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**"Pierre Loves Horranges":
Sartre and Malabou on the Fantastic in Philosophy**

Abstract

In "Pierre Loves Horranges ", a little noticed essay on Sartre's existential psychoanalysis, emerging French philosopher Catherine Malabou offers a new reading of "Doing and Having", in Sartre's Being and Nothingness for her philosophy of the fantastic. We compare Sartre and Malabou on the fantastic, focusing on their analyses of quality, viscosity and ontological difference. We argue that Malabou's reinterpretation of Sartre's symbolic schema, which serves to make visible the change and exchange in the ontological difference, is valuable for a psychoanalysis of the future, one that comes after metaphysics and deconstruction.

Key Words: Sartre, Malabou, ontology, psychoanalysis, plasticity, fantastic

Interest in Sartre's existential psychoanalysis has declined in recent years with one notable exception, Catherine Malabou, a rising voice in recent continental philosophy.¹ Sartre would no doubt be surprised at how few French women philosophers have garnered attention more than thirty-five years after his death. For instance, Ian James's recent collection, *The New French Philosophy*, includes only one woman, Catherine Malabou, while other recent French philosophy volumes turn up no other names (Badiou 2012; Gutting 2013, and Mullarkey 2006). Certainly, after Sartre's longstanding encouragement of Beauvoir – she credits him for the idea of *The Second Sex* – he would pause to learn that the related question of women's subjectivity and autonomy would remain unsettled as Malabou shows in *Changing Difference*, her work on feminist philosophy and essentialism. Malabou follows in the footsteps not of Irigaray, Kristeva, Cixous, or other French post-structuralist feminists, but of Derrida, who directed her thesis on Hegel. Derrida's influence could be

¹ We dedicate this paper to the memory of the one hundred thirty victims of the terrorist attacks in Paris on November 13, 2015.

seen throughout her work (Malabou, 2004). Malabou's philosophy is innovative in many respects, not the least of which is her concept of plasticity that she brings to her writings on psychoanalysis and neuroscience (Malabou 2009, Johnston and Malabou 2013).

Like the early Sartre, Malabou's writings, such as the *Ontology of the Accident*, are deeply engaged with Heidegger and the question of existence. Given the major influence of Heidegger and Hegel on *Being and Nothingness*, the young Sartre's treatise on ontology, it is curious to find only a few traces of Sartre in Malabou's published work. She cites Sartre in her book on Heidegger that appeared in 2004, and later in *Plasticity at the Dusk of Writing* (2009). It is in her essay for a collection on Jean-Luc Nancy (Guibal and Martin, 2004) that she addresses Sartre's works more prominently, with particular emphasis on Sartre's existential psychoanalysis, in which he analyzes quality as the revelation of being, in a section under that title. Malabou's essay, entitled, "Pierre Loves Horranges: Levinas-Sartre-Nancy: An Approach to the Fantastic in Philosophy," was subsequently translated for *Umbr(a)*, a journal on psychoanalysis and culture. Malabou introduces the fantastic to account for ontological difference after Heidegger. Our focus in this paper is to interpret the significance of Sartre in Malabou's treatment of the philosophical fantastic by examining this essay. Its title, "Pierre Loves Horranges", is taken directly from a passage in *Being and Nothingness*, in the section on quality. In the passage, Sartre uses Pierre, who has numerous appearances in the text (including the most famous one about his absence), to explore how qualities make existence possible. Malabou is particularly interested in the more than symbolic ways being relates to things, and argues that it is in this relation that the real in ontological difference is revealed, what she calls the "philosophical fantastic." Calling attention to Malabou's concept of plasticity in shaping her notion of the fantastic, we trace her selective reading of the viscous in Sartre's discussion of quality, and offer a more complete analysis of existential psychoanalysis as developed in *Being and Nothingness*. In so doing we seek to underscore Sartre's concern for the ethical throughout his ontology, a concern echoed in his own account of the fantastic in his essay on Blanchot, but is largely ignored by Malabou. We also seek to show the value of re-reading Sartre in light of Malabou, to explore the question of why "Pierre loves oranges and has a horror of water", which, Sartre believes, would be the proper disclosure of psychoanalysis for the future.

Sartre's Existential Psychoanalysis

To understand why Malabou finds Sartre's existential psychoanalysis particularly useful in bringing out the fantastic in philosophy, we must first examine Sartre's position on the subject. The early Sartre's integration of psychology with ontology in *Being and Noth-*

ingness was foreshadowed by Husserl's *Phenomenological Psychology* and to a lesser extent, William James's *Philosophical Psychology*. Sartre, writing against Freudian psychoanalysis, took a new direction. He understood that the fundamental problem of human freedom – for example, his own choice to be a writer, as well as seemingly whimsical choices of matters of taste and individual desires, such as a preference for dark chocolate, roses, or black coffee – cannot be understood without a philosophical account of the most fundamental human choices. Even though Sartre insists that we exist freely and that every moment of our existence is constituted by a free choice, this does not lead him to conclude that our actions are therefore thoroughly capricious and unpredictable, rendering it impossible to comprehend human lives as a unified totality. Quite the contrary, Sartre argues that our actions, far from being mercurial or haphazard, are typically organized around immediate goals that are pursued for the sake of numerous layers of more basic goals, which ultimately reflect our most fundamental project. This project, says Sartre, represents our primordial choice of being-in-the-world. We choose our actions in such a way as to express ultimately this fundamental choice. In this way human actions conform to a unifying principle – a fundamental attitude – that allows us to explain a person's life as a whole. What is needed, says Sartre, is a method by which to conduct a "regressive analysis" of tracing particular actions to the final project that is pursued for its own sake (Sartre 1984, 589). Sartre refers to this way of understanding a person by uncovering her or his fundamental choice as "Existential Psychoanalysis."

Whereas Freudian psychoanalysis attempts to explain our actions by appealing to the unconscious, Sartre's analysis is existential in that it focuses on the way in which our actions manifest our fundamental choice of existence. Furthermore, it is a method that seeks to reveal a choice of which we have pre-reflective awareness. It is crucial to bring direct awareness to this inherent choice if we are to work toward changing it. So deeply rooted is this fundamental choice in shaping our everyday choices and defining the way we live, altering it would require nothing less than a "radical conversion" (Sartre 1984, 598).

Sartre believes that a radical conversion is needed because our fundamental project is typically a flawed project founded on bad faith. As lack of being, we desire being. Specifically, we desire to possess the full identity, density, and positivity that things exhibit, without surrendering our consciousness and freedom. Indeed, we strive to be at once a freedom-thing. We seek to escape from our own nothingness and contingency by incorporating, without compromising our consciousness and freedom, the substantiality and full positivity of the in-itself. As Sartre puts it, our most fundamental choice is the pursuit of the ideal union of in-itself-for-itself, viz. God. However, such a project is both inauthentic and unattainable, inauthentic because it betrays our existence as pure nothingness, and unattain-

able because the very idea of a freedom-thing is but a hopeless contradiction that can never be realized.

In spite of the impossible nature of our fundamental project, Sartre believes that we nevertheless persist in our attempt to appropriate, if only symbolically, the desirable thing-like qualities of the in-itself within our being. But even as we endeavor in this doomed project, things possess an obtrusive and inexhaustible fullness of being that is as overwhelming as it is absurd. As Sartre shows in *Nausea*, Roquentin discovers the infinite excess of existence, the totality of spellbound nature. He notices the gratuitous presence of things, in their "frightful, obscene nakedness". There is always more to them than what is revealed through our momentary grasp of them. They exist in their abundance – as "monstrous masses, all in disorder" – beyond their instrumental manifestations to consciousness (Sartre 1964, 127).

Roquentin's startling discovery would pave the way for an elaborate ontology in *Being and Nothingness*, in which Sartre develops the distinctive characteristics of the for-itself and the in-itself, as well as the peculiar relation between them. As nothingness, consciousness is pure flux that becomes consciousness-of-something by projecting itself toward some object. The transcendent object which fills consciousness and gives it its content, is the in-itself. Consciousness thus approaches every entity in the world, even other subjects, "positionally" in a subject-to-object relation. The bond between subject and object is a delicate one. As consciousness, I experience the world by turning everything around me, including other consciousness, into a passive unity of objects. All things are defined by their instrumentality with respect to my chosen projects. But by the same token, I am quite dependent and even vulnerable to these objects in so far as consciousness demands as its very support their being-there. It is through their presence that my existence as consciousness-of-something is sustained. Furthermore, because consciousness, as pure nothingness, is thoroughly translucent, the for-itself is in no position to posit or found the being of the substantial object of which it is conscious. Hence, the object must exist transphenomenally, as brute being, independent of and prior to its encounter with consciousness. It must have been already-there before consciousness could nihilate it toward a project at hand, objectifying it in the process. As we will show, Malabou would later adopt this ontological realism to support her view on the fantastic.

Sartre further argues that, whereas we encounter the amorphous, massive being of the in-itself, things *appear* to us in limited perspectives through the lenses of our specific projects. We engage in patterns of bad faith by acting in ways that symbolically place ourselves as the foundation of the in-itself, and deceptively justify our existence as the source of the in-itself. A common mechanism is appropriation, in which I attempt to possess the

object completely so that it may become a part of me. Possession is therefore symbolic of the impossible union of in-itself-for-itself, the fundamental project that informs and unifies our actions. In this way, our fundamental project "arranges the world with its meaning, its instrumental-complexes, and its coefficient of adversity" (Sartre 1984, 598). Since the possessive acts are part of our spontaneous, lived experience, we do not necessarily know or understand their connection to our basic desire "to have", which amounts to the hopeless project to be God. It is the task of existential psychoanalysis to bring about such awareness.

Sartre further points out that this fundamental desire to appropriate objects is reflected not only in our actions but more profoundly in our attitude or "gut feelings" toward things. Our attitude toward a given object – e.g., whether it invokes exhilaration or disgust – depends to a large extent on whether or not it exhibits for us any possessable quality. Sartre observes that the things we find most revolting are those that offer the strongest resistance toward us. Such are objects with a "slimy" or viscous quality. To develop this point, Sartre identifies three general states in objects: liquid, solid, and the ambiguous quality in between, slime. Liquid and solid things are ideal objects of possession. The translucency of water, for instance, gives me the kind of satisfaction that comes with the appropriation of knowledge. Like consciousness, water has the clarity to reveal something without changing its actual identity. On the other hand, solid things, such as a rock, have the unmistakable opacity that fastens them as non-evasive, accessible objects. The rock's concreteness allows me to modify it at will, making it uniquely my possession. But none of this can be said of slimy entities. To use Sartre's example of honey, when I dip my finger into a jar of honey, it clings to me and slowly glides down my finger like a snake. And when I try to squeeze it, it oozes out like worms between my fingers. All told, "Slime is the revenge of the In-itself," one that symbolizes "the sugary death of the For-itself" (Sartre 1984, 777).

Existential psychoanalysis thus allows us to explain not only the coherence and unity of our freely chosen action, but also our attitude, feelings, and preferences toward particular things we encounter. Returning to his example of Pierre, Sartre argues that it is by conducting an existential psychoanalysis on Pierre's actions and dispositions, to trace them through concentric layers of secondary and primary projects to reveal his fundamental choice of being, that we can finally understand why he is attracted to certain qualities while repulsed by others, or why he likes oranges but refuses to eat beans (Sartre 1984, 770).

Sartre and Malabou on the Fantastic

Even though Sartre believes that our desire to appropriate the in-itself underlies our entire way of being, he nevertheless maintains that, as free subjects, it is within our power

to abandon our fundamental project to be God. To be sure, altering our fundamental project, and thus our entire way of being, is a drastic and difficult choice. As Sartre says, it would involve a radical conversion. In many instances, such a conversion requires not only our resolve but also our imagination. In his essay on Blanchot, originally published in *Situations I*, "Aminadab or the Fantastic Considered as a Language," Sartre offers a way of reimagining our relationship to the in-itself. Picking up the central theme of his earlier novel, *Nausea*, in which Roquentin experiences the spellbound totality of the in-itself as disorderly, "monstrous masses", Sartre reconfigures this theme in terms of the rich, overflowing possibilities that the disorderliness of the in-itself offers up. The fantastic feeds on this disorderliness. Like the gratuitous presence of the in-itself he described in *Nausea*, Sartre states that one "cannot impose limits on the fantastic; either it does not exist at all, or else it extends throughout the universe" (Sartre 1962, 61-62). The fantastic dwells in a "topsy-turvy world" where ends are crushed and devoured by their own means, where objects reveal themselves "with an indiscipline and disorderly power" (Sartre 1962, 63). The fantastic world thus stands in stark contrast to the familiar "right-side-up world" we inhabit. Orderly and rational, things in the right-side-up world are determined by their instrumentality, their usefulness for our purposes. As Sartre puts it, this world represents the in-itself as "a piece of domesticated matter." Through our mastery over domesticated objects, we seek to escape our own contingency by symbolically appropriating them and positioning ourselves as the foundation of their being.

By contrast, the topsy-turvy world invites us to transcend the right-side-up world by engaging in its fantastic disorderliness. Things in this world are no longer purposeful objects at our disposal, subject to our whim and will. They exhibit "a kind of coarse independence that suddenly snatches their end from us just when we think we have it fast" (Sartre 1962, 65). The fantastic is unpredictable and chaotic, existing in abandonment without rhyme or reason. But here, Sartre is careful to remind us that "the fantastic is only one of a hundred ways of mirroring...(our) own image" (Sartre 1962, 64). It redirects us to our own human condition, to the reality that we exist as thoroughly contingent beings without any necessary foundation or justification for our existence. In Sartre's view, Kafka is a master of the fantastic by creating riveting, disorderly worlds to reveal powerfully our deep-seated anxiety over our own condition. He maintains that, for Kafka, "a transcendental reality certainly existed, but it was beyond our reach and served only to give us a sharper feeling of man's abandonment in the realm of the human" (Sartre 1962, 63). Interpreting Sartre's notion of the fantastic in this way allows us to see that, ultimately, what is important to him is that the fantastic holds a key to human authenticity.

This analysis shows the consistent ethical theme that underlies Sartre's works, from his depiction of existence as such in *Nausea*, to his account of existential psychoanalysis in *Being and Nothingness*, and finally to his treatment of the fantastic in *Situations*. Sartre was concerned about the tendency for us to resort to bad faith to escape the human condition when we need to be authentic. As far as he is concerned, not only are our bad faith projects doomed to failure, but more importantly, we are not in a position to promote a freer society for all until we accept our own freedom and contingency, even at utmost existential cost.

Sartre's existential psychoanalysis has certainly captured Malabou's interest, but not for the obvious reason that it is a psychoanalysis that compels us to recognize and accept the burden of human existence. Rather, Malabou attempts to draw upon the basic ontology that underlies Sartrean psychoanalysis, particularly the "there-ness" of the In-itself, to reimagine ontological difference after Heidegger. In Malabou's view, such reimagination would allow for a deeper understanding of the other, of time, suffering, technology and culture. Her book, *The Heidegger Change*, was published in France in the same year as her Sartre essay (2004), and the two works share similar subtitles that invoke the fantastic in philosophy. For the former, it is "On the Fantastic in Philosophy", and the latter, "An Approach to the Fantastic in Philosophy." The fantastic, which appears throughout Malabou's work, is never static by definition and is always associated with the *real* of ontological difference. Malabou's treatment of the fantastic represents her revision of Heideggerian change, and along with that a new ontology, one that, by her own admission, owes a debt to Sartre's genius (Malabou 2006, 109). This is true even though her account of the fantastic, as we seek to show, takes on a different focus from Sartre's. She arduously weaves Heidegger's account of change, transformation, and metamorphosis – the triad of *Wandel*, *Wandlung*, and *Verwandlung* – through the early and later Heidegger texts. Simply put, the fantastic is both the ontological marker and the producer of difference. Malabou summarizes ontological difference as precisely "the sameness of being, essence, and beings, (*it*) is our world itself." (Malabou 2011a, 177).

The Heidegger Change thus embarks on a provocative and contested metaphysical quest to work out exactly how change is the real effects of existence. On Malabou's view, Heidegger's shortcoming lies in his inability to present a *visible* ontological difference. To address this problem, Malabou presents her own concept of plasticity to rehabilitate Heidegger's account of being as change. She first discussed temporal plasticity in her work on Hegel before turning to ontological plasticity in Heidegger. She refers to Heidegger's notions of *Gestell* and *Ereignis*, as "the gift and circulation of sameness – simultaneity and co-belonging." They are the "metabolic holding together, ... (not a rigid but) a plastic phenomenal crossing of things" (Malabou 2011a, 176). But if metaphysics is to change into its

other, allowing for what Malabou insists is the *real* of ontological difference, then she must explain the "double sense" that is required, namely, the objectification of ontological difference and the negation of the objectification. Malabou describes the objectification in the first sense as "being made the object of beings in the enframing," and the negation in the second sense as the "liberation of the ontological difference, as its (fantastic) coming into print on things" (Malabou 2011a, 177). Making use of her notions of plasticity and the fantastic, Malabou reconfigures Heidegger's ontology after postmodernism, to foreground its dynamic nature by calling attention to the real of ontological difference in terms of objectification and liberation. Change is therefore put in play in her re-visioning, as it were, of Heidegger: namely, as displacing itself, as visibly reasserting itself, and as becoming what it is not in order to be.

The Fantastic: Imaging the Real as Visible

Malabou would draw upon Sartre's understanding of qualities as they are revealed in being to bolster her post-Heideggerian account of change. Before examining her Sartre essay to develop this point, we must first examine two curious endnotes on Sartre that appear in *The Heidegger Change*. The first note is in the chapter entitled, "The Fantastic is Only Ever an Effect of the Real." If the fantastic is not the *real* but an effect of the *real* as the title indicates, how is the fantastic accessible to thought? As noted before, Malabou believes that fantastic thinking must think through the Heideggerian triad (*Wandel*, *Wandlung*, and *Verwandlung*), and the two modalities of ontological difference (objectification and liberation). Most importantly, she also stresses that "(i)t can only imagine what it thinks" (Malabou 2011a, 182). The kind of imagining required for the apprehension of ontological difference is not merely Heidegger's notion of the imagination as nihilation, but one that necessarily involves imaging the real as visible. This is where the fantastic comes in: "*The fantastic is another dimension, that of the real image of thingness*" (Malabou 2011a, 182). Turning to Sartre to support this point, she refers the readers to her essay on Sartre to explain the paradoxical phrase, "the real image of thingness". The point of her essay, she says, is to draw attention to the philosophical fantastic in Sartre by showing how Sartre allows the "real effect of existence" in such things as the roots of a chestnut tree to manifest itself. For these existents, every modification they undergo reveals the onto-ontological difference in their new form. Notice that, in her reading of the fantastic in Sartre, Malabou has shifted the focus away from the For-itself toward the In-itself, the very things that, by already being-there, sustain the For-itself's existence as consciousness-of-something.

The second endnote appears near the conclusion of *The Heidegger Change*, in the chapter, "Man and *Dasein*, Boring Each Other". Drawing upon Heidegger's later lectures on metaphysics, Malabou analyzes the Event of Existence. As she proclaims, "Today, existence for itself, existence on recess from man is the genuine event, *Ereignis*. It is 'suddenly unveiled'" (2011a, 266). But how is it that existence, the genuine event, is revealed? To answer this question, Malabou again refers to Sartre's novel, *Nausea*, in which Roquentin confronts existence squarely without conditions. "In a sense," she states, "the only thing the novel contends with is this metamorphosis of existence into an event" (Malabou 2011a, 325). What the "crowd of metamorphoses" ultimately revealed to Roquentin is that "to exist is simply *to be there*" (Sartre 1964, 131). The revelation of the being-there of existence is indeed an event, an *Ereignis*. Derived from the German verb, *erreichen*, which means to put something in a state of being reached, *Ereignis* captures quite aptly the disclosure of the there-ness of existence.²

As noted above, Malabou reconstructs the fantastic in Sartre to take Heideggerian ontology in a new direction, one that would account for the real of ontological difference. For her, every change, which is also an exchange, is suffused with images (2011a, 71). What is needed is a new theory of imagination to make visible ontological transformations. "At issue," she claims, "is knowing if philosophy can, at the end of the day, endure the trial of its own experience, the becoming visible – fantastically visible – of ontological transformability; if it can accept the revelation of its destiny" (Malabou 2011a, 270). Again, it is in Sartre's early ontology and literary work that Malabou finds a useful imaginary schema for re-visioning the (ex)change, a re-vision that allows for the "fantastically visible" in beings to emerge from Being.

As so it is that her essay on Sartre, "Pierre Loves Horrangers", is primarily an attempt to "situate the question of the fantastic in philosophy" (Malabou 2006, 103). The essay references *Nausea* but centers mainly on Sartrean ontology as developed in *Being and Nothingness*. In the section called "Being and Having," Sartre gives a phenomenological description of quality that captures, for Malabou, existence as the reality of ontological difference. But why does the ontological category of existence persist in philosophy long

² For Malabou, the unveiling of the *real* of ontological difference is to push ontology beyond the very line Heidegger draws between existence and its metamorphosis. Whether or not this is successful depends upon the nature of philosophy. If philosophy, in and after Heidegger, is thought turning back on itself in the journey of Being, and in this unfolding must carry within it its own challenge, it is an endeavor that is both deeply philosophical and anti-philosophical at once. For Malabou, this is the change (and the (ex)change) of ontological difference.

after Heidegger, Sartre, and Deconstruction? Malabou's answer is found, in part, by infusing Sartre's work on quality into her own notion of the fantastic.³ She understands the fantastic as the effects of the real, the remnants of being as it undergoes change. It is not static, but the dynamic eruption of difference in existence, or, as Malabou puts it, "the real irruption of the extraordinary" (Malabou 2006, 103). On her view, the fantastic could only emerge in philosophy after Deconstruction and its predecessors, for it requires a "new signification of existence", post-*Dasein*, that addresses change, disruption, and displacement. Its task is to reveal the extraordinary emerging from the displacement of the ordinary in existence.

But what can be said of existence in the post-Heidegger era? For Malabou, this is answered, in a preliminary way, in *Nausea*. Praising Sartre's ontological realism as "the future of a certain phenomenology", she claims that existence is not limited to *Dasein* but, as Sartre describes, "enters into presence everywhere, always there, like the root of the chestnut tree, viscous paste" (Malabou 2006, 114). Malabou expands on this point by appealing to her own concept of plasticity. Plasticity allows for the changing nature of being, the slipping into and out of formlessness, the site "where metaphysics and an other thought cross and organize the modalities of their exchanges; where, for example, the trace of ontological difference forms itself, materializes itself in forms" (Malabou 2006, 114). Relating this idea to Sartre's works, Malabou notes that these forms include artistic ones, "heretofore unknown forms of philosophical writing...evidenced in texts such as *Nausea*, certain passages from *Being and Nothingness*, *Existence and Existents*, or *Corpus*, the first examples of a fantastic philosophy" (Malabou 2006, 114). In this fantastic philosophy, imagination becomes an artistic form to image the real. Sartre thus displaces the Heideggerian notion of imagination by unveiling the real effect of existence, viz., the real image of thingness. In this way, ontological difference "constitutes" thinking itself (Malabou 2006, 104). Malabou tells us that Sartre's first bold move toward a philosophy of the fantastic was to reinterpret *Dasein* as human reality, from which he produced a viable ontology that integrates but also overcomes Heidegger by returning to the materiality of difference. We see that move in *Nausea*, where Sartre offers a powerful imaginary schema for the becoming (fantastically) visible of ontological transformability. Sartre would provide a more developed ontological schema in *Being and Nothingness*, in connection with his account of existential psychoanalysis.

³ In an important endnote she defines the fantastic in terms of the Heidegger problem and as "what returns when the category of 'existence' has disappeared from Heidegger's thought – which happens very quickly, right after *Being and Time*" (Malabou, 2011a, 116).

The Viscous as Ontological Schema

For Malabou, Sartre's ontological schema is, first and foremost, one that identifies qualities as the *objective* symbols of being, in keeping with his ontological realism. As Sartre states, the task of the psychoanalysis of things is "to establish the way in which each thing is the *objective* symbol of being and of the relation of human reality to this being" (Malabou 2006, 108). This, says Malabou, is precisely the fantastic transformative of things as symbols of the what-is-there, symbols that self-reference rather than point away from themselves. Sartre illustrates this with a discussion of viscosity. Quoting Sartre, Malabou agrees that the viscous "does not symbolize a psychic attitude *a priori*; it manifests a certain relation of being with itself and this relation has an originally psychic quality" (Malabou 2006, 109). For Sartre and Malabou, then, the viscous is given *a priori* to consciousness as a pure image that is invested with "a valid ontological schema" for all viscous existents, a schema that "will interpret the meaning of being of all the existents of a certain category," namely, all viscous things (Malabou 2006, 109).

But how does the ontological schema come into being? It does so within the very existents it schematizes. As Malabou maintains, "the viscous, as schema, is itself viscous, and it is in this sense that it shows itself as the relation of being to itself" (Malabou 2006, 109). The 'objective symbol', she notes, "designates the incoercible resistance of the real, and thus of existence, to the symbol" (Malabou 2006, 109). Paradoxically, in its resistance, the symbol both exists and is negated. Malabou uses Sartre's description of viscosity in his example of the honey-filled spoon and pot to develop this point. "The honey which slides off my spoon on to the honey contained in the jar first sculpts the surface by fastening itself on it in relief, and its fusion with the whole is presented as a gradual sinking, a collapse which appears at once as a deflation" (Malabou 2006, 109). According to Malabou, this image of the spoonful of honey sliding and sinking into the honey in the pot best captures the relation between the being of the viscous and the viscous thing. The viscous and the honey, in their formlessness yet their capacity to take on form, in their collapse and expansion as "indifferent sugared difference," represent "ontological difference at once annulled and revealed" (Malabou 2006, 109). Sartre achieved the fantastic in philosophy by making ontological difference exist, and only then, says Malabou, could there be a "metaphysical coefficient of lemon" (Malabou 2006, 110). And here she returns to the example of Pierre. Sartre contends that existential psychoanalysis holds the key to understanding, for instance, Pierre's love for oranges but repulsion toward oysters. His psychoanalysis is not merely about the apprehension of quality, or the appearance of quality in existence. It at-

tempts to understand the relationship between beings and quality by examining how the real is revealed in quality. But most importantly, Malabou returns the discussion here to the main focus that Sartre intends for his ontology; namely, the human condition. Ultimately, she says, psychoanalysis reveals how the apprehension of quality attempts a failed escape from existence, as we seek "to pierce through the shell of nothingness about the 'there is' and to penetrate to the pure in-itself" (Malabou 2006, 110).

For Sartre and Malabou, then, psychoanalysis holds the promise of revealing the unity of being, the apprehension of quality, and the fundamental project. It is through this revelation that we can arrive at "the metaphysical coefficient" of lemon, water, oil and other entities. If psychoanalysis can show us the way the real is revealed in quality, only then can the relationship between beings and qualities be understood, only then, someday, as Sartre writes, could we hope to understand "why Pierre loves oranges and has a horror of water, why he gladly eats tomatoes and refuses to eat beans, why he vomits if he is forced to swallow oysters or raw eggs" (Sartre 1984, 770).

Conclusion

In this paper we examined the notion of the fantastic in Sartre, a topic that has mostly remained unexplored in Sartrean scholarship. We also examined Malabou's use of Sartrean ontology to develop her own view of the philosophical fantastic as the real of ontological differences, in her attempt to re-vision Heidegger's account of change. This is done by taking Sartrean psychoanalysis in a slightly different direction, focusing on the "there-ness" of the In-itself. But while Malabou acknowledges Sartre's main concern, in offering an alternative psychoanalytic theory, to address our bad faith fundamental project to be freedom-thing, she does not pursue the ethical implications of that ill-fated project. Sartre sees Pierre, and each of us, as a useless passion. It is his hope that existential psychoanalysis, whose task is to uncover the unifying principle of a person's life, will one day help us to make sense of Pierre's attitude, choices, preferences, and even his predisposition toward objects and qualities.

Sartre's own faith in the value of existential psychoanalysis can be seen in his biographies of Baudelaire, Genet, and, of course, Flaubert. In each case, he diligently applied his psychoanalytic method to explain his subject's life as a whole. If Sartre were writing today, he might be interested to probe why Malabou turned to philosophy rather than art; why she writes on Hegel, Heidegger, plasticity, and the fantastic in philosophy; why the concept of change is so important to her; why she is drawn to neuroscience, and why she chooses to connect neuroscience with Continental philosophy. Indeed, Sartre might be most

interested in investigating why Malabou chose to neglect the ethical in her treatment of his psychoanalysis, and why his philosophy has not occupied a more prominent place in her work, even after she conceded the "genius" of his contribution. It is rather puzzling that "Pierre Loves Horranges" is her only piece of writing on Sartre to date. Moreover, the essay is not wholly about Sartre, but wedges him between two other French philosophers, Levinas and Nancy. Malabou strategically singles out Sartre's analysis of quality in *Being and Nothingness* to explain the fantastic in philosophy, all the while displacing, through omission, the more crucial aspects of his ontology concerning consciousness, freedom, and bad faith. Even though her theory of the fantastic has, by her own admission, benefitted from Sartrean ontology, Malabou has missed a golden opportunity to reveal a deconstruction inherent in that ontology, namely, in Sartre's view of humanity as a useless passion perpetually in pursuit of being, but never manages to attain a perfect coincidence with being.

We can also ask what Sartre could have learned from Malabou. Is her essay seminal for Sartreans like us, who have followed her on her journey to reveal the fantastic in philosophy? How has Malabou's reading of Sartre, as we have explicated in this paper, shaped our own re-reading of Sartre? Malabou has certainly made us more aware of the fantastic qualities of existence, exemplified, in part, by her return to Roquentin in *Nausea*. But more importantly, Malabou has invited Sartreans to look for a more dynamic, disruptive, and deconstructivist view of psychoanalysis, one that would really allow for the evolution and opposition of qualities in matters of taste as they emerge for situated existents. Future psychoanalysis is poised to seek richer explanations of the symbolic quality of Pierre's love of oranges and tomatoes, fear of water, hatred of green beans and repulsion towards oysters and raw eggs. It would examine how the associations of these qualities in Pierre's experience align with his fundamental project, and how oppositional moments, disruption and displacement of qualities, resistance and reassertion, might play a role in allowing, not even for a moment and eventually, Pierre's love for oranges to persist.

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