

Rediscovering Myth in *Autobiography of Red* by Anne Carson

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Abstract

*The paper explores the nature of desire in Anne Carson's verse novel *Autobiography of Red*, focusing on how desire shapes the self within the narrative and its relationship with the surrounding world. Drawing on Carson's background in classical languages and literature, *Autobiography of Red* reimagines the ancient Greek myth of Geryon and weaves it into a contemporary setting, exploring themes of love, desire, identity, and personal transformation. The examination of the self in the text draws on Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's conceptualizations of desire, particularly the ideas of becoming and de-territorialization found in *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*. The objective of the study is to analyse the influential power of desire in *Autobiography of Red*, offering an interpretive framework to comprehend the fragile nature of the self. The study reveals that desire is not limited to the relationship between the protagonist Geryon and Herakles, but rather, it permeates and constructs the entire text. The significance of the title's red, as well as the existence volcano and lava, is interpreted as an integral part, showcasing the influence of desire on the protagonist's personality and challenges conventional notions of a stable backdrop. The influence of Deleuzian desire extends beyond its philosophical implications. The research further explores its linguistic aspects and applies the concepts of becoming and de-territorialization to understand Carson's poetic style and the text as a space that gives rise to a phenomenology of desire. In doing so, the text transcends representational modes and becomes reterritorialized, allowing Carson to convey experiences in a unique manner. By offering a Deleuzian perspective on desire in *Autobiography of Red*, the thesis aims to expand interpretations of both the poetic and theoretical aspects of the text, opening up new avenues for research and exploration.*

Keywords: Deluzian Theory, Desire, Phenomenology, Becoming, Deterritorialization, Canadian Literature.

Introduction

By recognizing desire as a transformative and formative entity within *Autobiography of Red*, the research explores its profound impact on the self's existence in the world. This exploration involves an engagement with the philosophical ideas of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, with particular emphasis on the concepts presented in *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*. By examining Deleuzian concepts such as desire, becoming, and deterritorialization, the study aims to uncover a phenomenology of desire embedded within Carson's text. Furthermore, the utilization of Deleuzian concepts establishes a connection between desire, the phenomenological aspects of the text, and Carson's poetic style. Thus, the research offers fresh insights into both the poetic and theoretical dimensions of the text.

While Carson's body of work covers various genres and explicitly explores desire, the selection of a single novel allows for concentrated research and an in-depth close reading of the text. It is proposed that *Autobiography of Red* can be interpreted as the protagonist, Geryon's, unsuccessful endeavor to achieve a cohesive sense of self. The autobiography, in this context, emerges as a mere fantasy of an internal realm. Geryon embarks on the creation of his autobiography as a project concerning "all inside things," establishing a distinct space separate from "all outside things" (Carson 29). Additionally, the novella encompasses a romantic narrative, driven by Geryon's longing for an older boy named Herakles. Thus, it is argued that this text serves as an exemplary ground for constructing a phenomenology of desire. Through its poetic narrative, desire becomes a catalyst for expanding one's world, and

its transformative power suggests the development of a phenomenological perspective, influencing one's existence within the world.

Carson initiates *Autobiography of Red* by contextualizing it about the ancient Greek poet Stesichoros and his utilization of adjectives. These "small imported mechanisms" (4), are responsible for attaching every element in the world to its specific position. They act as the essential connectors of existence. This assertion holds significant importance within the text, emphasizing the role of language in the conception of being. The story of Geryon originates from an ancient Greek myth, as chronicled by lyrical poet Stesichoros in his poem Geryoneis. Carson reimagines this delineation and redefines the relationship between the presumed "source" and her own text. The mythical framework, along with Carson's utilization of it, further underscores the significance of language in relation to the thesis's objectives.

The objective of the research is to establish a comprehensive understanding of desire by analysing the novel *Autobiography of Red* written by Anne Carson in 1988. The central argument is that desire plays a constitutive role in shaping the self within the boundaries of Carson's poetic novel.

The research paper aims to answer the following research questions:

1. In *Autobiography of Red*, how does desire contribute to the construction and transformation of the self, and how does it influence the self's relationship with the world?
2. What is the interplay between desire and language in the conception of being, and how does this dynamic ultimately give rise to a phenomenology of desire?

In their seminal work titled *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari employ the concept of Becoming to denote a type of change that is not necessarily characterized by progress or regress. Deleuze and Guattari illustrate this idea through examples such as the transformation of a wasp into an orchid, and vice versa, as they engage in a symbiotic relationship. Becoming does not entail mere imitation or identification with a specific entity. Instead, according to Deleuze and Guattari, reality's intrinsic nature involves an incessant generation of ever-expanding becomings or multiplicities.

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari introduce the concept of Deterritorialization to elucidate the process through which societal structures and hierarchies undergo fragmentation and dissolution. According to their argument, deterritorialization plays a vital role in the emergence of novel forms of social organization that prioritize principles of democracy and egalitarianism.

Literature Review

When considering the research and literature available on Carson, it becomes apparent that there is no established canon to draw upon. The dissemination of information appears to be slow in this regard. However, "Ecstatic Lyre" (2015) stands as the initial anthology of secondary literature dedicated to Carson's body of work, offering concise essays encompassing her complete oeuvre. This compilation serves as a valuable resource, providing an accessible overview of the current research on Carson. Within these articles, a predominant focus lies in examining desire as both a driving force and recurring theme in her writing. Jessica Fisher's essay "Anne Carson's Stereoscopic Poetics," proposes desire as a self-constitutive force, a viewpoint that aligns the proposed contention. While Fisher's

approach diverges by relying on Lacanian psychoanalysis, her essay proves useful in emphasizing desire's role in shaping the self and serves as a starting point for further research. In his introduction to "Ecstatic Lyre", Joshua Wilkinson highlights Carson's call to "act so there is no use in a center," which he identifies as a methodological challenge in compiling the anthology (2).

While existing research has explored the notion of desire and its significance in Carson's work, a comprehensive investigation into its correlation with the phenomenological aspects of her texts appears to be lacking. Nonetheless, Stuart J. Murray's article, "The Autobiographical Self: Phenomenology and the Limits of Narrative Self-Possession in Anne Carson's *Autobiography of Red*", explicitly addresses some of the themes pertinent to the proposed research. Murray examines the relationship between phenomenology and autobiography within Carson's novel, drawing on Martin Heidegger's phenomenology to question whether the notion of "life" aligns more closely with writing or with a sense of self and being. Consequently, Murray's work proves invaluable in establishing Geryon's self-perception as partially a phenomenological inquiry.

Surprisingly, there is limited research exploring Carson's connection to Deleuze, despite the potential affinity between her conception of language and becoming-self and Deleuze's rhizomatic agency as presented in works like *A Thousand Plateaus*. Carson has not been extensively studied in the context of literature from the approach of Deleuze, which has predominantly focused on modernist writers such as Marcel Proust, Virginia Woolf, and Franz Kafka. Nevertheless, two recent articles partially bridge this gap and consider the application of Deleuzian theory to Carson's work. Although these articles do not provide exhaustive accounts of the possible relationship, they utilize Deleuzian concepts as a starting point to elucidate thematic elements in Carson's writing.

Monique Tschofen's article, "Drawing Out a New Image of Thought: Anne Carson's Radical Ekphrasis", examines Anne Carson's poem "Seated Figure with Red Angle (1988) by Betty Goodwin" in relation to the accompanying drawing by Betty Goodwin. Tschofen explores the interplay between word and image and investigates how Carson translates the visual into language. Drawing on Deleuze's view of art as a provider of "a new image of thought" (Tschofen 223), Tschofen argues that Carson's language creates novel spaces of becoming, aligning with Deleuze's assertion that the arts possess the capacity to open such spaces. This article proves useful by asserting an affinity between Carson's poetics and Deleuze's perspective on the potentiality and role of art in relation to the central problems of philosophy and their connection to human subjects (240). Tschofen's argument further advocates for Carson's inclusion among renowned writers such as Nietzsche and Proust, where Deleuze found these "new images" (240).

Dina Georgis' article, "Discarded Histories and Queer Affects in Anne Carson's *Autobiography of Red*", explores Carson's *Autobiography of Red* through the lens of queer theory. Georgis maps the relationship between language, being, and queerness in the novel, drawing on Deleuze's concept of being as "difference without a concept" (Georgis 156), as expounded in *Difference and Repetition*. She posits that Carson's text avoids the act of naming experiences and instead suggests that "the difference of being can only be reached through the indirection of adjectives and metaphor, pictures in Geryon's case, because the queer foreignness within has no other grammar" (Tschofen 160). This rejection of representing human experience through naming, thus refusing representation itself corresponds to what Deleuze defines as "a more profound and more artistic reality" (160).

While Georgis' focus lies in queer theory and the queerness of being, her article, much like Tschofen's, highlights the alignment between Carson's poetics and a Deleuzian understanding of being.

Carson's extensive and expansive body of work has evoked responses that go beyond traditional academic research and written discourse. As my own approach draws inspiration from poetry, utilizing poetic imagery as catalysts, I find other forms of response equally intriguing. Meriç Algün's exhibition, "Finding the Edge" (Galerie Nordenhake, Stockholm, 2017), takes Eros the Bittersweet as its starting point. The exhibition features a large wooden shelf structure displaying Carson's book alongside video images of moving tectonic plates, beehives, ferns, and fossils. Algün's focus lies in exploring the limits of Eros, as the accompanying information text states: "a series of new works that draws parallels between the separation of the continents and the origins of human desire." The exhibition predominantly features the overwhelming presence of the natural world with its spatial and temporal aspects, along with several substantial volumes bearing titles such as "Solid," "Horizon," "Liquid," "Lava," and "Flow." This installation implies that the borders of Eros possess an earthly dimension, suggesting a simultaneous movement of desire and the world while challenging their absolute division.

Jack Reynolds and Jon Roffe, in their article "Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty: Immanence, Univocity and Phenomenology," argue against a definitive dichotomy between poststructuralism and phenomenology. They suggest that despite differences, something akin to coexistence exists between Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty (Reynolds et al. 228). Furthermore, they emphasize the relative lack of research on the interrelation between these two philosophers and deem it reductionist to position Deleuze solely on the side of pure immanence in opposition to phenomenology.

In "Body and World in Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze," Corry Shores acknowledges the tension between Deleuzian theory and phenomenology but also highlights their compatibility (Shores 182). Shores express interest not only in the relationship of Deleuze's ideas to phenomenology but also in the possibilities that emerge when his criticisms are regarded as constructive critiques. He raises the question of whether it is possible to undertake phenomenology in a Deleuzian manner (182).

Research Methodology

Since it is a literary study, discussion method is employed in the research. The primary text is Anne Carson's novel *Autobiography of Red*. The secondary texts used are chosen from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's works on their theories of becoming and deterritorialization. Their theoretical discourses detailed in the following works will guide this study: *Anti-Oedipus* (1972) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980).

Discussion and Analysis

Deleuze and Guattari express the challenge of perceiving the essence within the flux of existence, remarking, "Discerning the essence within the midst is no simple task...to recognize the presence of vitality within both objects and language" (Deleuze et al. 23).

Geryon inquires, "Why are blades of grass named as such? Could it be due to their subtle clicking sounds?" (Carson 84)

Throughout *Autobiography of Red*, the surrounding world persistently presents itself to Geryon as ruthlessly unstable, possibly triggering his quest for self-discovery through autobiographical endeavours. Rooms careen towards the edge of the world, silence propels itself forward, and a perpetual erosion of self occurs. Geryon perceives the "external elements" as a perpetual threat to the integrity of his identity. He cannot maintain a safe distance from the world, perpetually finding himself caught in the middle: "Children surrounded him / and the relentless crimson assault of grass, with the scent of grass permeating everywhere / beckoned him toward it / like an unyielding ocean" (23). The world disintegrates into fragments: "Geryon squinted. / The grass swam closer, then receded" (49). Geryon observes the grass, expressing himself and encountering life from a constant state of displacement and decentralization.

The concept of perceiving the essence of things in a grass-like manner and occupying a middle position holds significant implications in the *Autobiography of Red*. In this literary work, desire manifests as a powerful current, both shaping and displacing consciousness and existence. To truly comprehend its transformative potency, one must delve into the phenomenological experiences it engenders. Desire acts as a catalyst, unveiling new perspectives of self and novel ways of existing in the world. A prevailing motif in the text, analogous to this current, is that of a volcanic nature. The volcano becomes inseparable from the narrative, the text itself, and the force of desire. It permeates every aspect, from the book's cover photo and the introductory quote by Emily Dickinson, to the very culmination of the story. It assumes a central role, surpassing conventional boundaries and dissolving dichotomies—it emerges as the embodiment of the middle ground.

Chris Jennings aptly describes the volcano as an exemplar, a visual representation of the threshold between internal and external realms. Its otherwise tranquil surface intermittently punctuated by intense eruptions mirrors the building pressure within Geryon, his inner self perpetually poised to manifest—either as a threat or a promise (Jennings 932). While Jennings acknowledges the volcano's connection to Geryon's being, it surpasses mere imagery or a metaphor for passionate love. Instead, it possesses profound structural significance, dismantling the binary division of internal and external. Its implications extend to challenge the foundational elements of autobiography, the notion of a bounded self, and even the stability of the phenomenal world itself, presenting the ultimate example of deterritorialization.

Being situated in an intermediate position does not entail a fixed or original state. To occupy a space between entities represents a perpendicular trajectory, a lateral motion that sweeps both ends, resembling an unending current with the power to erode boundaries and gain momentum at its core. This phenomenon is referred to as deterritorialization, a concept intrinsic to the theoretical framework of Deleuze and Guattari, as well as evident within their written works. Deterritorialization embodies a perpetual elusiveness of limits and demarcations, while emphasizing the primacy of fluidity and flux as fundamental aspects of reality, rather than stability (Deleuze et al. 25). It is important to note that this does not imply a negation of existence, but rather signifies an acceleration of being, a hastening, a departure, a transformative process beyond the confines of established knowledge within the present temporal and spatial context (West-Pavlov 204).

Russell West-Pavlov further elucidates the concept by highlighting its connection to human experience and the subjectivity of the experiencer. By foregrounding considerations of time, place, and knowledge, he elucidates deterritorialization as a profound rupture with

conventional perceptions. Throughout *Autobiography of Red*, the volcano serves as an exploration of precise time, place, and frameworks of knowledge, with its movements constructing and deconstructing the text. West-Pavlov argues that deterritorialization provides an opportunity to escape from one's current state or location and embrace a different identity. This concept is exemplified in fragment XII, titled LAVA, where the color red, associated with lava, represents a state of existence that enables Geryon to navigate through various levels of consciousness. The passage describes Geryon's arrival at the house of Herakles' grandmother, situated at the base of a volcano. This marks a shift in the narrative's setting, and Geryon grapples with establishing his position in relation to Herakles and in relation to himself in the presence of another (204). Geryon contemplates the experience of being a woman, pondering the act of listening in darkness. A metaphorical silence envelops them, akin to the intense pressure of geothermal forces. The text portrays a process of becoming-woman, mirroring the gradual deterritorialization of the volcano. The she mentioned in the passage does not denote a specific character, but represents a state in which Geryon assimilates, a territory. Seamlessly, he inhabits the consciousness associated with this feminine pronoun. However, the very motion and drift itself, symbolized by the colour red, is influenced by the volcanic context. The volcano, with its red hue, intermingles with the self's movement, deterritorializing it (57). According to Deleuze and Guattari, becoming-woman is the initial threshold for all processes of becoming, while becoming-imperceptible represents the ultimate limit. It serves as the primary means to transcend the prevailing notion of a fixed self. Thus, the study exemplifies the ongoing state of flux.

The conclusive set of seven fragments in *Autobiography of Red* bears the title PHOTOGRAPHS and coincides with a hastened progression towards self-obliteration: "I am vanishing," he contemplated, "yet the photographs hold significance. A volcano is an atypical mountain. The act of raising a camera to one's visage yields repercussions immeasurable in advance" (135). In these concluding pages, there is an almost obsessive insistence on photography that rekindles the underlying conflict between their presumed authenticity and Geryon's personal encounter with the world. These pages resonate with profound sentiment. Geryon and Herakles reunite, albeit not as romantic partners, and Geryon appears to coexist in both a past era and an uncertain present. Despite his final endeavours to seize time and "possess himself" (146), striving to retain a connection to the "bygone days" (141) through the stabilizing framework of a photograph, the text once again denies such attempts: "Vast moments enveloped his hands, rendering them immobile each time he sought to reposition" (136). Consequently, the photograph fails anew in capturing the spatiotemporal essence of a complete experience.

This passage delves into the inherent link between photography and autobiography, positing the former as a framing tool and an amalgamated entity that fleetingly captures the ebb and flow of life and existence. Photography perpetually engages with the vigour and movement of volcanic phenomena, acting as a stage for the inherent volatility of seemingly steadfast entities and constructed identities. Fragment XIX, entitled FROM THE ARCHAIC / TO / THE FAST SELF, characterizes the self within the context of volcanic motions. During moments of seeking solace, Geryon turns to autobiography as a sanctuary, a realm, where an overwhelming surge of emotions can find release. The volcano assumes a dual role as both a framing device and an eruptive paragon. Thereby, further underscoring its significance within the narrative. The phenomenological elucidation presented in the text sheds light on the intrinsic implausibility of photography and the inherent tension between the yearning for stability and the ever-evolving nature of reality. *Autobiography of Red*, by its very essence,

portrays a dearth of a stable backdrop or a fixed phenomenal world. Initially, Geryon's desires are contextualized within the framework of phenomenology. By drawing upon a schizophrenic individual embarking on a walk, it is comprehended that desire encompasses not solely specific individuals or objects but rather the entirety of the environment it traverses—the intricate vibrations and diverse currents to which it aligns, introducing ruptures and captures. It is an ever nomadic and migratory desire.

Photography assumes a significant role in the text, forging a connection with volcanoes. It serves as a prominent medium through which Geryon expresses his autobiography. During his youth, Geryon captures an image of his mother's rosebush as part of a school project. Within the photograph, four of the roses possess a captivating essence: "They stood up straight and pure on the stalk, gripping the dark like prophets, and howling colossal intimacies from the back of their fused throats" (84). This quote provokes an intriguing inquiry about what the notion of colossal intimacy truly encompasses. This exemplifies the intricate relationship between the reality captured by photography and the experiential realm. As a result, the experience and significance of the subject matter fail to fully translate within this autobiographical documentation. "Photography evokes a sense of disturbance, serving as a medium for manipulating perceptual relationships" (51). The presence of volcanic imagery challenges the "perceptual semiotics" linked to photographs and injects dynamism into the narrative. In this context, a significant photograph titled Red Patience, captured by Herakles' grandmother, portrays a volcanic eruption. This image leaves a profound yet disconcerting impact on Geryon. While it falls beyond the purview of his autobiographical endeavour, it symbolizes the inherent contradiction between the photograph and its intended subject matter. Geryon describes it as a frozen moment encapsulating fifteen distinct instances, spanning nine hundred seconds of ascending bombs and descending ash (60).

This scope of all-encompassing love is manifest in Geryon's encounters. When Geryon first encounters Herakles in fragment VII, aptly titled CHANGE, the previously perceived logical world collapses. While the surface meaning of "change" refers to the quarters Herakles requests Geryon to lend him. It also hints at the profound shift that occurs as a connection materializes between the two boys. Geryon catches sight of Herakles for the very first time as he steps off a New Mexico bus, and in that moment, "the world poured back and forth between their eyes once or twice" (39). The powerful bond they forge draws the surrounding world into its current, unsettling what would traditionally serve as a mere backdrop. Their meeting causes "the huge night [to] move overhead, scattering drops of itself" (39). Geryon's narrative position undergoes a displacement within the text, blurring the demarcation of voice, leading to uncertainty. This ambiguity permeates the entire text as voices intertwine, making it challenging to discern their origins. The deliberate line breaks, the poetic structure, and unconventional punctuation contribute to the obscurity of the dialogue. It is also worth noting the scarcity of first-person narration and the consequential limited use of the word I within a text that claims to be autobiographical.

The transformation is evident in the significant passage known as SPACE AND TIME, commencing with a statement or perhaps a question—a cautious, tentative endeavour to ascertain truth. When confronted with another human being, one's established methodologies acquire definition. However, this assertion is unsettled and disintegrates as the page unfolds. Geryon dedicates all his time to Herakles, which alters his self-perception not towards a more distinct identity, but rather exposes him to the point of dissolution. The moment of intimacy, shared between them, drains his very essence of existence, leaving mere

apparitions, rustling like an ancient map. He finds himself unable to communicate with anyone. He experiences a sense of detachment and lustrous fragility. Numerous elements are at play here. Once again, an entire world is at stake. The bond between the lovers creates a novel instant of intimacy, embodying the transformative and generative potency of desire. Simultaneously, as the world around them undergoes a shift, Geryon feels his essence unravelling. Engaging in conversation with his mother in the kitchen, he grapples with the grasp of his reality. Being in love results in "my realms being beyond reach" (Deleuze et al. 282).

This positioning of the self, engendered by deterritorialization, is interpreted as instances of becoming-imperceptible. Within Deleuze and Guattari's conceptual framework, becoming-imperceptible is intricately intertwined with the movement of desire. It represents the culmination of all becomings; the limit towards which being strives while simultaneously recoiling from it. Similar to all becomings, becoming-imperceptible is not a constant state of existence; rather, Deleuze and Guattari describe it as a moment—a comprehensive and rhizomatic process of perception, the juncture where desire and perception merge (283). In the realm of becoming-imperceptible, "perception will no longer reside in the relationship between a subject and an object, but rather in the movement that serves as the boundary of that relationship, in the timeframe associated with the subject and object" (262). The aforementioned limit is exemplified in *SPACE AND TIME*, concluding with a thought-provoking inquiry that reverberates throughout the entire text: "How does distance appear?" (43) This straightforward question extends its reach from an unbounded inner realm to the periphery of what can be cherished, relying on the presence of light. The location of the self within this quote becomes a matter of scrutiny as to where the self positions itself in relation to distance. Notably, there exists no focal point from which distance can be precisely delineated. The terms Distance and Within are both imbued with uncertainty through the utilization of the verb Look to gauge distance, along with the seemingly paradoxical notion of a Spaceless Within. The notion of Look itself becomes intricate when it cannot be associated with a confined interior space. Furthermore, it unfolds the formation of a territory. The territory of the self is contingent upon the movements of desire rather than a fixed position of interiority. The self in this context is spaceless, signifying that the boundary lies not within the self, but rather it emerges as a consequence of love's movements and its boundaries. Perception is displaced, as the act of looking at distance is now confined within the parameters of this territory engendered by the impetus of desire.

In a separate context, Geryon finds himself grappling with his desires while parked in a car alongside Herakles on a highway. Herakles proposes that sexual intercourse serves as a means of truly understanding someone (44). This notion is accompanied by a vivid description of desire, symbolized by the evocative sound of fishhooks scraping the depths of the world. Herakles claims "Sex is a way of getting to know someone" (44). Within this powerful moment, conventional logics become undone, transcending what Murray refers to as the imperialism of the eye. The implications extend beyond personal ego and encompass a depersonalization that permits desire to flourish. West-Pavlov writes: "Depersonalization allows the connectivity of desire to have full rein". As, Herakles speaks, his voice engulfs Geryon, causing him to open up and expose himself vulnerably. Herakles speaks in the car and "his voice washed / Geryon open.". (44) This openness, coupled with enigmatic imagery employed throughout the passage, vividly depicts the immense force of desire. It signifies something that surpasses the realm of visual perception, confounding the notion of a truth or

reality as witnessed by the eye, ultimately rejecting the conventional question-answer framework.

Drawing inspiration from Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy, Geryon becomes akin to grass—a being that transcends boundaries and becomes intertwined with the world, transforming everything and everyone into a continuous process of becoming. This interconnectedness emerges due to his ability to foster a communicative world and suppress within himself any hindrances that impede seamless integration and growth amidst the fabric of existence. The encounter Geryon has with the grass and roses is encapsulated in the fragment titled MITWELT, also the name of the café he frequents in Buenos Aires. The term MITWELT resonates with Heidegger's phenomenological concept denoting the world we coexist within. Subsequently, a statement follows the title: "There is no person without a world" ("Autobiography of Red"). This, in conjunction with the fragment's name and the narrative's relocation to Argentina, accentuates Geryon's inner struggle to find his place. He experiences a sensation of gradually slipping away from the surface of his immediate surroundings, comparable to an olive sliding off a plate. Once the plate reaches an inclination of thirty degrees, Geryon feels he will vanish into his own emptiness, into the void that engulfs him.

Remarkably, throughout *Autobiography of Red*, Geryon's redness remains unremarked upon. Thus, eluding any visible characteristic. This uncertainty surrounding the reality of being red destabilizes broader concepts at play within the text. Redness, however, transcends a mere metaphor or simile; it embodies a process of becoming. For instance, the author employs phrases like "Intolerable red assault of grass" (118) to evoke a sensation that surges through Geryon akin to a strong color" (118). Redness becomes a feeling, a movement, and even a scent. The association between red and grass is profound, suggesting that red exists as an intermediate position. The flowing lava disrupts the conventional subject-object relationship and challenges the viewer's perception.

One contemplates the individuality ascribed to a specific colour, as expressed by Stesichoros: "Indeed, it is the colour red that captivates my affinity, drawing a connection between geology and character" (149). The concept of being "red" and its geological implications are enigmatic and multifaceted within the context of the selected text. The notion of an autobiography of red signifies the colour's association with both, volcanic elements and desire. Nevertheless, the meaning of red remains elusive and constantly evolving throughout the narrative. Leif Erik Schenstead-Harris in his research titled "The Monstrosity of Anne Carson's *Autobiography of Red*" argues that redness represents the only assured quality pertaining to Geryon, yet the certainty of red remains uncertain (Schenstead-Harris 6). In a moment of heartbreak at a bookstore in Buenos Aires, Geryon encounters a book titled *Philosophical Problems*, where a passage emphasizes the impossibility of fully understanding how different individuals perceive the colour red. This realization of consciousness disconnect emerges after a breakdown in communication, challenging the initial assumption of a unified understanding.

The presence and role of red in the text undermines the notion that seeing is a definitive way of comprehending the world. Sight implies a knowing subject, detached from its surroundings, who appropriates and interprets the environment. The pronoun I is sparingly used throughout the text, and the absence of an I or eye is more than a mere wordplay. The displacement of the I/eye signifies a shift in subjectivity, distancing itself from the conventional logic of vision. Stuart J. Murray suggests that Geryon in Carson's work compels

the readers to reevaluate the body as the locus of experience and meaningful existence. The concept of body can be interpreted in various ways, but following Murray's proposition, it signifies an immanent aspect of Geryon's experiences. When Geryon encounters Herakles, the moment is described as "one of those moments / that is the opposite of blindness" (39). However, the antithesis of blindness between them does not involve conventional seeing. The relationship between the self, referred to as I or eye, and the external world can be viewed as an ongoing dialogue characterized by questions and answers. This dynamic is hinted at in Appendix C, which precedes the main narrative and addresses the unresolved issue of Stesichoros' blinding by Helen (18). The argument presented in the appendix challenges the established framework of this relationship. Despite the question being raised, it remains unanswered, never progressing beyond the dilemma of whether Stesichoros was blind or not, leading to a circularity that disrupts the conventional understanding of truth and perception. Consequently, the world appears distorted, as if viewed from an inverted perspective: "now that we are in reverse the whole landscape looks inside out" (19). Towards the end of the text, during an interview with Stesichoros, the notion of seeing or looking becomes even more intricate. Stesichoros remarks, "I was (very simply) in charge of seeing for the world after all seeing is just a substance" (19). It is noteworthy that the concept of seeing is repositioned as an embodied experience, emphasizing its inherent connection to the physical self rather than suggesting a separate entity detached from the world.

Conclusion

The research affirms that for Geryon, the significance of being red holds deeper implications than the fear of being ridiculed, which he has learned to endure as a winged red individual in his everyday life. Rather, it is the profound abandonment of his own thoughts and consciousness that plunges him into despair. The essence of being red does not solely pertain to external visibility or the reactions of others. Instead, it intertwines with the concept of his mind becoming an empty void, symbolized by the blank desertion he experiences. This contemplation of the vacant space within his mind leads Geryon to ponder the relationship between colours and sound in the natural world surrounding him. He recollects a specific moment when he began questioning the auditory manifestations of colours: "It was the year he began to wonder about the noise that colours make. Roses came roaring across the garden at him. During nighttime, he would lie in bed and listen to the resounding luminescence of stars colliding against the window screen" (Carson 146). In this peculiar state, he perceives the cries of roses and the rustling of grass. While roses are commonly associated with the colour red, it is as if Geryon's sense of self has been displaced, or rather, emanates not from an inner confined space but rather exists within the realm of roses, stars, and the murmuring grass, through which he establishes a form of communication. He embodies the notion of being red as an ever-constant movement towards imperceptibility.

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