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THE TIME OF SPACE AND THE SPACE OF TIME IN *BENITO CERENO* AND *THE MAGIC MOUNTAIN*: TOWARDS A COMPARATIVE UTOPIAN READING

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in LITERATURE

by

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Abstract

THE TIME OF SPACE AND THE SPACE OF TIME IN *BENITO CERENO* AND *THE MAGIC MOUNTAIN*: TOWARDS A COMPARATIVE UTOPIAN READING

Zachary Montgomery

In this M.A. thesis I comparatively look at two novels, Herman Melville's *Benito Cereno* and Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain*, in order to argue that while both texts have a strongly pronounced temporal dimension, the primary concept guiding pre 20th century intellectual work vis a vis Foucault's argument in "Of Other Spaces", it is a temporal framework that cannot be separated from space or spatiality, in particular, the "space" of lived capitalist social relations. I look at abstract forms of capitalist social domination through the diminution of time formally in the prose or in the time of the characters' "lived experience" in the novels' plot as opposed to the more concrete forms of capitalist social domination that become more and more historically apparent through merely using a spatial lens, for example, the problematic of global wealth inequality. I consider the thematic of self-negation allegorically as the utopian content shared by both works as a way to respond to the expression of the experience of the phenomenon of reification that the authors reveal, that functions to negate the possibilities for authentic subjective experience and troubles the emergence of human freedom. I conclude with Moishe Postone's comments on Karl Marx's mature work as primarily a theory of temporality in order to maintain its necessity as a critical category in progressive theoretical discourse today.

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“Capitalist social space, because of the worker’s separation from the means of labor, is fractured, serialized, and made irreversible, in contrast to pre-modern modes of spatial organization” (Harootunian, 45)

I. Introduction/ On the Grounds of a Comparative Reading

The general argument of Michel Foucault’s central 1967 essay, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias”, centers around the rather straightforward observation that the “great obsession of the nineteenth century was, as we know, *history*”, as well as the provocative hypothesis, that, “the present epoch”, by which he means the twentieth century, “will perhaps be above all the epoch of *space*” (Foucault 1, my annotation). In this essay, I pair two texts: Herman Melville’s novella *Benito Cereno*, first serialized in 1855, and Thomas Mann’s long novel first published in 1924, *The Magic Mountain*, and read both against the grain of and in line with this thesis; both texts have a strongly pronounced temporal dimension and are deeply concerned with the concept of time, but, it is a concept of time that cannot be separated from space or spatial mediation, and more directly or concretely, the space of capitalist social relations. The historical emergence of a spatial turn in literary criticism, pronounced strongly in the 1960’s, was the product of proponents of “post-modernism”. On this historical development, in “Utopianism After the End of Utopianism”, an essay in his larger work, *Postmodernism-or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Fredric Jameson states that what this move, “the evocation of spatialization”, ultimately signals, is “rather the will to use and subject time to the service of space” (Jameson 154, my annotation). In this essay, Jameson provides a brief immanent critique of French

theorists Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, showing that their radical 'schizophrenic utopian subject' is not, in fact, free from the bounds of time in a "pure experience of a spatial present beyond past history or future destiny or project", but rather, is bound up in an "eternal Nietzschean present" (Jameson 154). The historical emergence of an ever-expanding globalization of market forces contemporaneous with the emergence of this post-modern theory, which intensified wage inequality and economic disparity across the world as global trade became ever more expansive, was responded to with "a wide range of properly spatial Utopias in which the transformation of social relations and political institutions were projected onto the vision of place and landscape, including the human body", Jameson argues (Jameson, 160).

This thesis, however, will hold tightly to Georg Lukács' theoretical comments on the historical emergence of the commodity form and the cultural phenomenon of reification in his 1923 essay "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat", in his larger work, *History and Class Consciousness*, that, "the commodity form and the phenomenon of reification reduces space and time to a common denominator and degrades time to the dimension of space" (Lukács, 89). In my own perhaps more straightforward terms, I hope to show how Melville's mid 19th century text centering on an uprising on a slave ship, ironically Foucault's classical example of the heterotopia, as well as Mann's early 20th century novel centering around an isolated sanatorium in the Swiss Alps, have a strong temporal dimension that is already intimately bound up with and

cannot be separated from the textual space created for the reader, that of capitalist social relations. Another way of saying this is that the spatial settings of these texts cannot be figured as utopias, but must be considered as spaces of spatial and temporal domination. Following Lukács' claims above, that, the emergence of modern capitalism reduces time to space and space to time, I argue for the non-dialectical nature of Foucault's claim in literary terms through close readings of these works, arguing for their function as showing the dominating force of the time in particular in the space of capitalist social relations. I conclude by showing or maintaining the critical necessity of the concept of time in modernity in general via a brief reading of Moishe Postone's pivotal theoretical text, *Time, Labor, and Social Domination*, showing how he positions recovering stored up (dead) human labor time (capital) for use amongst the living as a precondition for realizing free human experience and a different experience of both time and space.

Both Melville and Mann are already, in their literary works of the mid 19th and early 20th century, attuned to the imposition of an alternative space emerging in human experience and the way it transforms the experience of time; both writers insist on maintaining the necessity of the concept of time for utopian possibilities in the present, allowing their novels to advance a stronger theoretical sensibility than Foucault's account allows for. Foucault and other's spatial framework accounts for, for example, what can be called the problem of un-even development, but cannot deal with the abstract forms of domination

inherent to the temporality of capitalist social relations, namely, the experience of the social phenomenon of reification as Lukács would have it as produced by wage labor. In this sense, I hope to put forward a stronger notion of utopian potentiality that will be figured in both novels strongly through observing the theme of self-negation in time allegorically as a “way out” of the possible forms of limited subjective experience of the time and space of wage labor.

II. On *Benito Cereno*: Reflections on a Critical/Historical Account of the Relationship of the Space and Time of the Novel- Self-Negation Read Allegorically as Promise from the Limited Subjectivity of Capitalist Social Relations

In the conclusion of Foucault’s essay, “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias”, he makes the claim worth citing at length, that,

The boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same *time* is given over to the infinity of the sea and that, from port to port, from tack to tack, from brothel to brothel, it goes as far as the colonies in search of the most precious treasures they conceal in their gardens, you will understand why the boat has not only been for our civilization, from the sixteenth century until the present, the great instrument of economic development (I have not been speaking of that today), but has been simultaneously the greatest reserve of the imagination. ***The ship is the heterotopia par excellence.*** In civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates (Foucault 9, my annotation).

In brief, the Heterotopia is figured as a utopic space “of dreams” for Foucault where difference is possible as cited above (Foucault, 9). It is worth noting that the textual time of *Benito Cereno* is not the “space of dreams” but the time of primitive accumulation and the development of world trade, specifically,

that of the slave trade which functions as a pre-condition for modern capitalism in the New World, as Eric Williams would have it in his tour de force, *Capitalism and Slavery*. The literary critic Cesare Casarino, in his *Modernity At Sea: Melville, Marx, Conrad In Crisis*, takes up the most iconic ship narrative in American, if not world literature, *Moby Dick*, as a site of such a potential heterotopia configured in literary form. One dimension of this essay responds to Casarino's project, and one that both tests the limitations of the ship as a heterotopia historically on the one hand, as well as perhaps confirms its own utopian ambitions through Babo's linguistic and physical self-negation in time in Melville's shorter novella, *Benito Cereno*, a more condensed work about a slave uprising on a ship trafficking slaves from Africa to the New World on the other.

1. On the Time of Space and Space of Time in Melville's *Benito Cereno*

The opening lines of Melville's 1855 novella point to, or confirm, Foucault's general analysis, the straightforward pronouncement of a strong temporal dimension in the cultural artifacts produced in the 19th and early 20th century. There, Melville writes, from the very opening of the text,

"In the year 1799, Captain Amasa Delano, of Duxbury in Massachusetts, commanding a large sealer and general trader, lay at anchor with a valuable cargo in the harbor of St. Maria- a small, desert, uninhabited island toward the southern extremity of the long coast of Chile. There he had touched for water (Melville 37, My

annotation).

While this seems like a straightforward opening of the novel, which, takes as its concern the prosaic description of a “real historical slave uprising” in novelistic fictionalized conventions, setting the scene in both time and place, the formal or logical development of it, when read comparatively against the second and third paragraphs that immediately follow, show interesting moves on Melville’s part concerning the nature of the relationship between time and space, what I would like to argue is a reflection on its diminution in lived experience historically shown formally in the development of the opening of the text. It is also worth noting that Melville uses the term “value” in this opening paragraph, a key-word that will be taken up for analysis later, which I argue is the “cause” or foundation of any such diminution of temporal experience. In the immediate opening of the work, as cited above, the narrative is grounded in time, and more specifically, the time unit of the year, but by the end of the first short paragraph, we are aware that the plot is located not only in time, but also space, as the concrete place of the ship in relationship to its geographical point of departure is announced. Perhaps this paragraph on its own terms does not come off as striking in the way it mediates the relationship of space and time, until one encounters the next passages relationally.

Next, Melville immediately writes,

“On the second day, not long after dawn, while laying in his berth, his mate came below, informing him that a strange sail was

coming into the bay. Ships were not so plenty in those waters as now. *He rose, dressed, and went on deck*" (Melville 37, my annotation).

This is profoundly striking as a narrative move as the unit of temporal measurement is reduced from the year in the opening paragraph of the novella above, to the "day" in the second, signaling a clear reduction in the unit of measurement of the time of experience for both the reader and the novels characters. The spatial unit also decreases or collapses at the end of the paragraph as the ship is now the sole *space* of reference, as the deck and movement throughout the ship is mentioned rather than land on a larger geographical scale.

The third paragraph, to drive this observation home, begins with a temporal orientation that immediately is configured, again, as a claim about both time and space, "*The morning* was one peculiar to *that coast*" (Melville 37). Here the temporal unit has decreased, again, down to a time *during the day*, from the earlier establishment of the *year*, and then the *day* itself as a unit of time. The "coast", however, returns as a larger unit of measurement, although somewhat indeterminate in its function.

In the first three paragraphs of the novel, then, we can observe that the opening sentence begins with a strong temporal demarcation that is closed or followed closely by a spatial claim. What is even more profound developmentally in the case of these three short paragraphs, is that the textual space in-between

the mentioning of time and space in each of these paragraphs become increasingly shorter. These three paragraphs, although not strong grounds for an argument on their own terms, point to, what might be read as Melville's strong awareness of the mediation of the temporal by the spatial, its collapsing on itself in relation to free human experience. As a mid-nineteenth century work, its prosaic form thus far follows Foucault's general claim about the temporal primacy of thought; given the opening of each paragraph in temporal terms, pointing to its initial concern with history or temporal grounding, however, in its mentioning of space, and spatial thematics that closely follow, we can see that Melville is attuned not only with the inseparable and dynamic nature of time and space, but also to the way emerging social relations of value production reconfigure them. Introducing the ship's role in cargo transportation into the first paragraph and the emerging forms of visible work or labor at large that emerge makes the categories of space and time increasingly un-separable, as well as diminishes the "experience" of both categories.

As the plot becomes richer, Melville writes, that, Captain Delano, upon the appearance of this "strange ship, thinks that it "is no purely fanciful resemblance which *now, for a moment*, almost led 'him' to think nothing less than a shipload of monks was before him. (Melville 38). Here time emerges again at a shorter unit, "a moment", and becomes the grounds for the *mis-recognition of the space* he finds himself in. This passage is followed by the claim that "Upon a still nigher approach (the spatial), this appearance was modified, and the true character of

the vessel was plain, - a Spanish merchantman of the first class, carrying Negro slaves, amongst other *valuable* freight, from one colonial port to another” (Melville 39, my annotation). While both space conceived as distance as well as time as a spatial marker allow for Delano’s suspected mis-recognition, it is his grasping of the value form of this ship, its role in colonial trade, which allows him to form a more concrete understanding of the encounter, “its true character”, which is to say value determines his comprehension of space, and makes his experience (in time) comprehensible or rational (actual). This is as much to say, both time and space abstractly configured become real or tangible measures of experience in relationship to value production in the novella. This realization serves as the grounds of the gam which then ensues between Delano’s vessel and this strange ship, the guarantee that this is not a heterotopic space where the unimaginable forms of espionage mentioned in the Foucault passage are possible.

On such labor organization on the ship, the American captain Delano is strongly disturbed or confused by the spatial movements of the black “subjects” of the ship, as well as what they do with their time. Very early into his encounter he remarks,

“I should think, Don Benito”, he now said, glancing toward the oakum-picker who had sought to interfere with the boys, “that you would find it *advantageous to keep all your blacks employed, especially the younger ones, no matter at what useless task*, and no matter what happens to the ship. Why, even with my little hand, I find such a course indispensable. I once kept a crew on my quarter deck thrumming mats for my cabin, when, for three days, I had

given up my ship- mats, men, and all- for a speedy loss, owing to the violence of a gale, in which we could do nothing but helplessly drive before it (Melville, 50).

This passage contains many key insights into the relationship of time and space as related or mediated by labor for Melville. Most centrally, perhaps, it signals the lack of attention to the necessity of actual labor time needed in the emerging processes of production, and instead marks labor as a method primarily of social control and not only value accumulation. This no doubt resonates with “useless” labor practices performed in our own modern late capitalist world, today, such as emailing, Face-booking, playing Solitaire, etc. that have become the empty non-productive occupations that re-affirm the validity of value production or the sale of one’s labor for a wage in the office or work -space almost universally. The lack of such a present active labor force frightens the American Captain as he mentions making his own crew, hired wage-laborers, and not slaves, perform menial tasks to maintain control. It is no surprise that this mentioning of such unnecessary labor is spoken of in strong temporal terms, “three days” to strengthen the point. This passage also draws a *universality* between the Americans and Slaves in that *all subjects* of ship life, in Delano’s account, should experience the space and time of the ship as a place of labor. The exception to Don Benito’s lackadaisical “management” skills is his treatment of Atufal. Concerning this slave, he remarks, “that negro alone has given me peculiar cause of offense”, resulting in his enchainment for “some sixty days” (Melville 53). This utterance figures as a more extreme case of a subject bound

to the space of empty homogenous labor time, its limit case in a concrete sense of domination.

As Captain Delano remains longer and longer on the ship, and becomes more and more suspicious of a sub-textual haunting of the space of the ship, (the fact the slaves are actually in control, having overthrown Benito Cereno), he remarks to Don Benito, “the more I think of your voyage...., the more I wonder not at the gales, terrible as they must have been, but at the *disastrous interval* following them. For here, by your account, have you been these *two months* and more getting from Cape Horn to St. Maria, a distance which I myself, with a good wind, have sailed in *two days*” (Melville 75, my annotation). When read in an allegorical vein, it can be seen that the extension of the experience and flow of time that should serve as a measure between two given ‘spaces’ in a much smaller amount of time as mediated by normal patterns of ‘natural forces’ is the object of Delano’s anxiety, which is to say that the category of time is extended far beyond its necessary measure for accomplishing a given task. I read this as a rational moment on Delano’s part where he is moving towards figuring out not only the ‘actuality’ of the situation of the ship, that Benito Cereno is not in fact, in control of the vessel, but also as a rational realization about the nature of the relationship of labor and time itself, its present “irrationality”, the overextension of labor-power in time for the never ending accumulation of value, or the role of production for productions sake in capitalist social relations.

The form of the retrospective conclusion of the novel, which, attempts to

unravel the mystery and underlying tension of the entire narrative in more “straightforward terms”, is interesting as a literary device as it signals the necessity of recovering time or accounts in time as a corrective to misguided notions about social relations on the ship. In other words, the novel concludes with time as a corrective measure for ‘getting things right’ and understanding the actuality of the plot. This is a strong announcement of the necessity of thinking the temporal.

2. Babo and Self-Negation in Time/Space as the Pre-Condition of Free Lived Human Freedom

Melville’s character Babo, Captain Benito Cereno’s assistant, shares a strong comparative relationship to two of Mann’s central characters in *The Magic Mountain*, Naphta and Hans, in his relationship to the thematic of self-negation. While Naphta in *The Magic Mountain* is materially/physically negated in the plot of the text, as will be laid out later in the reflections on his duel with Settembrini, and Hans is negated in the time of narration in Mann’s novel, Babo is negated both linguistically in his profound utterance early in the text, as well as materially, like Naphta, in his death at the end of the novel. I see the relationship between all three of these characters as pointing towards the utopian dimension of self-negation read allegorically, the authors plea for a way out of the experience of the diminution of lived subjective experience in the space/time of emerging global capital.

A. Babo’s linguistic negation

Babo's linguistic negation in *Benito Cereno* can be read productively alongside "Excursus I" of Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, "Odysseus or Myth and Enlightenment", in order to comparatively think about Melville's textual representation of the slaves aboard the *San Dominick* as gaining a relative level of freedom, or as establishing a new subjecthood through their cunning and self-negation, "deception en masse", and Adorno and Horkheimer's description of Odysseus's act of deception/ utterance of "Nobody" to the "Kyklops" in Homer's epic, *The Odyssey*, a scene which Adorno and Horkheimer read as establishing Odysseus' character as an early prototype of the Bourgeois individual in "epic literature". This thematic comparison will work to ultimately allow me to attempt to consider Melville's text in relationship to my schema of self-negation as a utopian frame for reading the novella.

In the context of their essay, Adorno and Horkheimer argue, that, "Odysseus, like the heroes of all true *novels* after him, throws himself away so to speak, in order to win himself" (Adorno and Horkheimer 38, my annotation). This passage is interesting here for how it could allow the reader to understand Melville's depiction of the "leader of the slave rebellion", Babo, and his relationship to freedom through linguistic negation. In a very concrete sense, both characters can be read as "true heroes" in the Adornian sense above. Upon Delano, Benito, and Babo's first encounter, the slave Babo is represented as introducing himself to Delano saying "don't speak of me; *Babo is nothing*" (Melville 47, my annotation). Here one can perhaps see extreme parallelism between Babo and

Odysseus, the latter whom the Frankfurt school theorists describe as “a man who, for the sake of his own self, calls himself nobody and manipulates resemblance to the natural state as a means of *controlling* nature” (Adorno and Horkheimer 53, my emphasis). On page 156 of Robert Fitzgerald’s 1990 translation of the epic, *The Odyssey*, the text reads, “Kyklops, you ask my honorable name? Remember, the gift you promised me, and I shall tell you. My name is Nohbdy: mother, father and friends, everyone calls me Nohbdy (Homer, 156). In this way, one can read Babo as first gaining a similar kind or mode of subjectivity, through being willing to loser his former ‘self’ in this very utterance. Adorno and Horkheimer point to this contradiction, which holds in both cases, “He (either Babo and Odysseyus) declares allegiance to himself by disowning himself as Nobody; he saves his life by making himself disappear” (Adorno and Horkheimer 48, my annotation). As Adorno and Horkheimer argue, “the moment of fraud in (the) sacrifice is the prototype of Odysseus’ (or Babo’s) cunning” (Adorno and Horkheimer 40, my annotation) In other words, it is a level of freedom, but it is gained in an unfree way, as freedom without a subject. Adorno points to the rationality of early sacrifice in which a tribe, “perhaps”, would have to sacrifice a member of the collective to ensure group survival. The development of Adorno’s argument is fascinating, as he claims, “the collective interpretation of sacrifice, which entirely denies the rationality of sacrifice, is it’s (barbaric) rationalization (Adorno 42). The whole must dominate itself to be free. By modeling the form of the text in relationship to the theme of modern

subjectivity as “losing oneself” so as to gain oneself (through cunning), Melville solidifies the work as a “modern novel” concerned with dealing with the problem of modernity, the loss of human experience through the category of wage labor mediating all aspects of social life.

B. On Babo’s Physical negation

While Hans serves as the counterpoint in Mann’s *The Magic Mountain* to what I call Babo’s linguistic self-negation above, by which I mean his negation in the narrative or text, but not a description of his bodily negation, Mann’s Naphta shares in relation to Babo’s self-negation a physical or bodily level of negation, his self-inflicted gunshot wound in the duel with Settembrini, which, when read allegorically, figures not as an argument for suicide, straightforwardly, but again as a utopian yearning for a profoundly different subjective experience of time and space. In the closing moments of the narrative, Babo flings himself over the deck towards the escape vessel that Delano and Benito Cereno have boarded in their attempt to safely escape what has become clear to Delano as a vessel captured by slaves, sacrificing his own life in an attempt to win his freedom. As Adorno argues, “The history of civilization is the history of the introversion of sacrifice... which is to say all who renounce give away more of their life than is given back to them (Adorno 43). Babo’s final leap, which could be read as a concrete personal attempt to escape on the one hand, I think, is best understood allegorically. Adorno claims, the anti-reason of totalitarian capitalism, whose technique of

satisfying needs, in their objectified form determined by domination, makes the satisfaction of needs impossible and tends towards the *extermination* of humanity, ...appears prototypically in the hero who escapes the sacrifice by sacrificing himself (Adorno 43). The demand must remain a call for a new non-barbaric form of subjectivity. Both Naphta and Babo gesture at this respectively in their self-inflicted fates in the novel.

III. On the Space of Time and the Time of Space in Mann's *The Magic Mountain*

1. *The time and space of readership*

Thomas Mann's text, *The Magic Mountain*, remarkably captures and transforms more straightforward notions of time and space on the level of sense-certainty, for example, the space and time of pre-Kantian scientific realism, and shows or develops the idea of their inseparability through the lived experience of patients situated in an isolated sanatorium in the Swiss Alps, primarily through the narrative development of the central character, Hans Castorp. This is as much to say, the depiction of social relationships and their place in the time/space of the novel develops the thesis that time and space cannot be separated as categories of experience, that each determines the other, and is not a reflection on empirical scientific discoveries surrounding the nature of space/time.

In his essay in part on *The Magic Mountain*, "On Form Production",

Fredric Jameson ultimately argues that the experience of time one gathers from Mann's modern epic, in relationship to its form, is the "time of readership". This can be read straightforwardly and will certainly resonate experientially with a reader of Mann's text, as marking the centrality of time in the novel, the way for example that material units of text/words that in previous chapters are devoted to the passing of a single day can be offset by a sentence in which months go by. This model of the progression of time, its diminution, is similar to Melville's in *Benito Cereno*. This can be clearly seen for example in the opening of the section of the novel titled "Eternal Soup and Sudden Clarity", the opening lines of chapter 5, worth citing at length.

There, Mann writes,

And now we have a new phenomenon- about which the narrator would do well to express his own amazement, if only to prove the readers being all too amazed on their own. The fact is the account of the first three weeks of Hans Castorp's stay with "the people up here" (twenty one days at the height of summer, to which, by all calculations, it was supposed to have been limited) *has consumed quantities of space* and time that correspond all too well to what the author expected, and indeed half confessed; the coverage of the next three weeks of the visit, however, will require about as many lines (unit of textual/ material space)- or words, or even seconds- as the first three weeks required pages, quires, hours, and working days. We can see it coming- we'll have those three weeks behind us and laid to rest in no time (Mann 181, my annotation).

This passage is offset, or stands in strong opposition to, for example, the short opening sentence of "Walpurgis Night", the last section of Chapter 5, where Mann writes "A few days passed, and young Hans Castorp had now spent seven months up here..." (Mann 316). In this instance we see the author's own

reflections about the physical space of the text, the way its own formal construction itself changes one's material experience of the time of readership (and lived experience/leisure under capital). This is intimately bound up with the time of narration as six weeks of time take up hundreds of pages of Mann's narrative as quoted above, while months pass in the following textual passage or space of a single sentence.

As the plot would have it, the young Hans Castorp travels from a modern European shipping city (the flatland) to an isolated sanatorium (Berghof) in the Swiss Alps to join his cousin for a rest cure for an ominous and indeterminate illness. The cause of his illness vacillates from the day to day experience of the world or life space of capital in a prosperous European shipping city, to something that is actually continually produced by the sanatorium itself, perhaps preventing the claim or inference of a false dichotomy that the flatland serves in the novel as a center of production, while the sanatorium is a heterotopic space of difference free from the ills of capitalist social relations and production. One can see my own Lukács-ian frame of analysis supported by the mentioning of "working days" in the large citation from the beginning of Chapter 5 above. Later in the novel, the sanatorium figured as a site of production can be further supported by Mann's comment that "in its never-resting concern for its guests, a thoughtful management had decided to add another amusing gadget to the collection in the main social room- purchased as a price we don't care to estimate, but that must have been considerable, a handsome disbursement on

the part of this highly recommended institution” (Mann, 627). In this sense, the means of production are conceived of as that which diagnosis and maintains illness. When thinking about the development of the form of narration in the novel, the reader can understand how transformations from the temporality of the primary third person narrative account of Hans Castorp’s life, interrupted by rich moments of the authors own comments on time, not only changes the reader’s phenomenological experience of the book, what Jameson calls the “time of readership”, but also marks how lived space itself transforms and is intimately bound up, which is to say un-separable, from movements in space and time, namely the space and time of accumulation.

2. The Time and Space of Narration

While Jameson is quick to note the moments of interruption in the narrative provided by the author that are worth looking at in more detail here and their relationship to the time of readership and the role of interpretation, (an endeavor that will be maintained in this section and is in-separable from the section above), it can be argued that there is also *a developmental diminution of time in the novel, a collapsing of time upon itself experientially, as time becoming simultaneously ever more empty and homogenous for the living subjects of the novel*, which is to say, the plot discusses events or the passing of time in less detail, which will ultimately will link up with later conclusions about Mann’s insistence on the development of self-negation or ballooning of subjectivity in the development of human freedom in a manner similar to Melville’s. In this way

the Sanatorium reveals a form of abstract domination that gets obscured, for example, in the hustle and bustle of life on the flatland. This gesture or hint towards the valorization of self-negation or the negation of modern forms of subjectivity as a pre-condition for a richer lived subjectivity will be set up in this section, before I proceed to unravel the work's utopian or rational kernel. As Jameson argues above, the third person narrator of the text, the dominant voice of the majority of the work, works at precise movements to produce the effect of the diminution of time. For example, the late section in chapter 6, "Snow", which opens, "*Five Times a day*, the dinners at all seven tables expressed unanimous dissatisfaction with this *years' winter*" (Mann 460, my annotation). In this passage, not only does Mann reduce the meal times which were earlier adorned in the novel with rich details of the space of the dining space itself and which took up larger units of textual space into merely numerical terms, "five" events, but also spreads this logic over an extended three-month period of time. In this way we can see the time of experience in the sanatorium collapsing on its self in prose. Another example which stands out in relationship to the author's own earlier reflection on the textual longevity of Hans first three days in the sanatorium, and the three days that follow on page 181 can be seen in a passage from a later passage in "an attack repulsed", where he writes in third person "Several days passed, four or five (Mann 429). Here we can observe that in six words Mann covers almost as much narrative time as the first third if not half of the book devoted to the same amount of days. But again, while this point is

crucial to understanding the temporality of the work, this is not the only way, I want to argue, that narration or more precisely the time of narration is transformed in the book.

In an early section, aptly titled “Excursus on the Sense of Time”, Mann narrates Hans’ initial encounter with the schedule of the sanatorium and his lived experience there. He writes, “The first few days in a new place have a youthful swing to them, a kind of sturdy, long stride- that lasts about six to eight days. Then, to the extent that we ‘settle in’ the gradual *shortening* becomes noticeable (Mann 102, my annotation). This settling can be read as a certain kind of loss of experience, one related to the abstract forms of domination increasingly pressing itself on reified subjects of both the flatland and the Berghof. Mann goes on to say, via Hans, in a conversation with his cousin Joachim, that, “Of course it would be *absurd* to say, ‘It’s as if I’d been up here two months already- that would be pure non-sense.’ All I can really say is ‘a very long time’” (Mann 103). In his early encounters with Joachim, a character lacking in strong character development, third person narration through quoted conversation comes to show Hans working through or attempting to realize the different time this space is producing. One also has to consider, I argue, the sections of his rich dialogue between the much more developed characters, the Italian Enlightenment humanist, Settembrini, and later the Jesuit Naphta, a character Mann configures as a representation of Lukács, ironically, and Hans’s mediating role as primarily a silent observer and pedagogical object who enters

in to the dialogue at key moments in order to grasp the way the narrative deals with the space/time problematic and the problematic of freedom. While the narrative form remains in third person primarily for the whole novel, the introduction of these moments of extended dialogue arguably can be read as a different form of narration, and one which transforms time, precisely through Hans' intellectual development in the space of these conversations. This development, however, as we will see later, is called into question by Hans's material negation in narrated time and Naphta's suicide.

Many conversations occur in the space of the novel through or with arguably the other two most pronounced characters alongside the text's protagonist, Naphta and Settembrini. Hans' encounters with Herr Settembrini and the narrative surrounding their conversations hint at the inkling of a development of Hans' intellectual fortitude or even the development of his own *Weltanschauung*. Mann writes, "Hans Castorp listened to Herr Settembrini. With the best of intentions he tested the man's views on reason, the world republic, and beautiful style- and was prepared to be influenced by them. And each time, he found it all the more permissible to run free in another direction, in the opposite direction" (Mann 157). Settembrini's long winded pontification about enlightenment humanism and bourgeoisie ideology serve as the most pronounced voice of "reason" before the introduction of the Naphta's character at the sanatorium, which is to say there are no other strong voices to offset his grandiose ideas. A proper example would be Herr Settembrini's monologue on

death, that, “The only healthy and noble and indeed, let me point this out, the only religious way in which to regard death is to perceive and feel it as a constituent part of one’s life, *as life’s holy pre-requisite*, and not to separate it intellectually, to set it up in opposition to life, or worse, to play it off against life in some disgusting fashion” (Mann 197, my annotation). Hans responds about such monologues that, “down in the flatlands, I’m sure I would have not understood them”, calling him a humanist pedagogue (Mann 199). Early in their encounters Hans mimics Settembrini as a character, but it is not the content of his ideas that lead to his own development, but the form of self-reflection they produce. Mann writes, in “Freedom”, that Hans, in his third “comprehensive” letter home, which it is worth noting is not composed in “forms of time valid down below”, asks for books, reflecting his pursuit of enlightenment and self-understanding (Mann, 221). I would like that these forms of time are valid “down below” following the logic of my argument, but become apparent at the sanatorium as abstract forms of domination in the space of the distance of reflection or isolation. While this develops or “establishes” Hans understanding of ‘freedom’, it is worth noting that this utterance has little to do with the meaning “Settembrini attaches to the word” (Mann 222). If Settembrini’s discourse does not provide or help define the realization of freedom, we must ask how his discourses with Naphta relate to this problematic. If Hans’s conversations with the characters of Naphta and Settembrini configure a dialectical development for Hans in the novel, it is worth noting the alternative

side of the conversation or ideology put forward in these discussions.

Naphta presents an alternative frame of understanding the world in the space of the Sanatorium in opposition to Settembrini as the other “philosophical” character in the novel, whose arrival comes much later. Perhaps Naphta’s most clear position is outlined very late in the book where he claims, that, “matter is much too paltry a substance for the Spirit ever to be realized within it”, marking his strong idealism. He critiques Settembrini’s enlightenment humanism by claiming, rightly, that the “outcome of the vaunted French Revolution had been the capitalist bourgeoisie state- a fine how do- you-do, which people hoped to improve upon by making the abomination universal” (Mann 680). This passage is enlightening as it shows Naphta’s position as another incomplete side of the discourse. While Settembrini praises the virtues of enlightenment humanism, Naphta sees the non-identity of enlightenment ideology and the development of capitalism as a form of social relations. Hans, in relationship to these characters is caught at a kind of logical impasse, and one that will not be resolved through narrated discourse in the novel, but rather, through the figuration of self-negation. Shortly after this disagreement, which cannot be solved in language, Settembrini and Naphta engage in a duel, so that, in Settembrini’s words, “Naphta will no longer molest vulnerable youth with his dubious ideas” (Mann 686). In the instance of the narration of the duel, Settembrini fires his gun first, and straight into the air, holding true to his humanist ideology. Although Naphta urges him to shoot again, Settembrini refuses. In response, Naphta’s most

profound action and response in the novel is put forward, “‘Coward!’ Naphta screamed, conceding with this very human cry that it requires more courage to shoot than to be shot at, raised his pistol to a position that had nothing to do with the duel, and shot himself in the head” (Mann 696). Naphta’s own suicidal death, when read allegorically, shows the apparent insolvability of the contradictions between realizing bourgeoisie freedom within emerging modern capitalist social relations. In this sense, a more profound call for the negation of modern subjectivity stands in as a pre-condition for realizing human freedom historically, the overcoming of selling one’s self or labor power for a wage.

Shortly thereafter, Mann interrupts the plot narrative to ask, and importantly in all caps, “WHERE ARE WE?”, as concrete of a self-reflection on notions of space as one could put forward (Mann 702). We come to find that in the space of the remaining three pages of the novel, Hans is immersed in the battlefield of World War I back on the flatlands. Hans falls victim to a shell/bomb, however, his death is not straightforwardly pronounced. Rather, Mann writes, “Farewell, Hans Castorp, life’s faithful problem child. *Your story is over. We have told it to its end*”, as well as, “*Farewell Hans- whether you live or stay where you are! Your chances are not good*” (Mann, 706). It is interesting to see that Mann concludes with the negation of Hans in the narrated time of the novel, but does not mark Hans material death in the narrative of the text. In this way it is clear that material existence is not linked to freedom. While his afflictions were mystical in the space of the sanatorium, they are much more

concrete in the flatland. Like with Naphta, the theme of self-negation in the conflict of historical space/time in the text reappears again as perhaps the only solution to the two sides of thought encapsulated by both Naphta and Settembrini, which is as much to say that human freedom or bourgeoisie ideology cannot be recognized universally under capitalist social relations.

3. The Time of Cigars/Smoking as a Social Relation and the Death of Hans (on negation/isolation)

The theme or concept of self-negation in the text can be tracked most strongly through two pivotal developments in the novel (the negation of Hans and Naphta), developments that will ultimately allow for an understanding of the utopian potentiality of recovering time as it is diminished by transformations in space. The figure of the cigar, Hans's developmental experience of smoking in this markedly different space, primarily its increasingly dissatisfactory results, in line with the physical negation of bodily lives in the end of the text in his departure from the space of the sanatorium, perhaps a much larger development, further develops the theme of self-negation in the text and perhaps offers up a negative allegorical account of how freedom can be achieved. The latter occurrence most radically shows, perhaps, the way that the time/space of rich dialogue in the text and what Hans learns from it are both only partial accounts of the necessity of realizing human freedom. One can see this negation allegorized in not only the death of Hans as a character in narrated time; "Your story is over", as well as in the ambiguity of his death within the

narrative development, but also in Naphta's suicide (Mann 696).

By tracing the development of Hans' relationship to his favorite pastime upon arriving to the sanatorium, smoking cigars, one can see how the space transforms the idea or time of his experience of leisure and performs a different kind of negation, the loss of experience. The most profound literary move in the text surrounding the figure of the cigar perhaps is Mann's use of the metaphorical term "Mercury Cigar" as a reference point for the thermometer, a measure of illness in the sanatorium (Mann 46). Directly after this metaphor is put forward by Mann, Hans states, "But I'm going to light a real one now", he said, coming to a halt. "I can't stand it any longer. I've not had a decent smoke since yesterday afternoon (Mann, 46). Returning from Hans' narration, Mann goes into great detail to outline the aesthetics of the cigar. He writes, "And from a buff leather etui monogrammed in *silver*, he extracted one of his Maria Mancinis—a lovely specimen from the top of the box, flattened on just one side the way he liked it" (Mann 46, my annotation). Mann's description of the silver monogram in relationship to the metaphorical description of the thermometer as a Mercury cigar can perhaps be read here as a form of foreshadowing of a transformation in Hans' relationship to the cigar. Upon offering one to his cousin Joachim, it is interesting to note that Joachim replies, "I've never smoked"..."Why should I start up here of all places" (Mann 46). While Joachim clearly sees the cigar as regressive to rehabilitation in this language, Hans enthusiastically retorts, "When I wake I look forward to being able to smoke *all day*" "I eat only that I can

smoke” ... “*a day* without tobacco would be absolutely insipid, a dull, totally wasted day” (Mann 46). This shows the way that commodification and consumption remain the measure of experience at the sanatorium. As this narrative comes to a close, Joachim concludes from these comments that the director of the sanatorium is correct, in that, it marks him as having a “weak will” and as still a “civilian”. After meeting with director Behrens later in the middle of the novel, he is offered a cigarette “of extra fine quality, the sort you bring out on tip-top occasions” (Mann 258). At this point in the development of narrative time, Hans “helps himself to the unusually wide, large cigarette, imprinted with a golden sphinx, and it was indeed wonderful” (258). After a period of illness, as a way of positioning Hans in space and time later in the text, Mann writes “His Maria Mancini’s tastes good again, ...” acting as a kind of connection between him, a man withdrawn from the world, and his former home in the flatlands” (Mann 381). This content-ness perhaps strongly configures or models the role of ideology at the sanatorium when left un-criticized. In this instance smoking can still be seen as kind of a satisfaction with the conditions for the possibilities of life before him. In the close of the novel, however, Hans relationship to smoking drastically changes, as if he no longer could comprehend difference or understand the mediation of these two worlds. Mann writes in “The Great Petulance”, that, “Naphta was smoking a cigarette, and Hans Castorp asked himself whether he would like to do the same and, finding *that he had not the least desire*, decided this had to be an affectation of Naphta’s part” (Mann 694,

My Annotation). Some four pages later, following Naphta's death, Mann claims he "no longer ordered his Maria Mancinis from (the flatland)" (Mann 698). Through his negation of smoking his former cigar of choice, and the pleasure it brought upon him, one can see a configuration of Hans realizing the insolvability of Settembrini's bourgeoisie ideology and Naphta's idealism within current or given social relations, as well as realizing the Sanatorium not as a utopian place, but a place mediated by the same form of social relations in a modified form. In this sense, it negates the utopian pretensions of the space of the Sanatorium and the flatland below as one of freedom.

IV. Conclusion: An Account of the Necessity of Recovering "Dead Labor Time" for "Use Amongst the Living" in Moishe Postone's *Time, Labor, and Social Domination*, or, Why Must We Maintain the Necessity of an Account of Lived *Time*/space in the 21st century in Order to Realize Human Freedom Universally.

In this section my goal is to give a brief account of the necessity of the centrality of time in a Poston-ian sense, his arguments about the inherent logical development of time in the "space" of lived modern capitalist social relations, as well as to show how Hans's experience of the sanatorium in Mann's novel as well as Melville's characters' experience of the time of ship life can be retrospectively related to the experience of an "abstract form of social domination". This is to say, while Hans' may not be in the absolute center of production, or Babo may

not be a wage laborer, the diminution of their experience of lived time, as narrated, for example, the reduction of Hans' experience of time and ordinary pleasures, can be configured as the narrativized materialization of "abstract form of social domination" with which Postone is concerned with, as opposed to more concrete problems brought by industrial capital such as wage inequality and treacherous industrial working conditions. This prevents or protects against the vulgar response to Mann's text that the space of the sanatorium (or Melville's ship for that matter) serves as a heterotopia in a utopian sense, a place away from the labor of the flatland. While Mann's book could be critiqued on these grounds in a straight forward Marxian sense, as not dealing with the terrors of industrial production in the period it was produced, coming somewhat after Melville's historically, it also lends itself to Postone's point, that, the primary form of capitalist social domination is not, to speak metaphorically, "with the availability bread and water", including accounts of critiques of wage inequality, the horrors of the extraction of absolute surplus value for example one would see at the peak of the development of industrial capital in England in the mid 19th century etc., which of course remain an problematic issue, but rather, a block on the development of subjective human experience that capital itself, if realized, creates the potentialities for.

1. The Necessity of Recovering Time for Utopian Potentialities in the Present

In this brief conclusion, I will perform a reading of Moishe Postone's critical

work of modern social theory, *Time, Labor, and Social Domination*, in order to concretize or crystalize two important guiding ideas of this text, the first, that the project of the Political Left has failed and that a recognition of this failure, its self-conscious *negation in thought*, is a necessary precondition for its actual emergence, which I see as deeply related to the utopian content of both novels at hand, in the characters self-negations, and the second, that capitalism need not only be conceptually grasped as a repressive form of social relations for the way it causes more straight-forward forms of domination, for example, global wage inequality, which can be easily grasped in spatial terms, but as a universal form of abstract domination, in the way it dominates the possibilities of any possible subjective experience *in time*. Most importantly, this text will then ultimately allow a way of figuring time so that, it can be understood as an absolutely critical utopian concept for realizing the possibilities capitalism itself, as a form of social relations, has formed in its own internal contradictions that could be grasped or realized for the purposes of human freedom.

I. Abstract Forms of Social Domination

It is worth noting to start, I think, that Postone's critique of previous accounts of capitalist domination, what he calls "traditional Marxism", is not a non-dialectical dismissal of the truth content of those forms of oppression, but rather, an attempt to think about domination in a way the exposes, for example, how even capitalists themselves are dominated by this form of social relations. In the introduction to *Time, Labor, and Social Domination*, "Rethinking Marx's

Critique of Capitalism”, Postone begins his text claiming that it has been argued in the history of Marxism, and in the subsequent interpretations of Marx’s *Capital Volume 1* that were produced (basically all of them on his reading) before his intervention, that the central contradictions that emerge in capitalist society, ‘as Marx laid them out’, are between the forces and the relations of production, as well as in class contradictions. This means that the central determinate contradiction in capitalism has been conceived of as having occurred between the way we produce and the way the products of production are distributed or, a contradiction between social classes. What, then, is the abstract domination with which Postone is concerned? In his terms this is configured as life as “organized around a “historically specific form of social interdependence with an impersonal and seemingly objective character” (Postone, 3). By this Postone ultimately means wage labor as a form of social mediation. Postone argues that his account places “*considerations of temporality* and a critique of production at the center of Marx’s analysis, and lays the foundation for an analysis of modern Capitalist society as a directionally dynamic society structured by a historically unique form of social mediation that, though socially constituted, has an abstract, *impersonal*, quasi-objective character” (Postone 5, my annotation). He argues that such “impersonal structural imperatives (the necessity to participate in the system requiring the sale of labor power) cannot be grasped in “personal or group domination” (Postone 4). His method of critique, instead, reads the capitalist not as the one ‘pulling the strings’ of a global system of inequality, but

as “bearers (Träger) of political-class relations or interests” which in turn dominate them also (Marx, 92). In this way the utopian content of negation as configured in the novels can be read in relationship in Postone’s terms in the negation of “already existing socialism” and its political presuppositions as authentic modes of political action. This also works to allow a narrative of how all the subjects or characters of the novels at hand are dominated by the diminution of lived time. Postone responds to this “political problem” by rejecting the notion of the forms of oppression central to capitalism as “the domination of one people by another”, but instead, conceives of it as ‘the domination of people (society as a whole) by abstract social structures that people themselves constitute (Postone 30). Negatively this can be also understood primarily in Postone’s rejection of capitalism as defined primarily by the dictates of “market” or “in terms of the private ownership of the means of production”, i.e, spatial categories (Postone 6). In Hegelian terms, perhaps, it is the development of this larger comprehensive “spirit”, or “self-grounding, self-moving Subject” of modernity, which is defined as “Capital” in *Time, Labor, and Social Domination*, that Postone is interested in accounting for, and not merely its economic *form of appearance* (Postone, 224). A shortcoming or loose end of his argument is perhaps revealed here, however, as one must ask the role of politics and political organization, or in other words, who are the *subjects* that can realize the objective possibilities immanent to capitalist production when he is writing historically in the absence of a political party on his own terms? In this

sense, the characters of the novel's linguistic and material subjective self-negation read allegorically perhaps becomes the only foreseeable form of political practice in the absence of a worker's party for the development of socialism. The only alternative is to follow the line of "traditional Marxism", which is, in Postone's terms, to "position the vision of socialism as the "historical realization of labor", a system of social relations which "structures life more openly", and more importantly in this context, "distributes wealth more justly" (Postone 9). It is clear here how the terms "openly", and the the logic of distribution of wealth function as inadequate spatial categories for the society he wants to imagine/realize.

2. Recovering Stored-Up "Dead- Labor Time for Use Amongst the Living

Postone's argument or account of value accumulation, the developmental trend in capitalist society that he argues will allow for its overcoming as a form of social relations, can be understood in the contradiction he presents between "dead and living labor" or in other terms between "value" and "material wealth". In perhaps one of Postone's clearest formulations describing what, for him, is the determinate dynamic of the relationship of labor and time that *could* create a possible "way out" from capitalist social relations, he argues, 'Increased productivity *increases the amount of value produced* per unit of time- until this productivity becomes generalized; at that point the magnitude of value yielded in that time period, because of its abstract and general temporal determination, falls back to its previous level (Postone, 289). In this way "the social labor hour",

or time itself, is socially reconstituted so as to allow production and the labor time within the hour itself to become more productive. This claim clearly can be read as expressing the dynamic nature of relative surplus value as opposed to absolute surplus value, that is, labor's technical intensification within the same amount of labor time, as opposed to a more concrete extension of the work day. Postone argues that this clearly points to a directional dynamic of society, defined by the "drive for ever-increasing levels of productivity" as well as the outcome of *the reduction of lived subjective time during a given day* (Postone 290). This reduction of lived time can be traced, as I have argued, in the narrative form of the novels at hand. His careful argumentation, I think, that increased productivity does result in "short-term increases in the amount of value yielded per unit time", before becoming generalized, can be read as suggesting more than a critique that capitalism always needs to "produce more commodities" and that we need to be 'content' with what we have (Postone 290). Rather, this contradiction expresses a relationship between dead and living labor, or a registering of transformations in historical time (the relationship of the past and the present), that increases in productivity as stored up dead labor/ value, could, but do not, result in a form of wealth that would be suitable for use amongst the living. While value does not expand "absolutely", due to structural temporal transformations, it temporarily increases, allowing for human labor to be freed up while it continues to be "sustained". This is as much to say, straightforwardly, that human life could be about more than mere

labor, or that life could be about more than working to live, allowing for a free-experience of lived human time. Perhaps this is most clear in Postone's use of the terms of or articulation of the contradiction between "value and material wealth". He supports this conceptual opposition, claiming

"Marx argues that, in the course of the development of capitalist industrial production, value becomes less and less adequate as a measure of the "real wealth" produced. He contrasts value, a form of wealth bound to human labor time expenditure, to the gigantic wealth-producing potential of modern science and technology. Value becomes anachronistic in terms of the potential of the system of production to which it gives rise; the realization of that potential would entail the abolition of value (Postone 26).

It becomes more clear here how industrial production under capital for Postone is not something that is a-historical and that could be appropriated to a new social order with central planning, but for how trends in production are part of the inexorable dynamic of capital accumulation. As increases in productivity continue to rely less and less on human labor, when all the while human labor remains the measure of social wealth historically, workers' wages are driven down below subsistence. In this way, perhaps, Postone's logic and Marx's are at least relatively congruous. In the simplest formulation possible, which is perhaps too vulgar, workers are made ever less necessary but are not done away with. Marx's general concept of "extra surplus value" as represented in his section "The Production of Relative Surplus Value" In *Capital Volume 1*, seems to support or remain relatively congruous with Postone's notion of the treadmill effect and the relative intensification of surplus following transformations following the

social re-organization of the labor hour. There, Marx argues, “this extra surplus value (relative surplus) vanishes *as soon as the new method of production is generalized* (Marx 436, my annotation). Postone’s conception of opposition becomes clearest when read as a contradiction between the *possibilities* generated by capitalism (its method of accumulation) and its actuality (social/universal subjective un-freedom) (Postone 392).

In conclusion, I read both novels as showing the abstract form of domination Postone is concerned with on the one hand, the diminution of lived experience in the space and time of wage labor, as well as pointing towards a call for a realization that a self-negation of actual politics as such understood allegorically through the characters’ self-negation, for example, the negation of a spatial bloc or third world communist politics as politics, exists as a condition for the emergence of a politics of actual human liberation. Or, in other terms, a temporal frame of analysis remains necessary today for comprehension of the full extent of capitalist social domination.

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