Only A Trickster Can Save Us:
Hypercommandeering Queer Identity Positions

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ABSTRACT: *The scholarship of Donna Haraway conducts a searing polemic against essentialist theorizing in feminist and gender studies by relying upon a novel methodology, which neither rejects the trappings of a culture addicted to technoscience, nor embraces them tout court; but, rather, inhabits said positions critically through irony, hyperbole, and iconoclasm. This approach is christened here as hypercommandeering: a neologism combining the hyper affinity of surplus, decadence, and overproduction in postmodernity with the blitzkrieg political connotations of commandeering necessary to survive in such a context. As such, this project dances and swerves between and among tropes insofar as, given the underlying trickster ontology, exaggerating and inverting meaning reveals more of the truth than a linear argument, which belies an assumed metalanguage and is therefore imperialistic. This is a path of generativity, not of final ends - of being able to speak all possible languages through the methodology's heteroglossia from which it derives a political stance of neither anarchism nor imperialism, but of a Janus head. Trickster strategies can flank the iron curtain of metonymy and breach it through artifice. An example of hypercommandeering is given via a reading of the avant-garde fashion designer Alexander McQueen's 2001 spring / summer show VOSS.*

KEYWORDS : *gender studies, Donna Haraway, Alexander McQueen, queer theory, trickster*

I.   INTRODUCTION

"Cyborg writing must not be about the Fall, the imagination of a once-upon-a-time wholeness before language, before writing, before Man. Cyborg writing is about the power to survive, not on the basis of original innocence, but on the basis of seizing the tools to mark the world that marked them as other… I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess." [1] (p. 175, 181)

The epigraph, taken from Donna Haraway's "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism for the 1980s" or more colloquially known as the "Cyborg Manifesto," highlights the motivations that animate Haraway's methodology and larger theoretical project. Evident are the overt political tones, which clearly elide any nostalgia for a wholeness grounded in historicity or futurity thereby challenging long-held beliefs in fields like science studies, the humanities, feminism, gender studies, psychology, and psychoanalysis. Taken further, though, is her active call to take up the very tools that have been used to subjugate and wield them against discourses of colonization and imperialism. This two-pronged approach of, paradoxically, both affirming and critiquing the splintered subject and its constitutive forces rests solidly, perhaps it goes without saying, on an ontology of the trickster as illustrated most explicitly, for Haraway [2], in the coyote myths of the Native American tradition. In this tradition, coyote is trickster incarnate [3] and, yet, the coyote is only one but a legion of possible iterations of the trickster trope that have appeared throughout culture and history. Other common examples of this avatar have taken the form of clowns, jesters, jokers, or fools [4] whose intention seems to be to destabilize the status quo usually with the aim of creating change. They do this, primarily, by crossing boundaries, which has led the trickster to be called a spirit-of-the-road and a messenger among the gods and mortals [3].

The trickster figure appears in numerous and diverse literary sources including the work of Homer [5], Shakespeare [6], Virginia Woolf [7], and many others. The seeming ubiquitousness of the trickster in culture caused Carl Jung [8] to appropriate it as one of the universal archetypes of his theory of the collective unconscious. Suffice it to say, the trickster seems to have had a powerful and prolonged impact on human psychology and culture. The current project continues to develop the motif of the trickster by elaborating its unique relationship to gender, sexuality, and queerness vis-a-vis the work of Donna Haraway. The trickster is particularly apropos for a discussion of gender and sexuality in regards to queerness because of its almost always ambiguous or polymorphous gender and sexuality (e.g., transgendered, intersexed), and its political animality or incessant thrust toward transgressing sexual and erotic cultural taboos in a way that is uncanny, perverse, flamboyant and unsettled - i.e., queer.

The term queer, here, Butler [9] argues, needs to be reclaimed by the community in which it had been historically used as a tool of marginalization and shame. This process of reclamation, in an expanded sense, is a recurrent thematic of this manuscript.

Reclaiming comes etymologically from the Old French *reclamer* meaning to call upon, invoke, re-echo or call back a hawk - as the Medieval aristocracy would do after hunting [10]. This can also mean to make tame or amenable for control. In addition, reclaim derives from the Latin *reclamarer* meaning to cry out or to protest against. This project holds these two seemingly contradictory senses of the word reclaim - to call back and to protest against - together as a unity indivisible into parts. Part of reclaiming this vision is to recognize that gender and sexuality are not essential phenomena as has generally been presupposed. Following Foucault, Haraway states that they may actually be inherent policing and controlling strategies,

> Identities seem contradictory, partial, and strategic. With the hard-won recognition of their social and historical constitution, gender, race, and class cannot provide the basis for belief in "essential" unity. There is nothing about being "female" that naturally bind women. There is not even such a state as "being" female, itself a highly complex category constructed in contested sexual scientific discourse and other social practices. Gender, race, or class consciousness is an achievement forced on us by the terrible historical experience of the contradictory social realities of patriarchy, colonialism, and capitalism. [2] (p. 13-14)

Or, as Butler [11] suggests, gender is, in part, a performance concretized merely due to a habitual repetition of stylized acts based upon a historical norm. Consequent of this premise, the thesis of this manuscript argues for deploying the trope of the trickster whereby the categories of LGBTetc can resist hypostatization according to the identity position of hypercommandeering (HCI), which is composed of a fourfold assemblage that is hyperbolic, ironic, iconoclastic, and processed.

II. SOCIAL INTELLIGIBILITY OF CATEGORIES

The scene of the manuscript and, largely, Haraway's work is set against the scholarship of Michel Foucault [12] who uncovered the emergence of nineteenth-century discourses on homosexuality vis-a-vis psychiatry, law, and literature, which made it possible for what he calls a 'reverse discourse' to appear. That is, homosexuality began to advocate for the veracity of its own naturality such that it demanded legitimacy necessarily in relation to the discourses in which it first was denounced. The reverse discourse project of essentialization in the queer community continues through the present day via a frenzied oscillation between categorization and consolidation.

History of Queer Categories : Up until roughly the 1960s in the United States there was not a colloquially accepted term to describe non-normative sexuality derogatorily. The descriptive phrase third gender, which has its roots in the 1860s, is perhaps the first attempt at such a term, but it was never widely used or accepted [13]. Homosexual was the first word that was generally accepted to describe non-normative sexuality. The American Psychiatric Association voted in 1973 to stop using homosexuality as a mental disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) [14]. However, the diagnosis of sexual orientation disturbance replaced it in 1974, and in 1980 the DSM-III used the categorization of ego-dystonic sexual orientation, which was eventually removed in 1987. While diagnosis as it pertained to gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals has been removed, the DSM-IV-TR 4th ed., text rev. [15] contains a category called gender identity disorder (GID), which potentially applies to transgendered and intersex people. Finally, in the DSM-V, GID is renamed to gender dysphoria so as to dispel some of the negative associations that typically go along with the word 'disorder' [16].

The term gay then came to the fore in the 1970s [17]. The acronym LGB (lesbian, gay, bisexual) began replacing the phrase gay community in the middle to late 1980s. Beginning in the 1990s, the term LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) started to take prominence and is the generally accepted and appropriate term used today [18]. In this middle of the 1990s, the letter Q (queer or questioning depending on the context) was added as a suffix to the LGBT acronym in order to make LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning). In the late 1990s, intersex individuals (i.e., an individual's sexual characteristics such as genitals that cannot be classified exclusively as male or female) extended the acronym by adding an I (intersex) as a suffix [19]. Following the addition of the I, a flurry of additional letters have been proposed such as C for curious, U for unsure, an additional T, TS, or 2 for two-spirit people (arising out of Native American culture) [20], an A or SA for straight allies, and an A for asexual [21]. In addition, others have suggested that a P for pansexual or polyamorous, and H for HIV-positive, and an O for other be added [18]. There have also been attempts to consolidate terms. For example, it has been argued that the categories of pansexual, omnisexual,

fluid, and queer-identified belong under the term bisexual while the terms transsexual and intersex actually fall into the domain of transgender; this is controversial for many people in the community, however [18].

In African-American culture, some members of the gay community have adopted the label of SGL (same gender loving), which is meant to set them apart from typically white dominated LGBT groups [22]. In the medical and sometimes academic discourse, the acronym MSM (men who have sex with men) or WSW (women who have sex with women) is employed to describe people who engage in a sexual act without having to talk about the complex issues of sexual orientation or preference [23].There have been several attempts to establish an all-encompassing, general category to capture the plethora of abbreviations and acronyms [24]. For instance, there has been a push to reclaim words like queer [9] and rainbow [25] but neither have gained wider acceptance than the prevailing LGBT; of partial exception is the former, which in the 1990s institutionalized itself as queer studies in academia [26]. Very recently, the phrase Gender and Sexual Diversity (GSD) has been suggested as a means to capture the various nuances [27]. However, there is a strong counter-culture in the community that rejects the motivation to attain a categorical name that is all encompassing [28] because, in part, such a project still assumes an essentialist view of gender and sexuality along with the political implications that stem from such a position.

Sociological Sense : The previous historical overview of terms foregrounds a discussion of their intelligibility within a social community. To state the historical project concisely, this process has largely employed essentialism. For instance, Wagner et al. [29] suggests that sense is made through an ongoing process of objectification whereby "objectification is a mechanism by which socially represented knowledge attains its specific form... an objectification captures the *essence* [emphasis added] of the phenomenon, makes it intelligible for people and weaves it into the fabric of the group's common sense" (p. 96). Does not the 'discovery' of a so-called form or essence to a phenomenon presuppose a degree of universality? And, further, if such an assumption is loaded with hegemonic power relations [11, 12], then does not this position necessarily privilege the majoritarian agenda of the social group?

Wary of this trap and essentialism proper, Namaste [30] suggested researchers try and escape the hetero-homo binary by looking at a multiplicity of positions (e.g., bisexual, transgendered, androgynous) that stand-outside of the sexual dichotomy because doing so may reveal that the "most effective sites of resistance are those created by people who refuse both options" (p. 230). Namaste, however, seems to hedge the consequences of post-essentialism such that the researcher believes that there exists some position which could be taken up that allows for a way out of the binary-web; namely, that investigating a site, like bisexuality or transgenderism, will unlock a possibility of circumventing hetero hegemony. However, if post-essentialism is taken seriously then, logically, all queer sites stand in definitional relation to normal sites such that any ownmost identity claim requires a normative criterion of adjudication - all the way up, and all the way down. In a sense, Namaste perpetuates the antithesis of the researcher's own argument by suggesting an engagement with non-normative sites, which, as per the researcher's own philosophical commitments, still remain trapped in the inside / out distinction [31]. Even if Namaste's argument is understood as a rally call for additional sites of resistance, they would still stand contradistinctive to normative positions. Case-in-point, Namaste [30] states that "if the adoption of a homosexual identity only serves to bolster the strength of heterosexuality, then perhaps the most effective sites of resistance are those created by people who refuse both options" (p. 230). People who refuse both options are still taking-up a relational identity position or, more precisely, a non-identity or 'negative' position; they do not exist everywhere and nowhere at the same time.

If we accept Wagner et al.'s [29] premise that intelligibility requires objectification, then queer identities seem to be a function, definitionally, of what consensual sociality decides as essential. Yet, even if we accept Namaste's [30] approach by taking up the mantle of less normative identity sites (e.g., bisexual, transgendered), then these sites are still constitutive of hetero hegemony, if only to a lesser degree - the kind as such has not been traversed. The trickster, however, cuts across all categories [1][2] by making intelligible meaning in a radically non-essential way via de(con)structing the very sense it proffers through a unique discursive trick named here as hypercommandeering, abbreviated as HCI.

III.   PHILOSOPHICAL TROUBLE

As a precursor to sketching-out HCI, some philosophical background work and context needs to be in place. Judith Butler [32] distinguishes between poststructuralism and postmodernism. For Butler, Jean-Francois Lyotard [33] and Jean Baudrillard [34] operate under the umbrella of postmodernism while Jacques Derrida [35] and Michel Foucault [36] are more accurately classified as poststructuralist. This distinction is important because the latters' work is focused more on the way language and power constitutes the world and identity,

rather than suspicious social and cultural commentaries given by the former. What does Butler have to say about queer categories and positioning?

Performativity : In *Gender Trouble*, Butler [11] argues that foundationalist fictions support the notion of an essentialized self, which continues to perpetuate the oppression of the feminine subject. Her aim is to create gender trouble "through the mobilization, subversive confusion, and proliferation of precisely those constitutive categories that seek to keep gender in its place by posturing as the foundational illusion of identity" (p. 34). Butler, appropriating Foucault, asserts that there can be no 'before,' 'outside,' or 'after' of which a subject can stand. Identity is necessarily caught in a web of interlocking, power discourses; consequently, it makes no sense to speak about the 'before' or 'after' since the subject is strictly equivalent to the effects generated via the intersection of various discursivities. The term that Butler employs, performativity, captures this sense of identity positioning and posturing as an ongoing and never ending discourse creating and enacting agent.

In this way, Butler confronts the long held distinction of gender and sex by collapsing the former into the latter. She [11] states, "when the constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice, with the consequence that man and masculine might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and woman and feminine a male body as easily as a female one" (p. 6). This radical de-essentialization leaves the assignation of gender arbitrary insofar as any static ontological grounding is concerned. Moreover, it foregrounds the possibility of viewing gender as a policing deployment of phallocentric and heteronormative hegemony [2].

Metaphorical Realism : This is where the work of Donna Haraway is especially helpful because she uses the trope of a trickster as a means of escaping hegemonic capture while still proffering sense. Two iterations of this, which constitute a Janus head, are the cyborg [1] and the canine [37]. She subsumes them under the kind companion species. They are not exhaustive since the trickster manifests as shape-shifter by nature [3]. However, they are particularly apropos given our current cultural and historical epoch; that is, they gather together disparate strands of culture, science, technology, and philosophy in a way that helps expose an underlying process ontology. In this way, the trickster frees us from the worry of moralizing and prescriptivity because knowledge, on this account, is given as a grain of salt - or, less idiomatically, speculatively. Haraway calls her position metaphorical realism, which is an interface between the false dichotomies of realism versus constructionism [38]. This position is not entirely poststructuralist in the Derridean sense in that the signifier and signified have managed to eke out at least some kind of relationship - albeit, fraught with communication and intimacy issues. As Haraway [38] says, "all language, including mathematics, is figurative, that is, made of tropes, constituted by bumps that make us swerve from literal-mindedness" (p. 11). Language does, in fact, have something meaningful to say about the world even if it is given indirectly through wit, humor, or irony.

The queer categories LGBTetc essentialize sexuality, and, furthermore, this hypostatization traps queer folks in the hegemony of phallogocentrism [39] and heteronormativity - i.e. in the dichotomy of the inside/outside [31]. Derrida [40] argued, we are always and already necessarily caught in a binary hermeneutic - one in which, as speaking subjects, we cannot hope to escape *a la* "there is no outside-the-text" (p. 873). Yet, if words are used to generate friction in a very swerving and tripping way, then perhaps they can tell us something meaningful about their referents. On this account, a metaphorical view of language is buttressed by the ontology of the trickster via Haraway bringing with it the necessary employment of certain rhetorical and positioning techniques as well as a specific strategy baptized here as hypercommandeering (HCI).

IV.   HYPERCOMMANDEERING AS IDENTITY POSITION

Hypercommandeering is a particular doing-in-the-world of an identity position. The term identity position arises out of a variety of disciplines such as discursive psychology and social psychology [41]. According to Davies and Harré [42], identity positioning is "the discursive process whereby people are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced storylines" (p. 126). In other words, the sense of self is located intersubjectively, necessarily through two or more interlocutors. Positioning theory sees the world as constructed socially through conversation and talk. As social beings, people are always engaged in constructing and making meaning of the world through dynamic relationships or alignments. The term alignment arises out of discursive psychology, which bears a family resemblance to the poststructuralist position [43] such that its philosophical roots extend into Foucault and Wittgenstein. This leads it to reject cognitivism, which believes that language expresses some internal essence and, instead, sees language as constituting both self and world. One way discursive psychology understands identity positioning is through social footing, which is a shift in speaker-listener alignment. As Goffman [44] states "a change in footing implies a change in alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in

the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance" (p. 96). In this way, interlocutors are constantly negotiating discursive power relations insofar as power, here, denotes both creative and destructive forces. Importantly for positioning theory, the interlocutors are given an agential role. As Wilkinson and Kitzinger [45] state "people activity elect, at particular times in specific encounters, to utter statements like these - and at other times not to" (p. 158). The possibility of how to position oneself always exists within any given context even if the choice remains latent and unacknowledged. As a result, HCI is one such possibility of how to position oneself socially.

A position is not a site of occupation for an extended duration since we are always engaged in a flux of positioning strategies [46]. This kind of identity-in-flux or 'necessary contingency' remains a possibility throughout the varieties of identity positions that can be taken up - including HCI. Even to interpellate this into the register of ontology it still holds; namely, that there are no pre-existing foundations, no pre-given conditions only radical contingency, which Butler [47] terms, somewhat paradoxically, contingent foundations. This is where the trickster as trope that undergirds HCI becomes helpful because it is an exemplar of radical contingency as a boundary crosser and a spirit-of-the-road [3].

The Four Assemblages : Of all possible literary and positioning devices, why a neologism? If we dissect the word and atomize it into its constitutive parts, we get: hyper-commandeer-ing; thus the acronym HCI, which is a stand-in for the somewhat cumbersome hypercommandeering because of the polysemic nature of the three letters; namely, that it refers to human-computer interaction in the field of technoscience and, of course, is in cahoots with Haraway's [1] own conception of the cyborg with its aim to thwart any kind of binary hypostatization. Like all good tricky devices, HCI is the interface; not merely comprising one category or another, but the key to unlocking communication between and amongst domains [3]. Hyper was chosen as a prefix because the social footing it represents is an overplay on decadence and surplus. Etymologically, hyper is from the Greek *huper* meaning over or in excess of measure [48]. This is a reference to the hyperbolism inherent in the position - that is, an exaggeration to absurdity - and the politics of the position; namely, that it is a kind of take-over or ending. Or, to use Haraway's [38] reading, "hyper means 'over' or 'beyond,' in the sense of 'overshooting' or 'extravagance.' Thus, technoscience indicates a time-space modality that is extravagant, that overshoots passages through naked or unmarked history" (p. 3). In a similar way, the prefix hyper has special meaning in the postmodern landscape, especially in regards to Baudrillard's [34] hyperreality, which equivocates the real with artifice, neither being anchored in any kind of originary grounding - i.e., sign *qua* signifier. HCI rejects the binary of foundationalism versus social constructionism (nature versus culture) and instead is committed to pursuing another course in the hybridity of natureculture [37].

Straightaway, commandeering has the implications of militarism. This gives HCI its blitzkrieg political and ethical fronts. That is, the strategy is not one of invasion and pillage but, rather, one of holding and retooling - a kind of reverse engineering of enemy technologies. The etymology of commandeer comes from South African Dutch *kommandeeren* to command or force into military service and also from the French, *commander*, to seize for military use [49]. Both of these historical facts most plainly paint us a picture of bellicosity, which is particularly apropos given the current time period in which we inhabit [2].Finally, the suffix renders the word a noun by gerunding it. In this way, we can then point to it as an identity position thereby making it intelligible in terms of the conceptual framework of positioning theory. Moreover, the *-ing* highlights one of the theory's main tenets; namely, that positioning is an active, ongoing, and dynamic process within the flux of human sociality [46]. Parallel with its linguistic background, the term hypercommandeering gathers together a fourfold of disparate rhetorical and discursive strands undisclosed in any other single word; namely, that it is hyperbolic, ironic, iconoclastic, and processed.

Hyperbolic : Footing-wise, HCI is the exaggeration of an identity position such that the overreach forecloses the possibility of any fixity. That is, it discloses the never ending deferral of meaning *a la* "there is no outside-the-text" [40] (p. 873). In this way it circumvents being affixed to a singular alignment between interlocutors: it is ambiguous, free floating, and pregnant with possibilities - immanent - since it undercuts any commitment to literalism. Secondly, this kind of hyperbolism by nature swerves because meaning is necessarily given indirectly [1]. That is, since, as Haraway [37] says, we can only "tell stories about stories, all the way down" (p. 21), swerving, exaggerating, and inverting meaning reveals more of the truth than a Cartesian argument, a totality. Haraway [2] argues that "the feminist dream of a common language, like all dreams for a perfectly true language, of perfectly faithful naming of experience, is a totalizing and imperialist one" (p. 31). We might wit by saying that 'we are condemned to be troping' - up, down, and all around. In sum, the hyperbolism implicit in hypercommandeering guards against fixity, literalism, and essentialism by taking up a footing of immanence while recognizing the metaphorical nature of language through its built in mechanism of embellishment.

Ironic : Keeping with the ontology of the trickster, HCI embodies incongruence and dissonance through ironism. As Haraway [2] says of her cyborg, it is "committed to partiality, irony, intimacy, and perversity. It is oppositional, utopian, and completely without innocence" (p. 9). This aspect of HCI illustrates an anti-holism, the desire to not seek a unitary identity; consequently, generating "antagonistic dualisms without end ... [by taking] irony for granted" [2] (p. 38). This is a position of generativity, not of final ends - of always being able to show that the opposite could be the case insofar as the subject is constituted through its socio-historical conditions. For Haraway [2], the irony of HCI unleashes a "cultural restriction enzyme to cut the code" (p. 11) of positioning over and against hetero hegemony - or any essentialist hegemony, for that matter. In this way, HCI is a position inclusive of the entire domain of human sociality such that the kind it operates under subsumes identitarianism. It speaks all possible languages through its trickster heteroglossia from which it derives a political stance of neither anarchism nor imperialism, but of a Janus head.

Iconoclastic : Iconoclasm is by definition political - i.e., an engaged project of reappropriation. Case-in-point, reflecting back on her cyborg studies, Haraway [37] recalls her motivation to try and "inhabit cyborgs critically; i.e., neither in celebration nor condemnation, but in a spirit of ironic appropriation for ends never envisioned by the space warriors (p. 4)." It is precisely in this sense that HCI is iconoclastic such that it not only disrupts the power alignments that would render a subject docile but, further, actually infiltrates, destabilizes, and rebrands these said structures deploying them for its own ends. Paragon of this is the retelling of origin stories - the appropriation of the instruments of colonization, as Haraway [2] argues, such that HCI "subvert[s] the central myths of origin of Western culture. We have all been colonized by those origin myths" (p. 33). This is iconoclasm to the extreme because it unashamedly reveals the 'contingent foundations' posited by Butler [47] earlier. However, Haraway [37] is adamant that this does not entail ahistoricity. Quite the contrary; it invigorates historical situatedness. We are companions with animals, machines, et al. in messy, intertwined, and specific historical relationships [37] that should not be consolidated under what Butler [50] calls the 'sign of the same' - i.e., phallogocentric, free floating categories.

The motivation to reject origin stories comes from that fact that they are almost always anthropocentric and, as Haraway [38] argues, typically a riff off of the Christian salvation story (cf. the iconography in technoscience). According to Haraway [37], "deep ecologists love to believe these stories in order to hate them in the name of Wilderness before the Fall into Culture, just as humanists believe them in order to fend off biological encroachments on culture" (p. 28). On this account, origin stories are a kind of political tactic utilized by contesting factions to further a specific ideology and set of beliefs.

Processed : Trickster metaphysics is a kind of process ontology. Thus, the identity position, HCI, is engaged in an active state(ing) of hyperbolizing, ironizing, and iconoclastisizing. By taking up this stance, it hails from a world where "beings constitute each other and themselves. Beings do not preexist their relatings" [37] (p. 6) which leaves us with nothing but "turtles upon turtles of naturecultures all the way down" [2] (p. 2). If we accept this processing nature of reality and the metaphorical view of language, then the gerund hypercommandeering is a valuable space in which to thwart normativity and reification.

Trickster as process ontology is more than just a trope, a site to do work, which Haraway [37] recognized, at least to an extent, as a valid critique of her conception of the cyborg. That is, the cyborg was a kind of abstraction, a site to do heady lifting. This, in part, led Haraway [37] to her companion species canines, which she resolutely states "are not an alibi for other themes; dogs are fleshly material-semiotic presences in the body of technoscience. Dogs are not surrogates for theory; they are not here just to think with. They are here to live with" (p. 5). Dogs are flesh-of-the-world beings, no doubt, but dogs and cyborgs are merely taxonomic kinds derived from the very ultra-fleshy cosmology of the trickster. Dogs may be "in the garden from the get-go" [37] (p. 5), but the trickster is the garden *qua* garden.   The aforesaid fourfold - hyperbolism, ironism, iconoclasticism, and processed - are gathered together in the identity position of HCI. They enable HCI to proffer sense while thwarting hegemony through trickster strategies of deployment.

V.   HCI-IN-THE-WORLD

A real world example of HCI that is both illuminating and generative is the aesthetic of the fashion designer Alexander McQueen [51]; particularly, his spring / summer 2001 show *VOSS*. In fact, Haraway and McQueen converge in many respects.

HaraQueen : The title of this section, HaraQueen, is a portmanteau of the last names of Donna Haraway and

Alexander McQueen in order to draw attention to their many similarities. The melding of these two proper nouns is, in itself, a trickster maneuver in that it brings within proximity two disparate domains holding them as unity [3]. HaraQueen is also a type of homophone - horror queen - that holds in concert the contradistinctive semantics of these two words: horror meaning an affection of disgust, revulsion, and dread and queen meaning the status of divine right, potentate, and sovereign; not under the sign of the same, but in all their distinctive g(l)ory such that difference is honored.

The professional projects as well as the personal histories of Haraway and McQueen show remarkable convergence. For McQueen, the natural world was an endless wellspring of inspiration. As Bolton [51] states, "nature was the greatest, or at least the most enduring, influence upon McQueen" (p. 15). In seeming paradox, one of McQueen's most surefire aims was to problematize the natural, to disrupt and destabilize normativity. This was clearly made visible in *Plato's Atlantis* (spring / summer 2010) where he offered an ironic, reversed origin story whereby the theory of evolution had been turned on its head, and we must return to the sea in order to survive the rising waters from the melting icecaps. McQueen envisioned this happening in tandem with future technical advancements where "the sublime experience of nature was paralleled by and supplanted with that of technology - the extreme space-time impressions produced by the internet" [51] (p. 15).

Haraway, too, thinks in terms of the natural-technical. Haraway is a trained biologist and her professional scholarship is infused with articulating a being-with-others (e.g., technology, animals, humans, etc.) that comes from studying the radical anti-anthropomorphism of biological discourse. Most famously, she initiated cyborg studies as a way to envision a non-instrumentalist relationship with technologies as well as to inhibit said technologies critically [37]. Not surprisingly, McQueen and Haraway have an affinity for trickster figures. Again, Haraway's is the Native American coyote who, in one instance, after stupidly putting "his head into an empty skull of an elk" becomes trapped and must wander blindly about the world [3] (p. 39). Similarly, McQueen's fall / winter 2000 - 2001 collection was christened *Eshu*, the trickster god of the Yoruba religion, who "delights in mishap as well as good hap" [3] (p. 121) and is a psychopomp guiding souls across the abyss between life and death. Both of these characters are on-the-way, in transit, and spirits of the road wherein stealing and lying, according to Hyde [3], are not "so much to get away with something or [to] get rich as to disturb the established categories of truth and property and, by so doing, open the road to possible new worlds" (p. 13). McQueen and Haraway share similar affinities in their trickster relationships as well as motifs derived from technology and the natural world. Their projects, in many ways, converge, diverge, swerve, and overlap each other. Consequently, articulating a reading of McQueen's spring / summer 2001 fashion show *VOSS* in light of HCI, which is based upon Haraway's work, brings to the fore a paragon site of this identity position in the world.

VOSS as Paradigmatic of HCI : Upon encountering *VOSS*, the observer was met with what appeared to be a large 3-sided box or room with mirrors on all sides. The fashion editors, photographers, and guests were seated along each of the 3 sides and confronted with their own reflections for an extended duration. This kind of set-up by McQueen lays claim to an inhabited space (or identity position) wherein it at once shields while, at the same time, reflects - the gaze is reclaimed; namely, as McQueen [51] quipped, "the idea was to turn people's faces on themselves. I wanted to turn it around and make them think, am I actually as good as what I'm looking at?" (p.142). The context was prefigured to be on McQueen's terms. This is important because HCI employs its ironism to inhabit a space already open for occupation in service of its own, political ends. The site may be handed over (the stage-catwalk), but the context is retooled in such a way as to regain a one-up footing.

Once the show commenced, the lights came on and revealed that the mirror-box was actually a room composed of two-way mirrors where, now, the observers could see in but the runway models could not see out. The room sported white walls that, according to Knox [52], invoked "the troubled setting of a mental asylum" (p. 30). On the back wall, there was a set of mirrors facing inward which created an infinite mirroring process within the room itself. Finally, at its center, there existed a cubed box composed of a metal frame and opaque, dirty glass on all sides of which the interior was invisible. The box within a box within a box illustrates HCI being processed such that McQueen was playing with the idea of infinite regress of perspective wherein there are boxes upon boxes all the way down. The large containing hall that encapsulates the audience also housed the asylum room. The asylum room housed the centerpiece box and so on. Saliently, perspective was controlled through the lighting. The asylum room only became visible once the lighting had shifted a certain way; likewise, at least hypothetically for the models, the audience could become visible had the white light dimmed in their padded room and shown instead on the observers. The way in which lighting and perspective are intimately linked and, importantly, that McQueen is in control of the former and therefore the latter is interesting: in *VOSS*, McQueen hypercommandeers the lighting and, consequently, controls all of the players' - models and audience

members - situated points of view.

The asylum theme was further developed when the models entered the rooms with their heads wrapped in what appeared to be white bandages. Upon entrance, they posed in front of the walls not for the audience, since they had no way of seeing out, but rather seemingly for their own reflection. They also sometimes engaged in erratic movements, looked confused, and laughed without any apparent reason almost as if they had been lobotomized. In one sense, this is a commentary on medical and psychiatric discourse - the impulse of society to control, normalize, and render the abnormal functional [53]. In another sense, McQueen is critiquing a herd mentality of beauty; that is, what might be called the patriarchal objectification of the female body as sex object. In contradistinction to this determinism, McQueen saw the body as up for grabs, as a place of disputation. Bolton [51] relates this as "for McQueen, the body was a site of contravention, where normalcy was questioned and where the spectacle of marginality was embraced and celebrated" (p. 15). Through his fashions, McQueen recoded the body in such a way as to upend what might be considered natural or beautiful. This, coupled with his love of nature, makes for an ironic paradox that preserves these two dichotomies as indissoluble - a trickster move, indeed.

On some of the more elaborate creations in *VOSS*, the models would shake and destroy parts of the ensemble thereby shedding on the stage. This is iconoclasm in action because it shows that even McQueen's own creations are subject to transience. Although McQueen engaged in iconoclasm, he was not a hardcore anarchist. As Bolton [51] relates, McQueen said "you've got to know the rules to break them. That's what I'm here for, to demolish the rules but to keep the tradition" (p. 30). He was profoundly historical and autobiographical in his collections by drawing on his Scottish heritage and his experiences growing up queer. This fact is another semblance to Haraway's work in that both avow the necessity of taking-up facticity and the importance of recognizing historical situatedness. McQueen's clothes shown with a real sense of reverence for the traditional canon; perhaps most clearly in his posthumous collection unofficially titled *Angels and Demons* (fall / winter 2010 - 2011). Here, according to Frankel [54], "entire paintings (as well as details of them) were captured digitally, and woven into jacquards or embroidered and engineered to fit individuals garments" in admiration for "some of his favorite old masters - Hieronymus Bosch, Hugo van der Goes, and Jean Fouquet among them" (p. 27). This helps illuminate what is iconoclastic in HCI; that is, a revisionist historical realism that nourished McQueen in all of his creativity.

Once the full *VOSS* collection had been shown, the models cleared the room and now visible inside the center box was a hanging light with either moths or butterflies fluttering around. The indistinctness of these flying insects (winged creatures were a running motif for McQueen) is important because it is indicative of playing with ambiguity and, therefore, tricksterism. If they are moths then they are sacrilegious, especially for the fashion industry, because they eat clothing. On the other hand, if they are butterflies, then they are a metamorphic catharsis perhaps symbolic of McQueen's newly finished collection. This ambiguity is liminal because it foregrounds the possibility for both perspectives without falling into the trap of either [3]. Suddenly, the lights came up, and the glass walls fell down and shattered. Inside, the whole time, had been fetish writer Michelle Olley [51] lying naked, plus-sized on an armchair couch with moths-butterflies flying about her. She donned a reptilian-cyborgian helmet over her head with a breathing-feeding tube protruding and attached to a duct in the ceiling - a blatant assemblage of human, machine, and animal. McQueen [51] said that the staging had been based on Joel-Peter Witkin's photo *Sanitorium*.

It is precisely this scene that captures the *sine qua non* of HCI: the duping the hegemonic Other. Dupe comes from the Middle French *duppe*, which originated as a jargon of the thieves meaning to deceive [55]. Perhaps it came from the idiom *de huppe* 'of the hoopoe' which is an extravagantly encrusted and embroidered bird known to be stupid and idiotic. In order to be duped, importantly, the deception must be revealed to be otherwise or HCI loses its political front. That is, in order to be deceived a realization of having been deceived in the first place must exist or else ignorance bars any possibility of the duping. In this way, what is so clever about *VOSS* is that the elephant in the room (idiomatically, not Michelle Olley) had been there the whole time under temporary erasure - the elephant only came into being once the duping occurred.

Importantly, the power to choose when to name the elephant was handed over to McQueen from the git-go. As such, *VOSS* is a semblance of the Trojan horse ruse wherein the phallic connotations of the Grecian attack make its use all the more ironic since it has been hijacked as a solution for queer positioning. This kind of sneak penetration is at its root queer, according to Seely [56], in that "any becoming-otherwise ... involve[s] the body's escape, however ephemeral, from the hegemonic modalities of patriarchal heteronormativity" (p. 263). That is, the queerness of HCI foregrounds any possibility of its use by phallogocentric hegemony: to recode means at the same time to unstraighten. The reveal, or when to exit the horse, generates an affective aesthetic [56], which can only occur for HCI when walking the razor's edge of camp and couture; slip and the position

either falls into either extreme otherness or reifies current norms. It is at once monstrous and enchanting - macabre romanticism - whereby the gaze is hypnotically summoned and entranced in an uncanniness. This must have been the feeling experienced by the audience members at the *VOSS* show. Not only had they been duped, but they were left with a feeling of being unnerved and unsettled, of not-being-at-home.

VI.   CONCLUSION

The future implementation of HCI is pregnant with possibilities. The branches of critical studies, such as feminism, critical race theory, and postcolonialism, could benefit from adding the HCI component to their disciplinary repertoire. HCI is helpful for critical scholarship because it is a bridge over an abyss, a dangerous on-the-way in between foundationalism and social constructionism. While having its roots in Marxism, critical theory has tended to ally with social constructionism and reject any kind of foundational realism [57]. HCI offers an alternative in metaphorical realism. To state it differently, trickster strategies can flank the iron curtain of metonymy and breach it through artifice. Claims can be made about the world. Contradistinctively, though, those claims are always foregrounded by the discursive politics of the era. Drawing on Haraway's work, HCI charts a course between these oscillating contingencies and perspectives wherein navigation hopefully becomes less treacherous. This may have some bearing for the waters of the aforementioned disciplines.

Most explicitly, HCI has special relevance for discursive psychology and positioning theory. Since it names an identity position, future research could use methodologies apropos for this kind of analysis - e.g., critical discourse analysis [58] - and study HCI in conversation. This would give additional empirical credence to what has hitherto been largely a theoretical work. It would also be interesting to discern the kind of political work being done by HCI (since it is by nature a political animal); that is, which master discourses is it being used to destabilize. This may help illuminate the flux of power relations taking place among the interlocutors and the broader cultural discourse in general.

"I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess" [1] (p. 181). To return, again, to the inaugural quotation from Haraway's "Cyborg Manifesto," we now might wonder how seriously we are to take her declaration. On the one hand, she seems dead serious such that clearing a path out of the essentialism of modernity and its free-floating shadow, postmodernity, is literally a fight for survival. On the other hand, she consistently maintains that significant parts of her project can be read as a kind of joke, as a means of preventing discursive foreclosure and actually setting desire in motion. Taken together, in this way, hypercommandeering feigns hegemony in order to dupe it and thereby reclaim, retool, and deploy it afresh. It is precisely in this sense that 'only a trickster can save us.'

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