truth.

The Self Deconstructive thinking seeks to break the lock, which confines humanity. Once truth, logic, and meaning are denied, the

self can be cut loose from the ballast of repressive structural systems, including psychoanalysis (see Deleuze and Guattari 1972). Deconstructive freedom exceeds that of the New Critics, constrained by the responsibility of obeying rules to ensure societal well-being. It contrasts with the determinism of the structuralists, who viewed individual action as predestined by the structures inherent in systems. Deconstructionists are perhaps most characteristically antimodern in their exuberant call for a totally free self unconfined by false categories called "structures."

In sum, the deconstructive critics set out to empower freedom, joy, playfulness, and provocation when they subverted previous Western ontological assumptions about the nature of language, reality, text, meaning, truth, and the self.

AXIOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

Overriding Goal In so doing, they also overthrew axiological assumptions about research goals and aims fundamental to the art/ science binary. The overriding goal of the New Critics was to keep aesthetic criticism "pure," free from contamination by scientific ideas. In contrast, the structuralists welcomed the contribution of scientific knowledge to the analysis of all language, including literary. Since deconstructionists deny the validity of binaries altogether, their goal is to erase the Western preference for hierarchical thinking embodied in art/ science. Recall that Derrida accepts no boundary between art and non-art and advocates reading all discourse as "literary," focusing on paradox and contradiction rather than on singular meaning.

In this regard, Wells's condemnation of consumer research that is "science fiction" (1993, p. 497) rather than "science" should be reconsidered. Just as science fiction offers the promise of "marvels of discovery" resulting from "future developments in science and technology" (Abrams 1993, p. 218), so too does consumer research. Both are genres of utopian literature, as Levy realized when he suggested that research be guided by "observing how various kinds of stories are studied, as their analysts search for meanings in such as fairy tales, plays, novels, psychological test responses, and myths, en route to studying consumer research protocols" (1981, p. 50). Deconstructive analysis of consumption can illuminate the art of construction whereby consumer stories are transformed into scientific

accounts, enhancing sensitivity to the literary processes that break down the barrier between stories and science.

Research Aims The purpose of this kind of research is to displace the ideological dominance empowered by strict adherence to hierarchy and repressive binary thinking. Perhaps the most direct challenge to binary oppression was that of feminist deconstructive critics. The opposition of the sexes is so deeply inscribed in Western logocentric thought that Derrida considers the system "one and the same"— the logos is paternal (1973, p. 311). His anti-hierarchical rereading of the sexual binary led Cixous and other European feminists to claim that femininity (Cixous [1975] 1986), Felman [1978] 1985) should not be seen as the opposite of masculinity, but as that which both includes and subverts the opposition.

In consumer research, radical rethinking of sexual categories has been recommended in Hetrick and Lozada's (1994) comments on Murray and Ozanne's "critical imagination" thesis. Hetrick and Lozada urge consumer researchers to grapple with Derrida's "deconstructive moments" (1994, p. 556) so that they can critique positivist science and social arrangements from a neo- Marxian point of view (p. 549). Murray, Ozanne, and Shapiro agree "that critical research must include a critique of capitalism," but go further in stating that a "critique must include all forms of domination" (1994, p. 559).

Yet the central metaphor (borrowed from Fromm) is "the crouched tiger, which will jump only when the moment for jumping has come" (1994, p. 559). Let us take this as a deconstructive moment, a starting point in the "circular and evolving process" of uncovering the underlying assumptions (p. 563). The assumptions are again those of the patriarchy— maleness, power, aggression— renveloped in a mechanistic superiority that quickly unravels. The tiger resembles a wind-up toy, robbed of its vitality by being referred to as "which," a thing, rather than as "who," an animal. The pronoun also desexualizes the tiger, suggesting tension between the advocacy of a critique of oppression and the state of oppression that contextualizes the critique. In Derrida's words, "the person writing is inscribed in a determined textual system" (1967a, p. 160), but the inscription must be problematized, not taken for granted, to achieve the deconstructive goal of shaking the foundations of research. Now let us turn to these foundations, based on favored Western epistemological assumptions about knowledge generation and paradigmatic roots.

EPISTEMOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

Knowledge Generation A starting deconstructive opening salvo is the proposition that knowledge emerges out of critical writing to "deconstruct the deconstruction." This aims at undermining New Critical faith in knowledge grounded in the informed explication of poetry and structuralist faith in knowledge grounded in the analysis of binary language. Instead, deconstructive critics insist that the very act of critical writing about a text is a creative one that generates a new text (Culler 1982) in the course of the writing. Derrida points out that every text should be viewed as "a machine with multiple reading heads for other texts" (1979, p. 107), with emphasis shifting from the outcome (knowledge construction) to the process (play). The process exposes the paradoxical nature of text as a movement of indefinite significations that fragment into incompatible meanings. These meanings are ultimately undecidable, but since logocentric language is all we have, the most that critics can do is to expose the self-subversion.

One example of such exposure is Hirschman's documentation of the dominant masculine ideology in consumer research. Her article documents the inadequately represented constituencies of women, of "social classes other than the middle class, of racial groups other than whites, and of occupational groups other than the managerial-professional group" (1993, p. 537). Yet her final admonition can be deconstructed as another instance of self-subversion, a "blind spot" in the text, "the not-seen that opens and limits visibility" (Derrida 1967a, p. 163. She states: "in the spirit of gender ecumenism, let us consider the wise words of a white man written almost three decades ago [Bob Dylan, "A Hard Rain's a'Gonna Fall" (1993, p. 552)]. The key Dylan line is, "And I'll tell it [the story of "forgotten souls"] and speak it and think it and breathe it," which affirms the ideology of white American male middle-class control over language. The words empower the singer to take the only thing that forgotten souls can call their own-their words. The author's placement of the song as the final item in the text "closes" it in a way that argues against the appeal to opening the research canon to "alien" ideologies.

Paradigmatic Roots The inevitability of blind spots in even the most enlightened text is rooted in skepticism, for Derrida considers humanism and empiricism to be Western metaphysical fallacies. The New Critics were humanists, believing that one proof of human superiority was the special capacity to create poetry-"the verbal ex-

pression of this life, at its finest" (Richards [1929] 1947, p. 300). New Critical faith in the special language of poetic truth reflects antagonism to scientific empiricism, which is said to ignore "the vast corpus of problems, assumptions, adumbrations, fictions, prejudices, tenets... everything about which civilized man cares most" (Richards [1929] 1947, p. 5). In contrast, the structuralists are empiricists, believing that a science of literature based on linguistics (Cutler 1982) could improve literary discourse. From this perspective, literature is but another kind of text socially constructed by fixed conventions and accepted codes, which can be understood by applying scientific principles to decode the system.

Derrida attacked the pseudo-scientific bent of structuralism the minute he faced an American audience (1966). The only root doctrine that deconstructive critics find at all congenial is skepticism, perhaps best expressed in Bloom's description of all readings as misreadings (1975). Nonetheless, despite the fact that readings unravel as they are being performed, deconstructive critics soldier on. One practical contribution of deconstructive analysis to consumer research is a sense of provisionality. There is no "final" outcome without limitations, for text subverts its own message. The deconstructive critic is "as much interested in how *ideology fails* as in how it succeeds" (Kellner 1995, p. 114), which repositions results/ limitations not as a hierarchy but as an intertwined entity.

PRAXIS

In practice, deconstructive critics begin by using New Critical and structural approaches to subvert the hierarchical claim that one is superior to the other (see Stern 1996). They adapt the New Critics' praxis-"close reading"-to analyze a text's words and expose its paradoxes and adapt structural praxis to describe binary relations and then explode them. Their how-to proceeds by exposing gaps, discovering word play, disrupting hierarchies, revealing power relationships, and denying closure.

In this activity, deconstructive readings treat binary opposition not as a necessary and sufficient object of analysis, but as a springboard for three additional and interconnected operations:

> [Deconstructive readings] first, ...show how those oppositions are structured hierarchically; second, ...overturn that hierarchy temporarily, as if

to make the text say the opposite of what it appeared to say initially; and third, ...displace and reassert both terms of the opposition within a nonhierarchical relationship of difference (Kneale 199, pp. 185-186).

The first operation performs a close reading of the binaries to reveal the logical or rhetorical incompatibilities at work beneath the explicit and implicit terms, submerging one to highlight the other. To a deconstructionist, identification of the system of binaries is a first step toward dismantling the system. The second step is the point at which one or more imaginative rereadings are performed to reverse the hierarchical order. The imaginative rereading does not end in harmonious reconciliation of opposites. Further, at least theoretically, it has no end, but instead uncovers a universe of ongoing human differences. Once the philosophical imperative of a single dominant hierarchical structure is replaced by the potential for multiple nonhierarchical relationships simmering under the surface, the practical task of discovering co-existing but unexpressed gaps and contradictions can be undertaken.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CONSUMER RESEARCH

Discovering what has been left out provides an opportunity to in vigorate research "by welcoming topical, methodological, and stylistic diversity" (Van Maanen 1995, p. 26) that "serves to subvert authoritative definitions of culture and technique-driven research" (p. 26). In management research, deconstruction is considered fundamental to postmodern research as follows: "Concepts of deconstruction, reflexivity, simulacrum, and polyphony are basic to this new or postmodern theoretical framework" (Gephart, Thatchenkery, and Boje 1996, p. 359). In consumer research, Firat and Venkatesh (1995) contextualize the implications of deconstruction by specifying relevant areas for future consumer research. They urge researchers to heed the "call to make each willing consumer an equal participant in the determination of this production (construction) of self, as well as in all production-symbolic construction by the myths, narratives and simulations that result from signification and representation processes" (1995, p. 260). We suggest looking at areas of "topical, methodological, and stylistic diversity " that are currently absent from consumption text to reveal omissions, contradictions, and disguises that block liberatory postmodernist research.

The Construct— "Consumers" One consequence of the literary approach is a new look at constructs whose meanings are taken for granted-for example, "consumer." It is a word that everyone uses, one whose meaning appears so obvious that it needs no further discussion. If we follow Derrida's practice and question its meaning, we can begin with Holbrook's definition of consumer research as the study of "consummation in all its many aspects" (1987, p. 128). By transforming the word play on consumption/ consummation into consumer/ consummator, we defamiliarize the meaning of "consumer." It is uprooted from a business context and reinscribed in a sexual one, which reveals the masculine dominance characteristic of most Western research text, including that of consumer research. Note that the poetic passages cited by Holbrook present Adam and Eve (Milton) and the bard chanting the spousal verse (Wordsworth). The male spouse is the consummator (an active role), whereas the female is the consumer-Eve being the originally sinful one. The argument for broadening consumer research by including "stories that help clarify our sense of who we are and our vision of where we are going" (1987, p. 130) references stories that either denigrate women (Eve) or disappear them (Wordsworth's "recluse"). This is undoubtedly unintentional, and I merely offer these comments to highlight marginalization as a textual inevitability.

Diverse Consumers To continue, let us turn away from the table of contents of journals and imagine a table of absences. The most obviously absent voices in American consumer research are those of minority consumers-African-Americans, Asian-Americans, nonheterosexuals, and so forth. The *Journal of Consumer Research* could be renamed the *Journal of White, Middle-Class, Heterosexual Consumer Research,* for the research polylogue is dominated by those voices. For example, there is not a single article about African-American, AsianAmerican, or non-heterosexual consumers in which the consumers' own voices are represented. This is not surprising, for there is not a single article in which any of those groups is the main focus. A major step forward in the "deconstruction and reconstruction of the modern (i.e. capitalist) market in the image of the diversity and multiplicity" of consumers (Firat and Venkatesh 1995, p. 260) would be the inclusion of voices other than those of white Americans.

Alternative Styles Finally, it is time to face the stylistic constraints that govern the way consumer research is allowed to appear. Prose and occasional pictures are the only acceptable constructions in the leading journals. Yet the suggestion that we study the consumer "as

someone seeking to produce (construct) symbols" (Firat and Venkatesh 1995, p. 260) coupled with the acknowledged postmodern interest in "the symbolic over the material" (p. 261) could (and should) be implemented by allowing alternative forms of expression into the field. One such expression is poetry, which answers Manning's question: "How is it that the unsayable, the deep structure of human lives, is conveyed by... words?" (1995, p. 266). It is a way to replace the experiential dimension missing in discursive narratives, whose textual mode is so limited that sensual aspects of consumption experiences are not conveyed. Poetry is the one way of saying things that cannot be said equally well in any other way— a performance that enacts experience and invites participation (Ciardi and Williams 1975). The absence of poetry in widely read marketing/ consumer behavior journals (*Journal of Consumer Research, Journal of Marketing*) is especially remarkable in view of the presence of poets in the marketing/ consumer behavior field— George Zinkhan, John Sherry, Morris Holbrook, and John Schouten, to name a few. Poetry, along with other aesthetic forms such as music, visual art, or dance, is an overlooked (or perhaps insufficiently valued) medium wellsuited to deconstructing the consumer.

To conclude, the spirit of deconstruction brings to the fore uncomfortable questions, pointed omissions, and irreconcilable conflicts. Yet it does so not to elevate barren nihilism, but to introduce healthy skepticism. The impetus to begin just when we thought we had reached the end has been well-stated by Kuhn-Osius, in his comments on the "sense and nonsense" swirling around the current cultural studies controversy: "We have always worried whether what was said was true; then we began to worry whether it was correct. Now we have to worry if something has been said in the first place" (1996, p. A28).

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The Unintended Consequences of the Culture of Consumption: An Historical-Theoretical Analysis of Consumer Misbehavior

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The culture of consumption which characterizes the economically advanced societies in this century is historically unique and evolving. Widespread misbehavior by consumers is an intrinsic element of this culture, being unintentionally stimulated by the very marketing factors which stimulate legitimate consumption. The paper elucidates the culture of consumption and the known reasons for consumer misbehavior, shows the strong relationships among these, and then demonstrates the pervasiveness and variety of consumer misbehavior in North America today.

THE PARADOX OF THE MODERN CONSUMPTION CULTURE

Misbehavior by consumers is the great paradox of the modern culture of consumption— its positive characteristics evoke its negative ones. Consumer misbehavior has developed as an intrinsic element of modern consumption behavior, and is sustained by the very factors which define the consumption culture's essential nature. The central argument of this paper is that consumer misbehavior is a fundamental— and intrinsic— element of the modern consumer culture, because it is *unintentionally* but powerfully fostered by the very marketing values and practices which shape and encourage legitimate consumption experiences.

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Consumer misbehavior, we will argue, is a profound, pervasive, and integral element of consumption experience within the modern culture of consumption. Consumer misbehavior is a significant phenomenon which affects the experience of *all* consumers. It is in fact an *inseparable* part of the consumer experience. Many consumers misbehave at least some of the time. Those consumers not themselves misbehaving are all inevitably victimized by other's misconduct. Misconduct by consumers is the "counterpoint" to legitimate consumer conduct and a fundamental part of consumer experience. The two themes (or dialectics) co-exist, as in a meticulously composed musical composition, each an essential part of the totality.

Consumer misbehavior is the dark side of the culture of consumption. Yet misbehavior is neither a sign of the culture's decay nor a threat to its continuation. Consumption's attractions are far too strong-leading to misbehavior within consumption settings. To control consumer misbehavior would require radical alterations that would destroy the freedom and experiential fullness of modern consumption-consequently destroying its very ethos. Consumers would resent the restrictiveness of fullbore deterrence. Marketers would fear that it would counter all of their efforts to expand marketing exchanges. Because this has been widely, if inchoately, recognized by marketers and consumers alike, reactions to misconduct have been profoundly *ambivalent.*

CONSUMER MISBEHAVIOR DEFINED

Consumer misbehavior is defined here as behavioral acts by consumers which violate the *generally accepted norms* of conduct in consumption situations, and thus disrupt the consumption order. The misbehavioral actions of interest here are externally-directed and visible. They are part of people's conduct in their role as consumers within exchange situations, which are a key component of the overall culture of consumption. Misbehavior by consumers directly challenges key aspects of consumption order: its implicit norms and role expectations, the legitimacy of marketers to establish boundaries, the sanctity of the financial and physical property of marketers, and the overall capacity of the consumption system to function smoothly.

ARGUMENT AND ORGANIZATION OF THE PAPER

The paper proceeds as follows. The first section draws upon historians' growing discussion of the culture of consumption to show that the consumption culture characterizing economically advanced countries in this century is historically unique and evolving. In the second section, building upon work by anthropologists, psychologists, and sociologists, we formulate a theoretical analysis of consumer misbehavior that shows the striking *relationships* between the core values intrinsic to the modern culture of consumption and the known causes of consumer misbehavior. The analysis illuminates the commanding yet unintentional role of marketing activities in *reinforcing* these links, and explains how and why such misbehavior became and remains a significant and intrinsic part of modern consumption culture. The third section elucidates the consumer misbehavior currently reported in North America. It shows consumer misbehavior to be a pervasive phenomenon which affects both consumers and marketers in several key respects. The fourth and final section helps identify the major research issues and questions involved in future research on consumer misbehavior viewed as a cultural phenomenon.

THE CULTURE OF CONSUMPTION IN CONSUMER SOCIETIES

Evolution

Consumer societies are an historical phenomenon: they have not always existed and in fact are not universal today; pre-consumer societies continue to exist in many parts of the world. Consumer societies can be defined by the expansive consumption values shared by their members. Collectively, these values comprise what many scholars call the "culture of consumption" (e.g., Fox and Lears 1983; Leach 1984). Historians agree this culture had definitely begun to emerge in Britian by the mid-1700s, spread to most of Western Europe and North America during the 1800s (McCracken 1988, Chapter 1; Fullerton 1988), and have more recently spread to several East Asian countries (Tse, Belk and Zhou 1989). It brought a fundamental reorientation of human values and conduct. Whereas previously most people were largely self-sufficient, under the new culture they purchased from an ever-widening assortment of goods and services offered to them by a growing consortium of marketers. As a consequence a *mass* con-

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sumption culture evolved and "the privileged possessions of the rich came to be within the legitimate aspirations of almost all" (McKendrick, Brewer, and Plumb 1982, p. 1). In McCracken's (1988, p. 17) elegant formulation, "culture and consumption were becoming inextricably linked" by 1800; *today they are inseparable.*

Core Characteristics of the Consumption Culture

The culture of consumption has been studied by a growing number of scholars from anthropology, history and sociology (e.g. Abelson 1989; Belk 1988a; Douglas and Isherwood 1978; Featherstone 1991; Fox and Lears 1983; McCracken 1988; McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb 1982; Rassuli and Hollander 1986). Marketing activities have played a major role in developing and sustaining the consumer culture, which would never have achieved the magnitude and shape that it did without them (Fullerton 1988; McCracken 1988). From the extensive literature on the culture of consumption it is possible to identify certain characteristics which appear to lie at its core. These are enumerated and discussed below.

1. *Centrality of Consumption* Over the centuries people have gradually come to conceive of themselves as consumers in the modern sense— continually purchasing and using commercially available goods and services— rather than as producers. Consumption has become the central activity in life (McCracken 1988, p. 17). There has been a shift of aspirations from the work sphere to the consumption sphere (Otnes 1988). The new-found importance of the consumption sphere has brought with it a lasting change in personal values. The impact of consumption values has helped foster among consumers a constantly expanding appetite for products. Consequently, a continually high level of consumer demand has became the mainstay of business success. At a macro level, developed economies have had to constantly alter the mix of products and services produced to meet the needs of consumers. Continuous innovation in the development of products and services and their widespread distribution has become a key to the economic wealth of nations.
2. *Changing Moral Values* "At the present time," wrote the pioneering marketing scholar Paul Nystrom in 1928, "not a few people in western nations have departed from old-time standards of religion and philosophy" (Nystrom 1928, p. 68). Older values

of abstinence, self-denial, practical utilitarianism, renunciation, and saving were being increasingly undermined and discredited as the pre-industrial environment which helped sustain them disappeared, according to the early marketing professor Reed (1929, Chapter 7) as well as later historians (e.g., Leach 1984). In consumer societies, material hardship is no longer seen as a virtue, or as one's inevitable lot in life (Fox and Lears 1983; 1984; Marchand 1985, esp. Chapters 5, 7). Traits such as envy, pride, greed, and lust, which had figured large among the "Seven Deadly Sins" of Christian theology, have metamorphosed into legitimate personal aspirations, even keys to personal fulfillment. Today, argues Sack (1992, p. 199), "the consumer's world... is a world without constraints and without responsibility."

3. *Insatiable Desire* Companies have not only kept careful watch on society to discern demands, but have also worked proactively to stimulate new wants (Leach 1984; Lynd 1933; McKendrick, Brewer, Plumb 1982) and the means to facilitate their satisfaction. As the marketing discipline developed, "demand creation" became an explicit goal taught to marketers (Shaw 1915). The economist who best understood modern marketing, Joseph Schumpeter, stressed the role of marketing entrepreneurship in formulating "new combinations" and then teaching consumers to want them badly (Schumpeter 1934). A natural consequence of these activities has been the stimulation of consumer states of desire which have aptly been described as "free floating" (McCracken 1988), since the objects of desire are in a constant state of transformation. Novelty-seeking has become commonplace, applied not only to products but also to belief systems. Restless desire has become a basic consumer trait (Lasch 1979, Chapters 3 and 4; Lynd 1933, pp. 877ff; Sack 1992).

4. *Social Meaning of Goods* Astute product design and vigorous promotion has contributed to the tendency for goods to accumulate social meaning. Products have increasingly become the means to maintain parity with others, to enhance self concept and to ascribe identities to others. Advertising activities have included efforts to assign new meanings to existing products. Consequently, it has become normal to routinely discard products— without qualm or guilt— long before they have worn out. Buying new and fashionable products has become for many

consumers a means of compensating for a lack of personal identity or low self-esteem (Otnes 1988). Consumer products have been increasingly seen as ways to solve one's personal problems (Lynd 1933, p. 867; McCracken 1988, pp. 18ff). Everyone wants to be a part of the American Dream-just like "the Joneses"-- and acquiring material objects is an assured way to do so. Personal possessions have come to be perceived as extensions of people's selves (Belk 1988).

5. *Hedonism* The historian Marchand (1985, p. 118) shows how business during the late 1920s increasingly cast off a utilitarian outlook and pushed "a new, more pleasure-minded, consumption ethic." People have come to see in consumption infinite opportunities for "new sensations and the spirit of adventure" (Nystrom 1928, p. 69), for self-transformation, and for self enhancement (Leach 1984). Moreover, advertising and consumer promotions, particularly the creation of carnivalesque shopping atmospherics, have promoted "ordered disorder" (Featherstone 1991, p. 23) encouraging consumers towards trance-like states of personal excess and rebelliousness. What had once been disparaged as self-indulgence has come to be perceived as legitimate fulfillment of consumer needs. Conduct once denounced as frivolous, vain, extravagant or wasteful has come to be seen as exemplifying the good life. Many consumers lead bored and disoriented lives, to which consumption provides a natural relief (Sack 1992, p. 200). Consumption free us from concerns and makes us carefree.

6. *Impulsive Buying* Recent research shows impulse buying to be a widespread consumer behavior which has also been "a focal point of considerable marketing management activity" (Rook 1987, p. 189). The marketer encourages consumers to buy on impulse by such means as enticing displays, easy— often "instant"— access to credit, self-service, 24-hour shopping, and home shopping networks.

7. *Openness of Exchange Environment* Much of life is spent in exchange institutions. These have become settings for social interaction and expression (Sack 1992, Chapter 7). Many teenagers congregate in shopping malls and it is here that they are socialized into the culture of consumption (Kowinski 1985). Psychologically disturbed individuals also find in exchange settings a haven for self-expression. The shopping mall's artificial environment— "promenades of fountains, shrubbery, palm trees,

simulated lava, and waterfalls with rocks" (Sack 1992, p. 144)— is carefully designed to bring people into the mood to consume.

In the expansive, omnipresent, *charged* atmosphere of modern consumer culture, many of the driving forces of legitimate consumer behavior have simultaneously been those of consumer misbehavior. To fully appreciate these relationships we need to elucidate the known causes of consumer misbehavior. These are presented in the next section.

MOTIVES FOR CONSUMER MISBEHAVIOR

Considerable work which can illuminate the motives for consumer misbehavior has been done in several social science disciplines, particularly the sociology of deviance (for reviews of this vast literature see Montanino 1977; Pfohl 1985; Terry and Steffensmeier 1988) and criminology (see Vold and Bernard 1986 for a good overview). Abnormal psychology covers such topics as aggression and abnormal behavior (e.g. Brain and Benton 1981; Moyer 1976) as well as specific consumer misbehaviors (e.g. Bickman and Green 1977; Russell 1973). In light of such work, and also research by some marketing and consumer researchers, seven major reasons for consumer misbehavior can be advanced. The reasons are not mutually exclusive nor exhaustive, since any one of them could be used to "explain" a variety of consumer misbehaviors. For other forms of misbehavior multiple motivations could be in effect.

1. *Unfulfilled aspirations* In one of the most famous arguments of modern sociology, Merton (1968) argues that the discrepancy between widely-held consumption goals and the availability of legitimate means to achieve them leads to deviant conduct. Unable to fulfill their material aspirations legitimately, some people will resort to theft or fraud. A similar argument is found in Durkheim's ([1897) 1952) theory of Anomie. Cameron's (1964) widely-cited work finds unfulfilled aspirations to be a major reason for shoplifting. A recent media report documents the role of unsatisfied consumer desire as a major motivation for merchandise-related theft, particularly among the younger generation (Brokaw 1993).

2. *Deviant thrill seeking* The sociologists Lofland *(1969)* and Katz (1988) find the search for thrills and adventure a basic motivation for misconduct. For some consumers, misbehaving is an ineffably thrilling experience in which they defy basic legal and moral strictures and lash out at imposing institutions, and in which the risk of being caught only heightens the exquisite tension. In other instances, lonely consumers engage in misbehavior to add excitement to their lives (Moore 1984, p. 56). Acts of consumer misbehavior can be a perverse variant of the hedonic consumption described by Hirschman and Holbrook (1982). Thrill seeking has been reported for juvenile vandalism (Allen 1984; Selosse 1984), price tag switching (Steiner, Hadden and Herkomer 1976), and shoplifting (Kallis and Vanier 1985; Katz 1988).

3. *Absence of moral constraints* A lack of powerful internal inhibitions against conduct perceived to be wrong is another difference between normal and misbehaving consumers. Both are exposed to the same stimuli, but the former seem to restrain themselves from misbehavior because of their moral constraints. To misbehavers, acts of misconduct are simply not perceived as immoral; such an argument is frequently advanced by vandals, price tag switchers (Steiner, Hadden and Herkomer 1976; Bideaud and Coslin 1984) and shoplifters (Wilkes 1978). A common variant of such arguments is the belief that an act may be immoral in general, but is not really wrong in the perpetrator's case (See Moore 1984; Kallis and Vanier 1985). A few psychologically troubled consumer misbehavers lack any sense of moral responsibility or remorse whatsoever (See DSM-III-R 1987, pp. 342-344).

4. *Differential association* The idea that deviant behavior is learned, particularly in intimate groups, is based on the famous theoretical work of the sociologist Sutherland (1937, 1947). Differential association is a major concept in the sociology of deviance. In groups whose prevailing norms deviate from those of the larger society, misbehavior promotes the group's identity and can serve as an initiation ritual. Group interaction inculcates both the techniques of-and rationales for-misbehavior to members. It teaches them how to neutralize attacks on the morality of their conduct (Sykes and Matza 1957). Differential association is especially prevalent among teenaged consumer misbehavers (Cox et. al 1993; Moschis, Cox and Kellaris 1987),

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and among adult repeat offenders. It may be considered a perverse variant of consumer socialization (See Cole 1988; Moschis and Cox 1988).

5. *Pathological Socialization* The size and ownership of marketing institutions can evoke negative feelings leading to misbehavior. Following the pioneering work by Smigel (1956), a stream of research has found that consumers are more willing to victimize large rather than small businesses (Baron and Fisher 1984; Moore 1984; Russell 1973; Steiner, Hadden and Herkomer 1976). Moreover, the more impersonal a large business is perceived to be the greater its vulnerability to consumer misbehavior. A possible explanation for these findings can be found in the theory of social distance, which posits that as social distance between buyer and seller increases, so too does the likelihood of untoward behavior (Houston and Gassenheimer 1987, pp.11-12). Consumers sometimes view misbehavior as revenge for real or imagined injustices. Reprisal motives for consumer misbehavior are also reported by Curtis (1971, pp. 55-56) and Kraut (1976). Berk (1970) found that even small inner-city merchants were likely to be vandalized, particularly those of a different race. The recent riots in Los Angeles bear testimony. Consumer alienation towards business in general, however, does not appear to increase the likelihood a consumer will misbehave (Cole 1988; Wilkes 1978).

6. *Provocative situational factors* Certain situations are frequently asserted to trigger powerful impulses to misbehave. These include crowding and unsettling amounts of heat and noise, which may trigger aggressiveness towards other consumers and towards marketers. Enticing displays of merchandise may arouse overwhelming urges to shoplift (Moore 1984, p. 55; Russell 1973). If, in addition, deterrence seems minimal or absent in such situations, the potential for misbehavior would be exacerbated according to some practitioners (Johnson 1987, pp. 288-291) and in light of deterrence theory (e.g., Tittle 1980).

7. *Calculating opportunism* A rational weighing of the risks and rewards of misconduct can result in some consumers engaging in acts of misbehavior. The influential crime theories of Becker (1968) and Wilson and Herrnstein (1985), as well as Control Theory among sociologists of deviance (Hirschi 1969), view misbehavior as the outcome of deliberation based upon calculations of expected benefits and costs. Misbehavior follows a rational

process which differs from consumer decision making only in its absence of ethical constraints (Kraut 1976). The calculating opportunist consciously and rationally evaluates and acts upon opportunities for which he/she has the least risk of being apprehended. In the judgement of many practitioners, researchers— and misbehaving consumers themselves— calculating opportunism is the single most important reason for consumer misbehavior (See Bernstein 1985; *Crimes Against Business* 1976; Guffy, Harris and Laumer 1979; Kraut 1976; Mills 1979, p. 60; Moore 1984, p. 58).

The above seven reasons when viewed individually do not provide insights into specific variants of consumer misbehavior. However, taken together they provide an overall perspective on consumer misbehavior as a phenomenon. They are important in the sense that *they are inextricably linked to the culture of consumption,* being an unintended consequence of the marketing activities that stimulate legitimate consumption. In the next section we illustrate these relationships.

MARKETER-FORGED BONDS BETWEEN THE CULTURE OF CONSUMPTION AND MISCONDUCT BY CONSUMERS

Tandem Evolution of Consumer Culture and Consumer Misbehavior

Historically, the evolution and growth of the culture of consumption has gone hand in hand with the evolution and growth of consumer misbehavior. Abelson (1989), for example, shows how the development of great department stores during the late 1800s stimulated a new behavioral sensation— shoplifting by middle-class women. Zola (1884 [1957], p. 395) described a department store display of lace so enticing that "the temptation was acute, it gave rise to an insane wave of desire which unhinged every woman." At least some became unhinged enough to steal. Misbehavior extended beyond shoplifting. Fuerth (1917, pp. 26-29) declared that customer mistreatment of store personnel had reached scandalous levels. The historian Benson finds that because "managers had perversely educated consumers to think that they could behave outrageously in the store,... this lesson shaped the conduct of some" (Benson 1986, p. 259). Finally, the rapid

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spread of retail self-service after its introduction in 1915 enabled lower prices and faster shopping— but also more temptation to steal (Converse 1930, pp. 646-647.)

Ongoing Bonds Between Consumer Culture and Consumer Misbehavior

As consumer culture has developed over time, the universe of consumer misbehaviors has constantly expanded with it. Alongside long-reported misbehaviors (e.g., shoplifting, vandalism), new forms have developed continually, as environmental and technological changes have created new opportunities. Theft of cable television services has grown with household penetration of CATV; fraudulent use of credit cards with their widespread availability; and piracy of software with the growth of micro computers. Yet, there is *no evidence of older forms such as vandalism or shoplifting dying out or being eradicated*; at most their incidence may have been held in check. Again, this suggests that consumer misbehavior is an ineradicable component of consumption culture itself.

Many of the causes of consumer misbehavior identified above can be strongly linked to values innate to the culture of consumption. The links are forged by cumulative marketing activities. *Misbehavior by consumers is thus an unintended consequence of marketing,* just as what many humanities and social science scholars decry as myriad social ills are unintended consequences of massive advertising (Pollay 1986).

The thrust of consumer culture has been-and still is-to embrace nearly everyone, not to be exclusive (Tedlow 1990). Following the strategic doctrine embodied in the "marketing concept," the marketer genuinely tries to reach out to and to please consumers by such means as alluring displays, proliferation of product choices, easy access to credit, self-service, and ceaseless coddling in an open and friendly atmosphere. These practices have become widespread precisely because of their strong appeal to consumers. At the same time, however, they have also encouraged misbehavior. Further, these links are continually reinforced by the marketing efforts that encourage the culture of consumption. Figure 1 shows these relationships. Marketing efforts, enthusiastically received by most, have brought consumer activity to the forefront of overall life behavior; and with it, *inadvertently but inevitably,* consumer misbehavior.
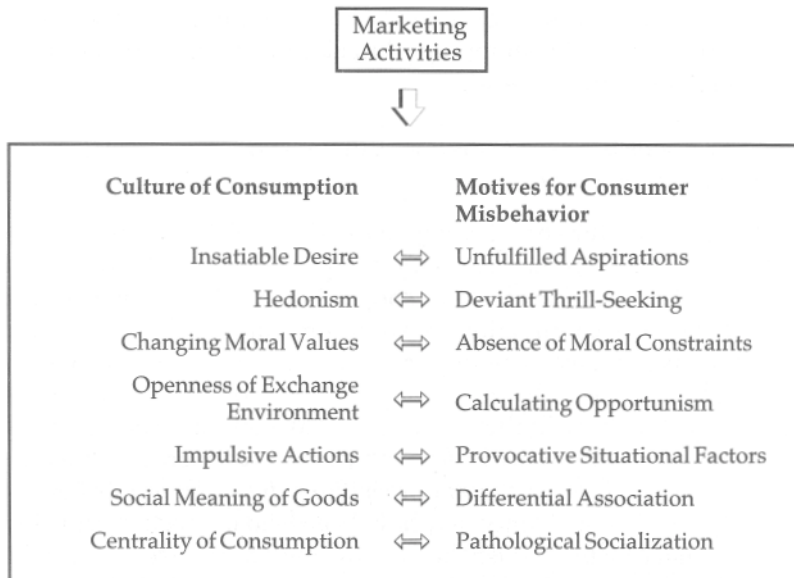
Figure 1 Links Between the Culture of Consumption and
Consumer Misbehavior

Relationship 1: Insatiable Desire and Unfulfilled Aspirations

Producers and providers, driven by the ideology of modern
enterprise to thrive and to expand, cultivate consumers with an
overgrowing array of enticing consumption experiences (e.g.,
Celsi, Rose and Leigh 1993). Consumers thus desire ever more,
and better, and newer; most believe this to be a fundamental right.
Yet few of them can afford— or ever hope to afford— all to which
they aspire. Thus there continues to exist that gap between goals
and legitimate means to realize them which Merton found to strain
moral order. To close the gap, some consumers violate the norms
of legitimate consumer conduct.

Relationship 2: Hedonism and Deviant Thrill-Seeking

Marketer initiatives, most noticeably (but hardly only) promotional
ones, strive ceaselessly to link consumption with titillating thrills
and unspeakable excitement. Fantasy imagery embodying the
consumption-excitement association is continually presented in
advertising:

from "sinfully" rich chocolate to creamy beauty soap to silk underwear to expensive automobiles. Sinister bikers and wild nightlife, the material of stereotyped deviance, flash through the fog and lights of video-like adds in efforts to fire acquisitive urges for products (Katz 1988, p. 358 n. 9). Misbehavior enables some thrill-crazed consumers to fulfil their cravings in an exciting way, adding to the exhilaration of the consumption experience. And yet if marketer initiatives did not arouse consumers, they would be ineffectual from a marketing viewpoint. Marketing efforts reinforce the consumption culture's celebration and legitimation of hedonism.

Relationship 3: Changing Moral Values and the Absence of Moral Constraints

That marketing action has had a profound if unintended impact on moral values is an undeniable historical reality. Walter Lippmann's s classic work on morality (1929) showed that the traditional moral constraints taught by religion and philosophy were anchored in asceticism, and hence undermined as asceticism was discredited as a core value by which to live. Moral inhibitions were, therefore, overrun. Effective marketing made it desirable as well as possible for millions to abandon asceticism (Mataja 1903-1904). Today, self-restraint and self-denial are certainly tolerated, but as somewhat pitiable eccentricities rather than as broadly shared virtues. When the urges of the self are paramount— especially amidst a prevailing ethos of abandon and excitement— moral constraints against misbehavior are weakened.

Marketing efforts, moreover, fire and sustain the consumption culture's passion for self-indulgence; the seminal work of Hegerty and Sims (1978) showed that self-indulgence encourages unethical behavior. Consumer self-indulgence is actively fostered by marketing campaigns: the consumer deserves the very best, is worth the lushest and finest, has earned the right to a rich variety of exquisite consumption experiences offered by marketers. Again the message has become part of consumer consciousness. Much of the time, evoking self-indulgence can help marketers to sell more. Self-indulgence may prompt a consumer to do nothing more than buy on a whim; but it could prompt consumers to jump queues, curse and humiliate salespeople, vandalize dressing rooms, hook in illegally to cable TV, or any other variant of consumer misbehavior.

The unrestricted freedoms of the consumer's world are difficult to cope with for some consumers— thereby resulting in misbehavior (Sack 1992, p. 199). There are stricter moral sanctions on disrupting social order than on unsettling the consumption order, leading some to misbehave in these settings.

Relationship 4: Openness of Exchange Environment and Calculating Opportunism

Exchange institutions are major settings for social interaction and expression. The marketing efforts which animate the consumption culture create institutional settings and situations that are strongly conducive to misbehavior. In particular, the retail store environment is often planned so that it reinforces advertising's thrill fantasies, pounding the consumption-excitement connection deep into consumer consciousness. Some environments are so powerfully designed, so exciting to consumers, that they become "sensually endowed and miraculously constituted perfectly for the emergent project in deviance" (Katz 1988, p. 56). In other words, the store atmosphere alone can goad some consumers into misbehavior.

The situational forces and factors which promote consumer misbehavior result to a large extent from the nature of exchange institutions in our consumption-centered culture. To be effective, these must be open and alluring, laying before consumers incredible possibilities for excitement and fulfillment. But on the other hand— as marketing practitioners have long been aware— most of the conditions which maximize attractiveness for consumers inevitably provide multiple opportunities for and instigation to misbehavior (Cameron 1964, Chapters 7-8; *Crime in Retailing* 1975; Johnson 1987, Chap. 12). They open up wide vistas for calculating opportunism. Typical ones include open displays, difficult-to-watch nooks and crannies, liberal credit policies, easily-switchable price tags, and liberal return policies (Berlin 1980; Steiner, Hadden, and Herkomer 1976). In fact, nearly any manifestation of marketer openness and trust can be an opportunity for potential misbehavers.

Relationship 5: Impulsive Actions and Provocative Situational Factors

Internal situational characteristics in exchange institutions can trigger powerful impulses to misbehavior. Every merchant loves

heavy "traffic," another term for crowds. Crowds, however, can trigger in consumers aggressiveness towards other consumers and marketing employees. So too may noise, heat, and flashing lights, as during the Christmas season. The dizziness and excitation created by the symbols of consumption can lead to misbehavior (Sack 1992). Displays of merchandise may arouse overwhelming urges to steal (Moore 1984, p. 55). Cole (1988, p. 23) suggests that marketer efforts "to increase impulse purchases by increasing desire or decreasing willpower may have the unexpected and undesired consequence of increasing consumer deviance." Russell (1973) found that self-service adds to the impersonality of an exchange setting, which as we have noted makes misconduct easier. Store credit expanded the consumption horizons of millions— but also opened up rich new areas to abuse by unscrupulous consumers. Open displays made shopping faster and enabled consumers to readily examine products— but also triggered shoplifting (Welton 1953).

Relationship 6: Social Meaning of Goods and Differential Association

Other situations which nurture consumer misbehavior stem from the fact that marketing institutions bulk so large in everyday life. They are major social settings, the places to meet, to see and to be seen— and hence the areas in which a great deal of differential association is at play. The pack today simply cannot avoid the mall, nor could their predecessors avoid downtown. Shopping areas appeal to the psychologically disturbed, giving them opportunities to express themselves. The charged atmosphere of freedom and spontaneity, the many enticements, and the presence of so many other people, all can ignite abnormal conduct.

The perception of economic power that is tied to the value of one's possessions is deeply ingrained in the consumption culture. The social meaning of success and well-being conveyed by these material possessions is so strong that it often overcomes doubts about the legitimacy of their acquisition. The broader culture places a premium on wealth and power. Goods provide a means to display these values. For some, consumer misbehavior may be an attempt to overcome the social inequality that is transmitted by the culture of consumption (Bourdieu 1984).

Relationship 7: Centrality of Consumption and Pathological Socialization

Finally, the often enormous size and power of marketers have for a variety of reasons aroused negative attitudes towards exchange institutions which make it easier for some consumers to misbehave either in or in contact with them. This particularly is the case for banks, insurance companies, utilities, and large retail chains. The more impersonal a large business is perceived to be, the greater its vulnerability to consumer misbehavior. Some consumers feel that big, impersonal, business institutions can well afford to take some hits.

Moreover, since these institutions are perceived as impersonal, victimizing them is considered to be markedly different than injuring people. Such consumers draw the line at hurting smaller institutions, which are closely identified with their human owners and operators. Mills (1979) found that department stores which projected an image of intimidating power were more likely to be victimized than those which did not. To some misbehavers, their actions reciprocate for the marketer's allegedly excessive prices, poor services, or other transgressions against consumers in the past. In many cases, however, the marketer's large size is due to its very success in meeting consumer needs; the "reward" for such success is, ironically, greater possibilities for victimization by consumers.

CONSUMER MISBEHAVIOR IN HIGHLY DEVELOPED ECONOMIES: THE CONTEMPORARY NORTH AMERICAN EXAMPLE

Widespread misbehavior by consumers, we have argued, is inevitable given the dynamics of consumer culture. The point is driven home with considerable evidence in this section, where we draw upon a wide range of scholarly analyses as well as journalistic reports to explicate consumer misbehavior in contemporary North America— its striking pervasiveness and variety, the broad socio-cultural diversity of misbehavers, its enormous economic costs, and the ambivalent attitudes which both marketers and consumers exhibit towards misconduct.

Variety

Consumer misconduct is variegated. Exhibit A enumerates and references more than thirty-five types of misbehavior that are currently

reported. These vary considerably. Intellectually, for example, they range from the intricacy of insurance fraud and data base theft on the one hand, to mindless thuggery in mall parking lots on the other. They range from creative acts like inventing fictional persons and documentation for some credit card and check fraud, to the destructive ones of vandalism. They range from schemes involving the use of the newest electronic equipment to old-fashioned con games. Some acts of misbehavior are spontaneous while others are painstakingly planned for months.

Exhibit A: Varieties of Consumer Misbehavior

Directed Against Marketer Employees
Verbal Abuse of Marketer Employees
Physical Abuse of Marketer Employees
Wilful Disobedience of Rules
Bizarre Behavior

Selected References: "Confessions of an Ex-Shoplifter" 1985; Curtis 1971, chapter 2; Richins 1983; Schultz 1978.

Directed Against Other Consumers
Jumping queues
Illegitimate use of express or "cash only" checkout lines Hostile Physical Acts
Annoying to Ominous Behavior Towards Other Consumers and Marketer Employees
Criminal Behavior in Exchange Settings

Selected References: Berk 1970; Johnson 1987; Sheley and Bailey 1985.

Directed Against Marketer Merchandise
Shoplifting
Fraudulent Returns
Switching/ Altering Price Tags
Abusive Exploitation of Information and Advisory Services
Provided by Marketers
Theft from Service Institutions
Coupon Misredemptions
Use of Forged or Stolen Tickets
Consumer Purchase of Stolen Goods
Theft of Utilities (including cable tv)
Copyright Theft

Purchase of Goods Stolen from Other Consumers
Smuggling of Goods across State lines to avoid tax/filing false customs declarations

Selected References: Bernstein 1985; "Confessions of an Ex-Shoplifter" 1985; Berlin 1980; Best and Luckenbill 1982; *The Cost of Crimes Against Business* 1976; Cox, Cox, and Moschis 1990; *Crime in Retailing* 1975; *Crime in Service Industries* 1977; French, Crask, and Mader 1984; Geurts, Andrus, Reinmuth 1976; Jolson 1974; Johnson 1987; *Manufacturers' Guide to Coupon Redemption* 1987; Mills 1979; Moore 1984; Moschis 1985; Schultz 1978; "Shoplifting Dynamics" 1985; Steiner, Hadden, and Herkomer 1976; Sutherland 1937; Varadarajan 1985; Zabriskie 1972-1973.

Directed Against Marketer's Financial Assets
Defrauding Retail Cashiers
Failure to Report Billing Errors Favorable to Consumer
False or Questionable Claims of Injury on Marketer Premises
Bad Check Passing
Credit Card Fraud
Loan Fraud
Fraudulent Assertions to Avoid Payment
Warrantry Frauds
Insurance Fraud
Computer-Based Consumer Crime
Rumor Generation, Sabotage of Marketer's Goods

Selected References: Albrecht, Romney, et al. 1982; Bernstein 1985; Council of Better Business Bureaus 1985; *Crime in Service Industries* 1977; *Crimes Against Business* 1976; Curtis 1971.

Directed Against Marketer's Physical Premises
Destructive Theft Acts
Vandalism
Urinating, Defecating, Masturbating in Exchange Settings
Arson
Computer Virus spreading, Unauthorized entry and "hacking"

Selected References: Berk 1970; *The Cost of Crimes Against Business* 1976; *Crime in Retailing* 1975; Guerts, Andrus and Reinmuth 1976; Hagan, Gillis and Simpson 1985; Jolson 1974; Levy-Leboyer 1984; Mills 1979; Selosse 1984.

Pervasiveness

Consumer misbehavior is also pervasive. At a minimum, occasional misconduct among consumers appears to be widespread. For example, so many consumers have shoplifted at least once, mainly as

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juveniles, that this form of misbehavior could almost be considered a rite of consumer passage. Two-thirds of the people Ray (1983) studied admitted to shoplifting on one or more occasions. Analogous results have been reported by other researchers (e.g., Bellur 1981; ElDirghami 1974). Substantial numbers of consumers also steal from service institutions and from utilities (Bernstein 1985; Crime in Service Industries 1977). Vandalism is common, especially among teenage consumers (Berk 1970; Levy-Leboyer 1984; Hagan, Gillis and Simpson 1985). Abusiveness towards marketing employees and other consumers is rampant, particularly during the year-end "holiday" season (Curtis 1971; Richins 1983; Schultz 1978). Tag-switches and bad check passers appear to be plentiful (Baris 1988; Johnson 1987).

This is not to say that the typical consumer misbehaves continually. Some never misbehave, others only once or twice. It is known, however, that misbehavior by consumers is under-reported by business sources and in official crime statistics (Bleakley 1993; Cameron 1964; Jolson 1974). Occasional misbehavior is almost certainly more common than commonly thought, according to research using consumer self-reports (Jolson 1974) and randomized research designs (Geurts, Andrus, and Reinmuth 1976). Moschis (1985) finds that among shoplifters a relatively small number of perpetrators account for a disproportionately large amount of this activity. "Heavy half" proportions may exist for other types of misbehavior, but have not yet been empirically found.

Diversity of Misbehaving Consumers

Related to the pervasiveness of consumer misbehavior, misbehavers span a rich diversity of consumers. Outright deviants like exhibitionists are represented— but so too are people with good mental health, stable family lives, and at least a high school level of education (Albrecht, Romney, et. al. 1982, Appendix C). Purchasers of stolen goods span the socio-economic spectrum, as do shoplifters (Guerts, Andrus, and Reinmuth 1976; Johnson 1987; Dawson 1993). Teenagers are disproportionally responsible for store-related misbehavior (Hirschi and Gottfredson 1983; Levy-Leboyer 1984; Moschis 1985). Historically, females have shoplifted more, presumably reflecting greater time spent in stores; males are now catching up, and may even be ahead. Males have traditionally engaged in more acts of vandalism. Other types of misbehavior, such as bad check passing and

credit card fraud, appear to be adult preserves (Albrecht, Romney, et al. 1982, Appendix C).

Marketer security personnel and many consumers often *wrongly* assume misbehavior to be a lower social class phenomenon (Cameron 1964; Jolson 1974). But, to give a few reported examples, price tag switchers are usually middle- and upper-class individuals, and shoplifting has long been a well-entrenched phenomenon in the middle and upper class (Abelson 1989).

Clearly, misbehaving consumers are as diverse a group as consumers in general. They are in fact representative of consumers overall, not a group apart. It is difficult to distinguish the misbehavior-prone from other consumers on the basis of socioeconomic factors, lifestyle, physical characteristics, or gender. Only a small minority of misbehaving consumers match the "observable" profile of the criminal-prone devised by Wilson and Hernstein (1985, Chapter 3). Moreover, even frequent perpetrators are well-behaved much of the time in consumption settings. The classic sociological work of Sutherland (1937) showed the professional shoplifter to be an honorable patron in most of the stores he frequented.

Costs of Consumer Misbehavior

The financial costs of consumer misbehavior directed against marketer products, assets, and premises are enormous. They may have exceeded $50 billion annually during recent years. Consumer misbehavior burdens the cost structures of many marketers, even to the point of threatening the continued existence of some businesses (*Crime in Retailing* 1975; O'Brien 1994). Yet, marketers do not appear to fully appreciate these costs. Often they are viewed simply as a cost of doing business. Inevitably, these costs contribute to higher prices for consumers, which in turn lessens the economic efficiency of the marketing system. The persistence of high interest rates on credit cards, for example, is partially due to banks trying to cover heavy fraud losses.

Ambivalence Towards Misbehavior

Both marketers and consumers evince a great deal of *ambivalence* towards consumer misbehavior; there are complex ambiguities in their reactions.

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Consumer Ambivalence

Consumers are strangely indifferent towards misbehavior which illicitly appropriates financial assets and property. Bailey (1985) found a majority of consumers to have only a mildly condemnatory attitude towards purchasing stolen goods. Several researchers have found that shoplifting has become considered as quasi-acceptable behavior by much of the population (Cameron 1964; El-Dirghami 1974; Moore 1984). Even though the costs of covering these losses are often enormous they appear to be difficult to comprehend for most. Consumers either do not realize or, if they do, do not care that they are the ones who eventually are affected (Wilkes 1978, Prestwich 1978; Guffy, Harris, Laumer 1979).

Marketer Ambivalence

Marketers also show a striking amount of ambivalence— verging at times upon toleration— towards the financial misbehavior by consumers. Embarrassed by the presence of consumer misbehavior on their watch, marketing managers have traditionally tended to conceal and/or deny its occurrence *(Crimes Against Business: A Management Perspective* 1976; Johnson 1987). Again, the "customer is always right" philosophy is used as a rationalization for consumers' misbehavior.

Marketers in effect accept much of the misbehavior directed against their own employees, who are expected to smile through customer discourtesies, outbursts, and even physical abuse. Legal prosecution of such acts is unlikely since the marketer does not like to draw attention to them. High turnover costs resulting from unhappy employees quitting are inadvertently downplayed.

The persistence of marketer ambivalence reinforces consumers' misbehavioral tendencies, ensuring that misconduct goes on and on— and consequently becomes ever-more ingrained as part of the culture of consumption.

While serious criminal violations involving fraud and theft may be passed over, legally lesser ones involving vandalism or rowdiness may evoke severe responses. Some seemingly minor role expectation violations, such as jumping a queue or improperly using an express or "cash only" check-out line, can evoke anger in the gentlest of fellow consumers. Consumers expect to be protected while in the exchange setting. They blame marketers for not preventing or

appearing to tolerate misconduct. Marketers respond to this need with more flourish than they do to the materially greater but unvoiced need to reduce financial misconduct.

Reactions by marketers and consumers do not necessarily correspond to the degree of disruption. Some consumer misbehavior appears to be implicitly accepted by marketers and consumers alike; some is not. Highly-publicized recent efforts to dispel menacing teenage gangs from shopping malls and convenience stores with piped-in classical or "easy listening" music are examples. Efforts to enhance security alienate some well-behaved consumers (Dawson 1993). The visibility of the disruption and the threat it poses to the consumption order are perceived as more important than its material or financial impact. Appearances of "normality," even when feigned, appear to be paramount to the smooth functioning of the consumption system.

However, it should be clear that whatever its surface appearance, the consumption order is by no means placid. The existence of widespread consumer misbehavior indicates (among other things) that marketers have hardly succeeded in transforming consumers into docile "zombies" as some social critics (e.g., Kowinski 1985, p. 359) have asserted.

Future Research Avenues

In light of the analysis presented here, four themes seem promising for future research:

1. The process by which expectations about consumer conduct of the type discussed here originate has not yet been explicitly studied. Our work suggests that the process involves cultural values, legal norms, ethical codes, and personal experience; and that these are inculcated through a socialization or acculturalization process which itself needs to be investigated.
2. Since consumer behavior is linked to cultural values, and since cultural values differ in different places, expectations regarding what is acceptable conduct by consumers are likely to differ somewhat across cultures. As an example, queue jumping infuriates Britons far more than Germans. Cross-cultural differences in the formation of expectations should be investigated; this would include looking at developing as well as developed consumer economies.

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3. Similarly, differences and similarities in expectations should be investigated across subcultures and the larger culture of which they are a part. Could, for example, differences reflect the fact that one or more subcultures do not share the values of the broader culture of consumption, and that they rebel against a value system that is imposed upon them? Recent clashes between black patrons and Korean store owners in Los Angeles, and earlier in New York, could have been caused by a struggle for power among people with widely differing consumption values.

4. Power is the heart of a related, and extremely important, issue— that of who (if anyone) within a consumer culture has the greatest ability to impose behavioral standards. One line of research within the sociology of deviance explores the "labeling" phenomenon; i.e., who has the power to designate others as deviant. Defining consumer misbehavior raises issues of power and control. Critics of consumer culture assume that marketers have enormous power to manipulate and control consumers (See Leach 1993, p. 386); defenders of marketing emphasize consumers' sovereignty and power to influence marketer actions. The theory presented here suggests that the power to define misbehavior is shared between marketers and consumers. The intricacies of this *reciprocal power relationship* merit serious future investigation.

CONCLUSION

A key aspect of our theoretical analysis involves *culture,* specifically the culture of consumption which characterizes the economically advanced societies in this century. Aside from a few researchers (e.g., McCracken, Belk), the *culture of consumption* has been slighted in the consumer research literature. While consumer behavior textbooks acknowledge the importance of cultural values and mores to consumption, there appears to be operating an implicit assumption that only in cross-national research are these worthwhile research phenomena. Yet among historians burgeoning interest in the culture of consumption has generated an expanding literature which is of great pertinence. Building on this, our contribution has been to show that the culture of consumption is historically unique and evolving, and that its influence on consumer misbehavior has had profound impact upon the experiences of consumers.

As advocates of a broadened view of consumption have argued for many years, consumer behavior is extremely complex, and consumer experience includes all of the activities involved with consumption as opposed to merely purchasing decisions. These researchers have called for— and developed— a richer, more multifaceted, view of the consumer. To complete the picture— to see consumers in all their composite reality— this paper has explored the feral side which consumers may also exhibit.

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