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Dealing with Books: Naming Texts and the Logic of Entitlement

Books appear as ordinary things, objects that we take for granted in our everyday existence.¹ We are surrounded by them. From our first days, the already organized circulation of texts helps form our language, our thoughts, and our world — what we read, what we hear about, what we are told to read, and what we are discouraged or prohibited from reading. While a considerable amount of attention in recent years has been given to the functions of the author (such as by Barthes and Foucault) and some attention to other aspects of the paratext (by Genette), very little has been written about the functions of the book title.² Yet titles are usually the first things that people look at when they begin reading books, and they are by far the most common way of referring to books whether the books have been read or not. Beyond a small number of exceptions, there is no problem in finding and repeating a title, in showing what the title refers to and suggesting what it means. However, while we easily accept the system of entitlements, there remains a considerable amount worth noting about the ways titles function. Titles create and mediate a cluster of relations through which we are immersed in a well-managed textual world.

THE MULTIPLICITY OF TITLES

Attempts to locate the book's proper title must contend with several problems. For instance, even within a single language a book may have several different titles. The spine of the book will sometimes have a shorter version of the title than is found on the title page. The title that occurs in catalogues, the listings from the Library of Congress or the *Books in Print* is seldom the title used in

1 The author would like to thank Dr. Evelyn Cobley, Dr. Warren Magnusson, Rod Neufeldt, Debora Halbert, and Colleen Fox for their comments on previous versions of the essay; and the staff at Bolen Books and the University of Victoria for their insights and for years of relevant work experience.

2 Although sparse, there is an international literature on the topic. In addition to the works cited in this essay, see Angenot, Di Fazio Alberti, Hoek; for other English-language studies on the title see, for example, Derrida, Fisher, Levin, Meyer, Wilson.

citations or conversations, and may be very different from the author's working title. The same book can be given different titles by British and American publishers, who alter the title for copyright reasons but also to appeal to their national markets. For instance, *Settled Out of Court* in England is titled *The Body in the Silo* in the United States (Barzun 92). Titles can also vary after books are made into movies — *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* is filmed as *Blade Runner*, and the book is duely republished with the new title (at least in North America). There may also be a political dimension to such changes. Theodor Adorno points to the way that Heinrich Mann's *Professor Unrat* (translated literally as *Professor Garbage*) became *Der blaue Engel* (*The Blue Angel*), in part because the new title was less offensive, less overtly political, and therefore more marketable. The change in title was thus part of a broader process, both political and economic, where people in the film industry "removed every social barb, and turned the philistine devil into a figure of sentimental comedy" (Adorno 300). In this instance, people in the book industry played a minor, but crucial role in the larger political process.

Variations in titles can arise from the staff and customers in a bookstore. Customers often create their own temporary titles, sometimes with the name of the author, sometimes with the name of the series, and sometimes with a description of the content. For example, customers might ask for "the next book in *The Clan of the Cave Bear* series" or "the latest book by Stephen King" or "that new book on Canadian politics," using these phrases in place of the authorized title that they do not know. Of course, these ways of referring to books may not count as titles, given their temporary status and the authority relationships that exist between publishers, authors, and customers. However, in some situations they are adequate alternatives, used as if they were titles.

To further complicate attempts to find a single title, the book can include a pre-title and a sub-title, which are also subject to change. A pre-title often indicates the book's form or its location in a larger series. *Considerations on... Time-Life Cookbooks... The Fables of... Epigrams from... The Collected Letters of... and An Essay on...* are a few examples. The subtitle generally expands or clarifies the title. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the subtitle was often an extended introductory sentence, a clarifying sketch of the content promised by the title. Defoe's *The Life and Strange Times of Robinson Crusoe of York, Mariner: Who Lived Eight and Twenty Years All Alone in an Uninhabited Island on the Coast of America, Near the Mouth of the Great River of Oroonoke, Having Been Cast on Shore by Shipwreck Wherein All the Men Perished But Himself* is an apt example. Current practices of entitlement tend to excise the extended subtitles of the original editions, perhaps placing them on a reproduction of an early title page, which enhances the classical aura of the work without creating an obligation to cite (or list) the entire title. In these cases, the title page is not the place where the current title is presented.

The relations between the parts of a title are not always static. Pretitles and subtitles are often changed, added or erased in other editions of the book: the *Iliad* easily becomes *Homer's Iliad*, *Gone With the Wind* eventually becomes *Gone With the Wind: 50th Anniversary Edition*. The subtitle can even usurp the position of the original title, as when Rousseau's *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse* becomes simply *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. If a book becomes the first book in a series after it was first published, then a subtitle could be added later. In all these variations, there are attempts to make the titles meaningful, to add information, to give consumers reasons to make an extra purchase, and to fit the title into appropriate markets. Defoe's original title would probably never come back into use as a practical title, except on nostalgic title pages; while *Gone With the Wind: 50th Anniversary Edition* will probably never be published again.

The shift to the ten-digit standardized book number (ISBN) has allowed computers to either assist in or take over the circulation of books. A division has developed between how people and how the book-selling businesses refer to books. An ISBN meticulously designates a book, understood as a mass-produced, consistent commodity, but is completely indifferent to what book it designates. It traverses languages, but at the cost of meaning. The ISBN does not describe the book, only denotes it. It is a generalized tracking system, suitable for warehousing, computer retail systems, and order lists. The ISBN does not seduce people into reading the book or affect how they interpret the work. To almost every reader, the ISBN gives no information and grants no relevance. It only acts as a title in very limited ways. However, it is becoming increasingly essential to the way that books circulate. Recognized publishers are allocated ISBNs for their books while books that are submitted for inclusion into the *Books in Print* that do not have an ISBN are given one (see Bowker x). A book without an ISBN will cause headaches for bookstores, who have to create reference numbers if they want to stock the book. Even if the ISBN does not occur on the title page yet, it occurs in most of the other places that the title occurs (the cover, the book information page, the publisher's catalogues, *The Books in Print* and so on). The ISBN shadows what previously counted as the title, becoming, in effect, the book's title for computer systems.

One interesting problem with finding a title arises when scholars try to entitle fragments that have survived from antiquity. The process of entitlement is coupled with a process of organization that shapes the fragments in particular ways, in terms of particular readings. For instance, when later writers refer to the pre-Socratic texts, *On Nature* is consistently used as the title. But it is unclear whether the works were entitled *On Nature* or whether "on nature" was a commentator's description of the content (Guthrie 73) or an archivist's label for the scroll. Because there was no special punctuation for indicating a title, when a writer referred to "Empedocles's book on nature," the ambiguity of the reference was unavoidable. Many editors argue that Empedocles's writings

should be divided into two separate works, one entitled *On Nature* or *Physis* and the other *On Purifications* or *Katharmoi* (Barnes 161; Wright 21). One rationale that Barnes gives for organizing the fragments in this way is that the fragments deal with either scientific or religious topics. However, using these two titles builds a division between science and religion into the fragments that was not as marked in pre-Socratic thought. Others, such as Diels, have argued that the book named *Katharmoi* should be taken as the third section of the larger work entitled *Physis*, thus making religion a part of physics (see Wright 21). Inwood argues that there is not enough evidence to decide this issue with any confidence (13). The title of Inwood's translation, *The Poem of Empedocles*, is a partial response to the difficulty, suggesting that there is a single poem without offering a title that describes the poem's content. There is much at stake in this problem, primarily concerning whether there is continuity or discontinuity between scientific and religious questions. The arrangement of titles is thus an important part of the interpretation; and, because there has to be a title if the book is to be published, some interpretation is unavoidable.

The way that Empedocles's writing is approached suggests a bias in practices of modern scholarship. The lack of clear titles in antiquity implies that creating titles for books was not a fixed part of the management of texts, and that the author's name and the topic were the primary ways to distinguish one book from another. Empedocles wrote a poem about nature. There is no need for a title, for a name, because the author and the description are sufficient for distinguishing that poem from the other writings that the commentators would want to consider. What this suggests is that modern attempts to find clear titles — and therefore clearly delineated books with distinct topics — is an attempt to bring these writings in line with modern practices, to make the poem that Empedocles wrote into a product that can be published and properly footnoted.

A similar problem arises when a book's title is a proper name. One example is a book such as *The Sermons of Augustine*. The title could refer to sermons written by St Augustine of Hippo or someone else named Augustine, to sermons collected by a monk named Augustine, to sermons collected in a place called Augustine or to commentaries on any of these.³ Of course, these ambiguities would seldom arise in a Medieval library, where the monks would have a direct and on-going connection to the available books. In a modern computer database, on the other hand, ambiguities of this sort could cause incredible confusion. One likely response for a modern publisher would be to add additional information into the title, which would allow the title to specify a single book to a readership that is unfamiliar with what is available. Another response is to create a

"keywords" section in the database citation, which supplements the information normally conveyed through the title.

If a text did not have a title, one would have to be found for it: the titles of Kafka's novels come from his literary executor, while editors and translators often have a free hand when naming other people's unpublished works. Wittgenstein's *The Blue and Brown Books* is an example of how incidental characteristics of the binders' covers became the title when a title was needed, first when people began to talk about the writing, and then when the "book" was finally published. With this book, there is an evident slide in the title. On the front cover, the title appears to be *The Blue and Brown Books: Preliminary Studies for the "Philosophical Investigations."* It is a strange title, given that it claims to be the preliminary work for a book that Wittgenstein never in fact published. But more to the point, the next page indicates that the title is *The Blue and Brown Books* while on the third page the title is *Preliminary Studies for the "Philosophical Investigations" generally known as The Blue and Brown Books.* There seems to be an attempt, whether by the publisher or the translators, to give the book a more descriptive title than *The Blue and Brown Books*, perhaps because it says nothing about the text. However, there is no academic controversy in this case, given that the book is referred to as *The Blue and Brown Books* by those familiar with Wittgenstein's work and it is generally recognized to be the transitional work that Wittgenstein was working on after the *Tractatus*. The variations in the title are close enough together that they do not cause confusion. Even if the title varies, the readers can know what books are being referred to.

Because people are protected from a considerable amount of the book production system by a *façade* of order, they seldom see how a book is created or hear about titles of books that are never published. Sometimes, such as when the publisher distributes an advanced copy, some cracks in the process can be seen. Different parts of the book can change, from the ISBN and the cover art to the title and the content. Until the book is published, its identity and existence remains in question. For instance, when an elementary school textbook entitled *Find a Shining Pebble* was first sent to reviewers, the book looked like a finished product: perfect binding, glossy cover, ISBN and so on. When the book was published months later, however, the title, the ISBN, the artwork on the cover and some chapters in the book were completely different. People who ordered the book based on the review copy were sent the version of the book that the publisher finally published. But the publisher considered it to be the same book, primarily because the book was part of a larger series. *Find a Shining Pebble* now exists only in the reviewer's archives, not achieving the status of a book, no matter how convincing the mock-up's appearance.⁴

3 I would like to thank Dr. Carl Grindley for his helpful discussion on the finer points of Medieval practices.

4 I am indebted to Al Butler for this example.

The translation of titles from one language to another can also complicate the relationship between the book and the title. Differences in language are also borders between markets. Sometimes the titles are not translated. An example is *Écrits*, which is the title of an English edition of Jacques Lacan's work. For the English edition, the title helps characterize the foreign, and in particular French, nature of the work, an intellectual source that has appeal for both marketing and intellectual reasons. One reason why the title does not have to be translated is because there is a wide English-speaking readership that can recognize the general meaning of *écrits* and can guess at the book's genre. Of course, the decision not to translate a title is only plausible when the "foreign" language is partially meaningful to the potential readership. It would do little good to publish a book directed towards an English-speaking audience that used less-known French words. There is also a technical imperative for translating titles. Because the book production system is based on Roman characters, it would be impractical for a book title to be in Chinese, for instance. Of course, Chinese characters could be part of the design on the book's cover, and could even be considered the real title, although it could not be used by many publishers, distributors, or booksellers.

Sometimes the translator, the publisher, or the author give a book a different title for strategic reasons. One example is Foucault's *Les Mots et Choses*, which would have translated directly as *Words and Things*; but was instead entitled *The Order of Things*. One reason that the translator gives is that there were already two books titled *Words and Things* and publishing another book with the same title would cause confusion (Foucault viii). In addition, to publish another book with the same title would fail to distinguish Foucault's book from the others: the common sense assumption being that two books with the same title are roughly the same book. This is as much the case when the book is marketed as when it is taken up in debates. A different title suggests a different position. The fact that Foucault's book was not entitled *Words and Things* is important for understanding how his book was coded for English-speaking markets. The direct translation would not have had the desired impact. For this reason, the best translation of a title is not always the literal one.

One interesting example of the shift from one book distribution system to another is the recent translation of George Bataille's *Accursed Share*. In French, there are three volumes. In English, the first volume was published as a book and unremarkably subtitled *Volume One*. However, the subsequent two volumes where combined into a single book, with the subtitle *Volumes Two and Three*. The strange title points to what can happen when books cross from one publishing system to another. What counts as a book in one market may become two or more books, or be combined with other books, in another market. It is left to the title to reflect these changes, even at the cost of confusion.

There are instances when publishers or editors rearrange works, even when the connections between books and titles are relatively well established. For instance, the title of the 1912 Everyman edition of Aristotle's works runs: *A Treatise on Government; or, The Politics of Aristotle*. In the introduction, the translator, William Ellis, claims that "The *Politics* of Aristotle is the second part of a treatise of which the *Ethics* is the first part. It looks back to the *Ethics* as the *Ethics* looks forward to the *Politics*. For Aristotle did not separate, as we are inclined to do, the spheres of the statesman and the moralist" (Aristotle 1935, vii). The suggestion is interesting: the treatise that he has translated is, in fact, only half of a treatise that we know exists because the parts refer to and complement each other. Of course, to follow this argument to its conclusion, Aristotle only wrote one book, entitled *Philosophy*. On the other hand, Ellis is only doing what most editors do. But most editors obscure their creation through words such as *Essential*, *Collected*, or the *Selected Works*. In these cases, there is no attempt to create a new book with a new title, or suggesting that the taxonomy of Aristotle's books is mistaken.

In other cases, the decision to change a title seems to be motivated by political concerns. Hitler's *Mein Kampf* is a good example: the book was first published in 1925 (see Williams et al. 298-304) and in 1933, near the time when Hitler became Chancellor of the Reich, the book was first translated into English and given the title *My Struggle* in England and *My Battle* in the United States (the French translation from the same period was entitled *Mon Combat*). These translations included only a part of the work and were the sections that would most likely appeal to Anglo-American readers. Houghton Mifflin was the publisher of the American edition. In 1937, Houghton Mifflin reprinted the book with the title changed slightly to *My Battle (Mein Kampf)*. The title, as translated and untranslated, suggests the ambiguity with which Hitler was viewed in the years leading to the war. Three new editions of the partial work were published in 1939 and all were titled simply *Mein Kampf*. Finally, Houghton Mifflin published the full book in 1940 as *Mein Kampf*. The book had been definitely coded as German. (An incidental benefit of keeping the German title for an English audience is that "mein" is phonetically connected to "mine," and suggests an emphatic and irrational desire to possess and exclude others.) Since the war, all English editions of the work have carried the untranslated title. Due to the crystallization of titles into conventions of signification, the consequent demonization of Hitler in Western thought, and the meaning that the title now conveys for an English audience, it is unlikely that the work will ever have an English title (nor will it ever need one).

THE IDENTITY OF BOOKS

The existence and maintenance of entitling practices is intimately tied to the persistent identity of texts over space and time. If books were like water, they

could not have titles. As identifying marks, titles play an important role in the production, distribution, and organization of books. In modern publishing, the title is created before the book is published, which enables the publisher to market the book, and distribute information about books to warehouses and to prospective customers. Practices such as book reviews, order forms, autographing tours, advertisements, and advanced copies all depend on knowing the name of a book before the book makes it through the publishing process. In effect, the title is a rumour that becomes increasingly hard to deny. The closer the book comes to its publication date, the more costly and disruptive a change would be.

Bookstore customers do not expect that books with the same title have different words inside, especially if the book's author and cover design are also the same. In part this is a result of technological developments since the printing press. Prior to that time, it was not thought that every copy of a book would be identical. For instance, reference is made in *The Carolingians and the Written Word* to "Valenciennes 293, a ninth-century copy of Plato's *Timaeus* in the translation by Calcidius" (McKitterick 135). In this case, the book is the *Timaeus*, written by Plato, translated by Calcidius, copied by an unnamed scribe from a manuscript with an unknown history, and finally tagged by an anonymous library archivist. The amount of interpretive work that has to be done by the reader is increased. It is not as simple as buying a mass-produced book with the correct title and reading it. The source of the physical book, its connection to other books of the same title, the context of its creation and its history all have to be considered. The title in the Middle Ages served as the name for an ideal though possibly never actualized book against which other books, the books that people possessed and studied, could be judged. There is never a perfect copy of Plato's *Timaeus* but there are books that are closer and closer to a perfect copy (meaning, lost to the original). In the Middle Ages the quality of the edition was a much greater issue than it is now.

The close connection of books that have the same title is extended, with some variation, to different editions and translations of the same book. For instance, from the seventeenth-century translations by Chapman and Hobbes to more recent ones by Rieu and Latimore, Homer's *Iliad* has been translated into English many times. But because the different translations have similar titles, there may be a tendency to ignore the differences between the books. In any case, we are reading *The Iliad*. Yet each translation is conditioned by the style and vocabulary (if not the prejudices) of the translator. For instance, Hobbes's translation is generally skewed towards an aristocratic, well-educated elite whereas Rieu's is directed towards a broad readership. The books do not even share a common source given that the Greek original, itself somehow connected back to an oral source, has been edited over the last 300 years. Readers are lead to believe that *The Iliad* is the *same* book and that it subsists through different

translations. The book is thus abstracted through the title from any particular physical book, it is a book that people can only read through its various editions.

In the early modern period the ownership of intellectual property became an important legal and economic problem, and the need to designate *what* an author owned became crucial. The title became a name for an abstracted identity persisting over time whose copyright could be bought and sold. When the book is being written, the connection between the title and the book it names is less fixed. Milton's contract for what would become *Paradise Lost* suggests how a tentative title was used before publication, as a name that could be changed when the book became a product. What Milton sold to his publisher was "All that Booke Copy or Manuscript of A Poem entitled Paradise lost, or by whatsoever other title or name the same is or shalbe called or distinguished" (Rose 27). In the contract, the book is titled *Paradise Lost*, even if the book is not ultimately titled *Paradise Lost*. The title itself becomes a name abstracted from the name of the book. In this way, the uncertain existence of unwritten books can still be included in legal agreements — commodities exist before the products do.

The important role that the title plays in unifying a text is not always obvious. From time to time, however, titles themselves are contested on this point. One example is the debate concerning the unity of Plato's *Republic* (Πολιτεία) Gilbert Ryle has argued that what people popularly refer to as the *Republic* is a set of shorter dialogues, passages from lectures and so on which Plato collected together later in his life (49). Yet the single title supports the belief that there is a single object that is being referred to, and in turn supports the assumption that the work can be analysed as a single statement, even if Plato's work taken as a whole can be allowed to develop. Yet most readers would pass over the title into the book, thinking nothing of the way that the title has overcome a number of possible suspicions and academic debates. But a considerable amount is at stake in deciding whether the *Republic* is a single work or that the parts circulated separately in Plato's time (which means, among other things, that there may have been different titles).

The conventions established for naming books sometimes disrupts the common-sense notion of how a title relates to its book. Sometimes this is unintended or unavoidable. An example is Sir Thomas Elyot's book, which is named *The Book Named the Governor* more often than it is named *The Governor* (or, more accurately, *The Gouenour*). This is the case even though, according to the common title, the proper title is *The Governor*. In this case, the frame that tells the reader what the word means (that "The Governor" is the title) is itself made part of the picture. There is a short jump to Smullyan's *This Book Needs No Title* or a book titled *Untitled*, titles that are intentionally paradoxical.

Just as a title can refer to itself, a book can reference its own title. Sometimes the self-referencing is understandable, such as with the *Books in Print* listing itself as being in print. At some point in the production process, that information

had to be wrong, but most readers are unlikely to be disturbed when they spot the reference. Sometimes the book referencing its own title can be used intentionally, such as in Calvino's *If On a Winter's Night a Traveller*, where the book is a confused mixture (and is made up) of many books. The continuity of the book is, in part, provided by the search for the book. Another example is in *Don Quixote*, where the second part of the book begins with the knight of the sorrowful countenance being confronted with *The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote de la Mancha*, which tells the story of the first half of the book entitled (in English) *The Adventures of Don Quixote* (Cervantes 484). The book turns in on itself through the referential paths created by its title, and the reader's confidence in the simple and autonomous existence of the book is undermined.

Titles can also refer to things other than books. For instance, *Robinson Crusoe* has become deeply integrated into our culture, retold in various ways in many forms. Almost everyone knows something about *Robinson Crusoe*, such as that it is set on an island and that it concerns a shipwrecked man and a companion named Friday. Although the title continues to refer to the work, at least in principle, what is understood is a set of characters, a plot, and sometimes a series of political arguments. Rousseau recommended that the first, if not only, book a child should have is *Robinson Crusoe* because the book provides a way of measuring things: if Crusoe would not need something on his island, then it is not worth having. Some early economists suggested that *Robinson Crusoe* was a good image for the liberal concept of "Economic Man." Marx argued that *Robinson Crusoe* was the epitome of the liberal world-view (Marx 1977, 439). In the process of this debate, *Robinson Crusoe* has become the name for a set of images and values whose connection to the book is tentative and not very relevant. People can actively participate in political and literary debates around *Robinson Crusoe* whether they have read the book or not. The content of the book has become secondary to the images that are tied to it. In *Emile*, Rousseau complains that he hates books because they only teach people to talk about things that they know nothing about (184). The complaint can be extended a step further to say that titles allow people to talk about books that they have never read.

The function of naming can even establish the existence of a book when no book exists. A bibliography full of fictional citations looks the same as any other bibliography. In part, bibliographies (including the one at the end of this paper) are designed to reassure readers that the books exist somewhere, and that they could be looked up if necessary. This opens up the possibility of subversion, which an author such as Rabelais thoroughly exploits. Throughout *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, Rabelais mixes references to books that exist and do not exist. He quotes from Plato and lists the books in the Library of Saint-Victor, which includes works such as *The Codpiece of the Law*, *On the Practice and Utility of Skinning Horses and Mares*, and *The Knickknacks of the Travelers* (153-58). One

further anecdote that illustrates this is the book owned by Charles Dickens entitled *Modern Warfare*, by Tom Thumb, which was either a blank book or only the spine of a book. The "book" was one of many on a fake bookshelf that decorated a door to Dickens' personal library (Levin xxxi). Had the veil of the title been challenged in this case, the automatic relation of the title and the book would also have been challenged. The book title, so long as it follows the grammar and placement required by the rules of entitlement (such as being italicized and placed on the spine or cover of a book), can refer to something other than a book, or to nothing at all....

THE CONTENT OF BOOKS

While the relation between the title and the content of the book is in principle arbitrary, because the author, the publisher, and the customer want the title to be meaningful, the relation is highly restricted. A badly titled book is an initial step towards meaninglessness, and the book's commercial or intellectual failure.

Different genres of entitlement are ways to maintain the relative isolation of different groups of books: the separation (non-contamination) of the content is suggested by the lack of similar titles. When the keywords of a genre require that the reader has technical knowledge, such as in many academic books, the title may limit the book's appeal to a small group of experts. The title is a way for academics to inscribe the content of their field from other textual practices, and from other academic departments.

One way that titles describe books is by using words to suggest the book's genre. Western novels, for instance, share a cluster of keywords that characterize the book as a Western. Potential readers would also expect that *Surrender to Love* be the title of a romance novel. By indicating the genre of a book, the book is separated from books of other genres. If people want to read a book on a certain subject, they will look for titles that use a particular range of words. A potential reader of *Surrender to Love* would be shocked if the book turned out to be a science fiction novel (which is at least a possibility).

The images connected to and formed by genres are part of the broader social logic of stereotypes. A scan of some recent books written about Hitler, for example, shows how titles can play upon the often mythical character that Hitler has gained. Herbert Mason's *To Kill the Devil: The Attempts on the Life of Adolf Hitler*, Hitler: *A Study in Tyranny* and *The Mad Dictator: A Novel of Adolf Hitler* link him to ideas of madness and radical authoritarianism. Hitler was barbaric, undemocratic, unthinking, militaristic, and so on. In contrast, the books written about the Allied leaders, such as Gilbert Martin's *Winston Churchill: Road to Victory* and Roosevelt's own *Rendezvous with Destiny*, tend to invoke positive images of democratic, heroic leadership. The title suggests to the potential reader not only what the book is about, but also what kinds of judgments will be made. These titles tie into popular culture, fitting the book into

a set of shared beliefs that the titles also help create: the war was Hitler's fault, the Germans were complicit, the Allies were saviors. The propaganda contests of the Second World War are thus continued in the present.

In some cases — I am thinking in particular of romance and science fiction novels — the title and the author can even be unreadable on the book's cover and the book's genre is conveyed solely by the picture. In part this is because the mass character of these genres reduces the importance of the titles. All that matters is that customers buy books that they have not read before. It is only when people go into a bookstore looking for a particular book, identified by its specific title, that the title is necessary. Nonetheless, these books always have regular titles (and ISBNs), if only so that the computers running the bookstores can order them properly.

An untranslated title, or a title that includes foreign words, can associate the book with exotic locations or topics. One theme that arose in the early modern period concerned the Noble Savage. The exoticizing social practices are reflected in the entitlement practices. However, the exotic is limited to proper names (of people and places), where the words do not have to explain what the book is about. For instance, Aphra Benn's *Oroonoko*; or, *the Royal Slave* suggests that the book will be exotic, while at the same time quickly limiting the exotic with the English subtitle. The potential reader only has to understand that Oroonoko is a proper name, which the subtitle reinforces. Science fiction books are a current genre where exoticization through titles is prevalent, if not necessary insofar as science fiction transcribes anthropological themes on to the distant or the future.

When the original title is a proper name or place name, it is difficult to avoid establishing a distance between the book and the reader. From the perspective of the English reader, *Cyrano de Bergerac* unavoidably suggests that the book concerns French people and French settings. While this exoticization may be effective, the foreign connotations of a title are not always appropriate or desired. Many of Balzac's works, *Père Goriot* or *Eugenie Grandet* for instance, contain the proper names of important characters in the novel. Directed towards a French audience, the titles reinforce the connection between the characters and the readers. Balzac is describing the French to themselves. Transferred to an English audience, however, the titles suggest a foreignness that Balzac was not trying to achieve. It would be difficult to avoid this distance, given that it would be impractical, as well as generally unacceptable, to translate French proper names into English alternatives, which in this case would only further complicate the problem.

The need for a title to describe its book becomes a problem when the title continues to be used in different cultures or different historical periods. For instance, Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* will be independently meaningful only so long as people understand what the Western Front was. As

World War One retreats to a more obscure stage in history and perhaps as people become less familiar with the notion of military fronts of any kind, fewer people will understand what the title means. Stendhal's *The Charterhouse of Parma* is an example of a title whose meaning has been almost completely obscured. Few potential readers now know that a "charterhouse" is a type of monastery or that Parma is a city in Italy. In this case, the book is generally not read because people understand the title, it is read because people have been told that a book by that title is worth reading.

Because titles are closely tied to the meaningful circulation of texts, they can also be used to disrupt the norms of entitlement. Titles can be puns, such as the mystery book entitled *The Morgue the Merrier*. The lack of punctuation in *Finnegans Wake* is the first indication of the radicalized use of language that follows (Simpkins 735). Swift's *Modest Proposal* uses the title as the opening step of his satirical argument that is far from modest. Other titles, such as *Seal This Book* and *Oral Sadism and the Vegetarian Personality*, may lead the potential reader to suspect a disruption of the reader-title-book triad: in the first case, the title directly addresses the reader, rather than offering a passive introduction to the book; while, in the second, the title disrupts its descriptive function by offering an apparent summary that, in fact, leaves the reader wondering what is being summarized. In both cases, the reader knows very little about what to expect, which is presumably part of the appeal.

Translated titles can confuse or complicate the descriptive function of the title. How a title is translated conditions how a text is first located and approached. If the translation is inaccurate, the coherence of the writing itself can be undermined. For instance, Foucault's inaugural lecture, "L'ordre du discours," has been translated into as "The Discourse on Language." The reader may be surprised to discover that the lecture concerns "discourse" rather than "language." A more direct translation would be "The Order of Discourse" where "order" suggests images of method and discipline. What Foucault is concerned to describe is how various discourses are structured and thus how institutionalized knowledge is regulated. The translated title may reflect a tendency in academic appropriations of Foucault's work that treats his approach to discourse, which he applied to limited areas such as the social sciences, as if it was the key to a general philosophy of language.

Another example is the way that a work by Aristotle has been translated as *The Constitution of Athens*. The closer translation for the title is *The Constitution of the Athenians* (Castoriadis 109). The shift in meaning is significant, moving the text from an image of politics based on the collectivity of citizens to an image of politics based on the arrangement of geographical borders. How a title is translated, if it is translated at all, is part of an interpretive strategy, a discursive ordering that exists at the beginning of reading. In this case, Aristotle's work is placed on our side of an historical shift from politics being

the control of people (the Athenians) to politics being the control of lands (Athens) and indirectly of people. (In this case, the English version of the commentary is slightly misdirected in that the translation of Aristotle's work into English is generally entitled *The Athenian Constitution* and not, as Castoriadis's translator suggests, *The Constitution of Athens*. Thus, a criticism that works in French depends on a contrast that is not as sharp in the English: *The Athenian Constitution* could suggest either Athens or the Athenians.)

There are instances when even a correct translation of a book's title into another language eventually creates tension between the book and the title. By 900 AD, Plato's Πολιτεία had been translated into Latin and entitled *Respublica*. The translation of the title was generally accurate. "Respublica" refers to those things that concern the public or the community. When the work was translated into English, the title became *Republic*. In the eighteenth century, the title became problematic when the meaning of "republic" changed in English. Rather than the affairs of the community in general, "republic" came to refer to a particular system of government where the state was in the hands of the people and the leader of the state was an elected president. Ironically, in his *Republic*, Plato argues that the ideal system is an aristocracy and that the second to worst system is what he refers to as a democracy. The title thus suggests a political system that the book emphatically rejects, or, perhaps, a political system that the author could never have been familiar with. The same problem occurs in French — *La République* — but not in German — *Der Staat*. The meaning of the words have thus slipped away from the title. Given that changing the title would cause a confusion of signification — that is to say it would cause a disruption in the referential function of the title — it is unlikely to be changed to describe the work better.

Referring to the titles of books that people read can locate those people in the groups, classes, and stereotypes of a society. Housewives and military personnel will, if the stereotypes are followed, read books from different genres, and people would be surprised if either of them read *The Critique of Pure Reason*. The titles become tied to our expectations of what we and other people should read, which further enforce social stereotypes. The way that certain authors, like Stephen King or Danielle Steele, can be held in low repute in some circles, and sometimes used to denigrate the "kinds" of people that read them is a related form of social criticism. This relationship can also be used in literature, where titles can become an effective way to describe characters. Sherlock Holmes wrote a book entitled *Practical Handbook of Bee Culture*, while a priest in Rabelais's *Gargantua and Pantagruel* owns a book by Master Greedyguts called *On Polishing off the Canonical Hours* (40 vols.) (Wallechinsky 237). The structures of entitlement thus become an effective, if somewhat hidden way, to police the circulation of identities as much as texts in society.

THE ORGANIZATION OF BOOKS

Some aspects of organization have already been discussed. Denoting and describing a book are, in part, ways of placing the book on a grid of identities and differences that individuate the books currently circulating in the market, close enough to other books to be in a dialogue but far enough to be significantly different. A title can explicitly connect to other titles, suggesting some kind of relation between the book it names and other books.

Titles may help organize books into a larger series. Books on world religions, for instance, could use the names of the different religions as titles: *Buddhism*, *Christianity*, *Hinduism*, and so on. Each book is a section of a larger, and implicitly complete whole. Such a strategy of entitlement marginalizes smaller religions, perhaps into a single volume, and may suggest an unwarranted identity within a religion and distinction between religions. Other groups of books are created by subtitles, such as Balzac's *La Comédie humaine*. In this case, the series title places the books into a loose unity. Along the same lines, one of the later books in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* series, entitled *So Long, and Thanks for All the Fish*, is subtitled *The Fourth in the Trilogy*. In each case, an explicit connection is made, whether through the relation of titles or through the addition of a general title.

The connection between books may also be implicit. A series of books may share a similar set of words or themes. Inclusion in the "myth series" by Robert Asprin is denoted by a play on words that is common to all members of the series, such as *Mything Persons*, *Hit or Myth*, and *Mythconceptions*. A reader will know which books belong to the series; and, if another book appears with a similar play on words, the reader would expect that the book was a further book in the series. In addition, this strategy of entitlement is one way to market the books; the reader is invited to play along in the puns. *Philosophical Investigations*, the philosophy book, becomes *A Philosophical Investigation*, a murder mystery loosely built upon Wittgenstein's writings. Tournier's *Friday: or, the Other Island* (titled *Vendredi, ou, Les Limbes du Pacifique* in French) retells *Robinson Crusoe* from the perspective of Friday. Here the title is connected to the earlier book, but the potential reader must have some familiarity with *Robinson Crusoe* to realize the connection.

The series that a book is connected to may be a series of commentaries or arguments. Aristotle wrote a book that is (currently) entitled *Categories*, which was eventually translated into Arabic. Porphyry, an Arab intellectual from Northern Africa, wrote *An Introduction to Aristotle's Categories* (the *Isagogen*) which became influential among later Christian thinkers. Three hundred years after Porphyry, Boethius translated the introduction into Latin and wrote a commentary — *In Isagogen Porphyrii Commenta* — which can be roughly translated as *Commentary on Porphyry's Introduction to Aristotle's Categories*.

Another example is the exchange between John Locke and Jonas Proast following Locke's publication of *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689) and Proast's publication of *The Argument of the Letter Concerning Toleration Briefly Considered and Answered* (1690). One of Locke's responses to Proast was entitled *A Third Letter for Toleration to the Author of the Third Letter Concerning Toleration* (1692) to which Proast eventually responded with *A Second Letter to the Author of Three Letters for Toleration* (1703). Locke died before he was able to complete the fourth letter, but a likely title is easy enough to guess (see Tully 2).

Connecting two titles can be rhetorically powerful. In 1846, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon published *Système des contradictions économic, ou, philosophie de la misère*. Soon after 1846, Karl Marx wrote *Das Elend der Philosophie* and Marx's intellectual response was thus underlined by his strategic choice of the book's title. And even if people did not read either of the books, the opposition of the two thinkers was made evident. The relation did not survive into English, although it could have. The title of Marx's work has regularly been translated as *The Poverty of Philosophy*. Interestingly, the 1888 English edition of Proudhon's work translates the title as *System of Economic Contradictions: The Philosophy of Misery*. This must have posed a problem for whoever translated Marx's work in relation to Proudhon's. *The Poverty of Philosophy* suggests the book's argument but sacrifices the rhetorical connection, whereas *The Misery of Philosophy* suggests the connection but sacrifices some of the title's relation to the economic content of its book. Dropping the subtitle completely, in whatever language, would also be a way to disrupt Marx's counter-entitlement and thus protect Proudhon from Marx's opening attack on the work.

There are also instances where a title refers back to another title without suggesting any significant connection. For instance, *Steal This Plot*, a book on plagiarism, has a title partially copied from Abbie Hoffman's *Steal This Book*. Understanding the pun creates an initial connection between the customer and the book, building on the cultural familiarity with Hoffman's title. It is interesting that, while the book discusses plagiarism, there is no mention of stealing titles. Hoffman's *Steal This Urine Test* uses the pun to suggest a connection with his earlier book and political project.

In addition to suggesting specific connections between books, the title allows the extensive organization of texts. In this case, the title does not create the connection itself, but is taken up by an information system that organizes the titles in lieu of organizing the books. Carolingian monasteries used titles in library catalogues to organize and circulate information about the manuscripts they possessed (and that could be copied by others). As books became mass-produced, and the number of books increased, titles became vital to every stage of the production and distribution of the book, occurring in author-publisher contracts, in production runs, in catalogues, in order forms, in best-seller lists,

in book reviews, in bibliographies, etc. Most of the work that people do with books is not done with the books, but with the titles. Many statistics depend on the title: citation indexes, a measurement of a writer's productivity and popularity (most published, most reviewed, most cited). Titles provide an easy way to express the size of a book collection. A bookstore may advertise that it has 50,000 titles, a library may say it has several million. Some people may be able to list off 50 titles of books they have read in the past year, while others may list the thousands in their collection that remain unread. Without titles, without a way to refer to books, to list books, to arrange books, we would wander around books in a confused daze, unable to manage our attempts to make sense of the vast amount of text that is produced in the world.

The simultaneous connection and distance between the title and the book is essential for systems of censorship. A key example is the *Index librorum prohibitorum*, which is the list of prohibited books that the Catholic church began to compile in the sixteenth century. The policing of titles was part of the church's on-going attempt to preserve a single system of belief in the Christian World. The title is an essential part of censorship because it allows something to be named without repeating it. The title escapes censorship so that it can help the censorship of the book, presenting the wary reader with a mirror that allows the Medusa to be killed. Without a consistent title placed properly on the outside of the book, attempts at censorship would be too late, the reader would have already read too much.

The practices of entitlement are closely connected to notions of citation and plagiarism, to the ways that the borders and relations between texts are policed. A self-reflexive digression seems necessary at this point. At the beginning of this paper there was a footnote that listed a number of works that were explicitly not going to be discussed here. This sets up a problem, given that they were cited to mark them as not being included. Should they be put in the bibliography? Does a simple reference to a title count as a reference to the book? Of course, there may not be much at stake in this question. Why cannot we put what we want in a bibliography? Yet to place something in a bibliography is to make a claim that connects what is being written here to things that have been written elsewhere. What kind of connection is this? Do the books have to exist? Must they have been read? Quoted? Looked up in the library?

Writers are expected to document "any appropriate material that readers might otherwise mistaken for [their] own" (Gibaldi 165). To document means to provide the other author's title. The possibility of originality is supported by the belief that a list of works cited distinguishes the books of one author from another's, and the content of one book from the others. The punctuation of titles tells the reader that the title is a reference outside of the text and not part of the present work. In terms of copyright and plagiarism, the title itself escapes the need for citation. A title cannot be quoted as other parts of the book are. In the

same way, a title cannot be plagiarized, though it can be copied or stolen. There is no name for the title, it is the name.

CONCLUSION

Whether ordinary or not, the logic of entitlement is complicated and pervasive. Far from being a passive name for a book, the title is itself a site of management, conflict, and interpretation. Like words, titles are both completely arbitrary and meticulously organized. A book can have any title, but the choice is in practice limited to a few unexceptional possibilities. More than a name, the title is a substitute for what it entitles, a *mise en abyme* for the book. The title is usually the first and often the only part of the book we read. The circulation of books occurs within a more intense circulation of titles, which precede and exist in the place of books. The reader passes through the title into the book. The book title offers a promise, creates an anticipation, attempts a seduction, but the title is not what is promised. Existing between the book and the reader, the title is a site where commodity and intellectual institutions manage the flow of texts, where meanings are created and exchanged, and where a society creates and polices the accounts it gives of itself and the world. The title is much like a park warden, orienting the reader towards certain spots and away from others. Wardens are, of course, seldom clear, not always very helpful, and sometimes intentionally misleading. And for any of these reasons, we may be lured past the boundary into the park.

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