Para-s/cite

Constantine V. Nakassis
cnakassi@uchicago.edu

Part II. The Paracite

In the first part of this essay—"The Parasite"—I explored the (meta)semiotics of citation. In this second part of the essay I extend this discussion through an investigation of brand citations/parasites. I give particular attention to brand citations which exceed themselves *as* citations/brands. I call such acts *paracites*. In order to contextualize this argument, I briefly reprise part I's discussion of the citation vis-à-vis Derrida's engagement with speech act theory. I then turn to the brand and its paracites, focusing on my own ethnographic work on youth fashion in Tamil Nadu, India. I conclude with methodological reflections on how best to study paracites.

From parasites to paracites

As discussed in part I, citations are "parasitical" acts, acts which re-present some event of semiosis in a context alien to its putative origin. In doing so citations bracket or denude something of what is cited, breathing life into another's voice through one's own voice, a "ventriloquation" (Bakhtin 1982) that places but displaces the cited. Quotations are the most canonical examples of citations, though citational acts include many more types of acts: allusion, homage, pretence, parody, drag, mimicry, mockery, imitation, and many others beside. All such acts, *as* citations, are constituted by polyphony, a double motion between re-presentation and absence, identification and differentiation, between sharing form or substance while marking difference.

This double motion lends the citation performative force, what Jacques Derrida (1988)—in his deconstructive engagements with his dear Johns, namely, Austin and Searle—calls the *iterability*, or *citationality*, of the sign. Iterability describes that play between what Peirce (1988) called *token* and *type,* the capacity of every sign to be repeated across contexts, to maintain some identity (or type) in every uniquely singular, novel iteration (or token). As Derrida (1988:15) argues, citationality is that "necessary possibility" that hovers around every act, the necessity that it *could be* cited. If the citation is a "parasite" on that which it cites, as Austin (1962:21–22) suggests, then this parasitability resides within all signs. As I suggested, however, a citation isn't a citation if it isn't seen as metacommunicating that it is not(-quite) what it presences. Indeed, an act that doesn't disavow, or isn't seen as disavowing, that which it presences is not a citation at all.

In part I argued that this reflexivity is (performatively) materialized in the texture of Derrida's deconstructive method and its poetics, though it is muted in his explicit statements about citationality. Let us pick up the thread of this argument again in Derrida's response to Searle's *Reply* to Derrida's reading of Austin. In responding to and rejecting Searle's (1977) argument that it is not iterability but *permanence* that characterizes the written word, Derrida writes:

> Iterability supposes a minimal remainder (as well as a minimum of idealization) in order that the identity of the *selfsame* be repeatable and identifiable *in, through,* and even *in view of* its alteration. For the structure of iteration . . . . implies *both* identity *and* difference. (Derrida 1988:53)

But if reflexivity is key to constituting the citation/iteration and its performativity, does iterability *always* imply both identity and difference, as Derrida implies? Or is the question of identity and/or difference always the *achievement* of some metasemiotic formulation ('*that-there* is the same/different as *this-here*') in a particular context for a particular audience (i.e., relative to some social domain), much as a performative utterance is only ever an achievement, never pregiven or guaranteed except as ratified and taken up? Or put differently, are there some repetitions which so radically undermine the identity of that which is repeated that "it" is not "itself" anymore, and thus perhaps not even a citation/iteration? Are there moments when the sign is, in fact, no longer a sign at all, but something of a totally different ontology altogether? When a word is only sonic energy, when a dollar bill is just fuel for the flame? (As the American rapper Nas sings, "Stash loot in fly clothes, burning dollars to light my stove.") And what do such actualities—that is, moments when the "selfsame" is not itself—*do* to the "necessary possibility" of iterability? What happens when the bottom falls out from under semiosis, where token and type are rendered asunder? Below I explore how the (meta)semiotic dynamics of the citation contribute to this rendering asunder, to the beyond of sameness and difference. In such cases the citation exceeds itself *as* a citation. It stands beyond and beside its status as a citation. This is the question of what I call the *paracite*.

Brands and their parasites

Derrida (1988:106) says in "Limited Inc a b c. . ." that the "object" of *Sec* is, in fact, copyright, that authorizing discourse that attempts to police and control the play of commodity-text iterability. Derrida's seriously parodic, and parodically serious, (non-)encounter with Searle's speech act theory begins with a reflection on what it means for Searle to have appended a hand-written "Copyright © 1977 by John R. Searle" to the pre-publication copy of his *Reply*, sent to Derrida in 1976. What was this present-future claim to the authorship and authority over, and the authenticity and ownership of, the (con)texts within the copyright's citational frame, namely, the essay which it surveils from the margin of the page and all its iterations? What are its aspirations to take on—or illegitimately usurp, as Derrida paints it—the inheritance of the Austinian proper name and intellectual property? And what, Derrida asks, happens when we cite Searle's copyright, when we repeat it, lifting it out of its original context into another by repeatedly putting it in quotes:

> "Copyright © 1977 by John R. Searle"? (p. 30)
> " "Copyright © 1977 by John R. Searle" "? (p. 30)
> " " "Copyright © 1977 by John R. Searle" " " ? (p. 31)

Derrida writes:

> The use of this mention . . . would have lost all value in 1976 . . . or in another place, or between quotation marks, as is *here* the case, in the middle of a page that no normal person (except, perhaps, myself) would dream of attributing to the hand of John R. Searle. (Derrida 1988:30)

Such citations, Derrida suggests, undermine the value and the performativity of the copyright and its author. And yet, to be an authorizing mark of property, the mark must be iterable, repeatable across instances and yet unique in each instance. Any copyright, like any signature, can, and in a sense must, then, already be a copy, and thus liable to being forged, stolen, and

counterfeited, just as any performative can be cited and parasited. Intellectual property and infringement, host and parasite, stand apart and together, but also, paradoxically, one inside the other. So Derrida argues.

What is the performative effect of Derrida's citations of Searle's copyright? As Derrida notes, with these iterated citations we have left, or stepped beyond, the realm of copyright proper. What remains and has crossed over is something more than the seal of Searle, something backed by a force other than the (mark of the) state. What exteriorities might such citations open up? Let me suggest one: with Derrida's citations, having left one realm of property—the copyrighted commodity-text—we have entered another: that of the trademark and its brand, that immaterialized commodity ontology that, within the cosmology of late capitalism, imputes to its commoditized instantiations a brand "essence," "personality," and even consumer lifestyle and community (Mazzarella 2003; Nakassis 2012a, 2012b). Indeed, what is at issue in Derrida and Searle's (non-)encounter if not the (competing) brands "Speech Act Theory" and "Deconstruction"?

Whose brand is invoked by Derrida's citation of Searle's *Reply*? Derrida's quotation of Searle's copyright does not operate under the umbrella of Searle's author/brand-function, though it operates through it. Derrida undermines and scrambles Searle's brand through his appropriation. We might say that *Limited Inc* is a type of adbusting or culture jamming. It is a rebranding, or less euphemistically, a "tarnishment" and "dilution" of the corporate entity designated by Searle's, now *Sarl*'s, busted/jammed brand name. These citations speak instead with another voice from a different brand sponsor. They speak as Derrida's own trademark, under the aegis of Derrida's own immaterial brand identity / personality / lifestyle / image / community, namely, "Deconstruction." (One can almost hear the echoes of another great 1970s feud, between Billy Martin and George Steinbrenner, and its own mediatized brand marketing campaign: "Tastes great, John," "Less filling, Jacques!")

How might we understand the brand through this discussion of parasites and citations? As I have argued elsewhere (Nakassis 2012a, 2012b, 2013a, n.d.), the brand always implies its counterfeits, what I have called its *surfeits*, those excesses of materiality and meaning which cite and parasite the brand. Is not a fake Louis Vuitton handbag, for example, a parasite on the Louis Vuitton brand identity, dissimulating itself as the "real" thing when it is only a "fake"? Or if known to be a "fake," isn't its knowing wink a wink that requires our recognition of and desire for Louis Vuitton and its brand image? Isn't the "pirate" a mooch on another's intellectual property, an interloper to capital's party, a crasher who doesn't just show up without an invite but ruins the fun, sullying the name of the host and stealing his silver(ware) and gold in one and the same movement? And isn't the semiotic form of this parasitism citational? Does it not involve the re-presentation of an absent brand form enclosed within "quotation marks," which, if the surfeit is, indeed, to be a surfeit, must be reflexively framed as not(-quite) an instance of the "real" brand "original" that it invokes?

At its legal inception in the second half of the nineteenth century, the trademark was a "mark of liability," an index that uniquely pointed to the production origin of a good, a way to guarantee commodity quality, as well as to guide consumers by the reputation of its producer (Coombe 1998; Bently 2008). Such a legally protected mark was necessary given the increasing inscrutability of the commodity form in Anglo-American markets (Wilkins 1992). In a situation where commodities were increasingly mass-produced in sites distant from their point of sale, where commodity quality and origin were often unknown and unknowable by consumers, and thus where goods were easily counterfeited, a supplemental (meta)communication was

necessary, some trustworthy mark which could authorize the commodity's provenance, which could make present the absent producer, or, at least, his spectral surrogate, his so-called "goodwill." Through the medium of that mark, the qualities of the product could come to project that reputation. In this sense, reputation, or "brand image" as we might say today, was derived from the commodity, carried by it, emergent out of it, parasitic on it. The trademark, as this image's congealed commoditized form, was an add-on to protect from the menace of the pirate, to compensate for the vacuousness of the commodity.

Today we find this semiotic relation inverted. No longer a commodity epiphenomenon, the brand and its marks have increasingly been, since the 1920s at least (Schechter 1927), seen as the origin of commodity value itself. In this fetish inversion, the commodity form is formulated as simply a manifestation of the brand's primacy, only existing to bring to earth its heavenly, sublime form (Manning 2010). We might say, then, that today it is the commodity which is parasitic on the brand. It is the commodity which must cite the brand in order to accrue value and circulate in the market (Nakassis 2012b). This reversal of parasite and host reverberates throughout contemporary business practice and legal regimes.

Intellectual property law in the late twentieth century has steadily reformulated the trademark's mandate. Less and less to protect consumers against "consumer confusion," to make producers liable for the quality of their wares, or to rationalize the market vis-à-vis consumer choice (Klein 2000; Lury 2004), increasingly the trademark functions as a legally protectable fraction of the *brand* that it invokes, as an immaterial asset of the corporation who holds its intellectual property, its so-called "brand equity" (Aaker 1991; Arvidsson 2005). Through the trademark, today the law protects the brand from "dilution," from "tarnishment" (Davis 2008; Ginsburg 2008). It protects the hard work of marketers to build up a brand image and personality as such.

The increased importance of the brand to business practice (Arvidsson 2005) also speaks to this reversal of host and parasite. This shift was heralded early on in marketing circles by Burleigh Gardner and Sidney Levy in their oft-cited paper, "The Product and the Brand":

> A brand name is more than the label employed to differentiate among the manufacturers of a product. It is a complex symbol that represents a variety of ideas and attributes. . . . The net result is a public image, a character or personality that may be more important for the overall status (and sales) of the brand than many technical facts about the product. (Gardner and Levy 1955:34)

Or, as Naomi Klein (2000:22) cites Phil Knight, then CEO of Nike, as saying:

> For years we thought of ourselves as a production-oriented company, meaning we put all our emphasis on designing and manufacturing the product. But now we understand that the most important thing we do is market the product. We've come around to saying that Nike is a marketing-oriented company, and the product is our most important marketing tool.

The increasing centrality of the brand and its marketing has gone hand in hand with the increasing concern over the vulnerability of that immaterial, ephemeral "image," a concern with the continual possibility of the brand's inappropriation and citation. If the brand's value and performativity is constituted by its "meanings" among its consumer publics, then the brand is promiscuously accessible to anyone who can speak about it (Manning 2010). Always liable to

suffer libel, as a parasite itself the brand and its "image" are ever susceptible to parasitism. "Fake" Louis Vuitton handbags don't simply take profits from Louis Vuitton (if indeed they do that), they also (supposedly) taint the image of the brand which they cite, sullying its exclusivity. The differential meanings of such unauthorized iterations threaten to stick to the brand, to undermine its "code." They threaten to deconstruct it. Such disruptive iterations might even include citations which are not commodities as such, such as the University of Pennsylvania's Law School's playful use of the Louis Vuitton trademarked Toile Monogram (dare I reproduce it here?) in a poster for its symposium on fashion law (Figure 1).

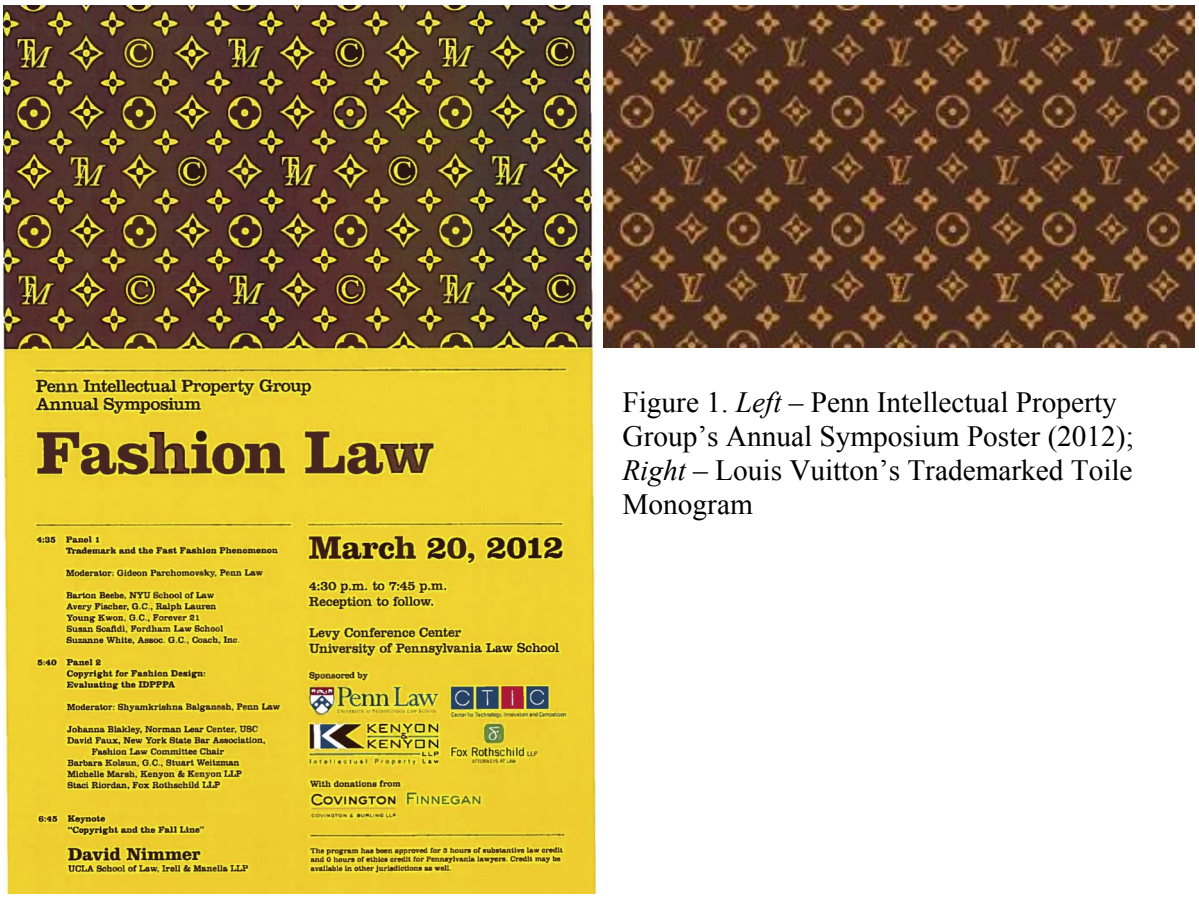

Figure 1. *Left* – Penn Intellectual Property Group's Annual Symposium Poster (2012); *Right* – Louis Vuitton's Trademarked Toile Monogram

Louis Vuitton, if rather absurdly (though this is the point, in the contemporary context such absurdities are thinkable as not absurd at all), threatened infringement, citing the poster's "dilution" of the brand and its potential creation of consumer confusion.[1] This necessary possibility that parasites *might* menace the brand's immaterial value and image is enough to trigger (the citational threat of) using the law by intellectual property holders.[2]

The parasite's menace is not, however, simply an issue of profits or of symbolic value. It is often framed as an issue of security. Like those counterfeit guests who crashed a 2009 White House dinner party in honor of Manmohan Singh, Tareq and Michaele Salahi[3]—in "reality," as it later turned out, televisual parasites of a different kind of *oikos*—the counterfeit causes a scandal not simply of impropriety but of safety. Parasiting and illegitimate citation are not simply unfair. In many parts of the world they are framed by political discourse and attendant legal regimes as criminal (Thomas 2009, 2013). As M.I.A. named her intellectual property flaunting mix-tape,

parodically reanimating post-9/11 discourse on the threat of piracy, "Piracy Funds Terrorism."[4] (In this case, piracy funded her career, this mix-tape simply being the first step in marketing her own celebrity brand.)

"Rules are meant to be broken" . . . Like the host and its parasites, the brand requires its surfeits, those illegitimate citations of the "original." The brand and its parasites are co-eval. They mutually constitute each other's bodies, each other's souls. We might even suggest from our discussion above that the surfeit precedes the brand. Indeed, does not the brand as a legal entity already anticipate this parasitism, this illegality? Isn't this parasitism thus already at the heart of the brand host, just as the parasite cannot do without the host's hostile hospitality? The "fake" is always already implied by the "real" so as to be excluded from its authenticity and authority, so as to serve as the constitutive outside from which that authority is sited, from which its safety is guaranteed (Coombe 1998; Nakassis 2012a, 2012b). But is that all? Or is there something beyond these tired binaries that are caught in the thrall of the brand?

Brands and their paracites

What are the limits and boundaries of these citational relationships, of the enclosure that contains the brand and its surfeits? If every brand citation introduces its own differences, if each fake alters the brand image, if adbusting mars the brand's "personality," does this also imply that the brand always and necessarily remains as the center of gravity of this citational economy and politics? Is indeed, the brand the navel of the ever-expanding commoditized universe, at which we cannot help but gaze? And if not, when do such citations of the brand cease to be citations as such, to be tethered by the brand? What becomes of the citation beyond and beside itself? This is the question of the paracite*,* the indifference that stands alongside, and beyond, the play of iterability, repetition/difference, the parasite.

My ethnographic research on brand fashion among young lower-middle- and middle-class young men in urban Tamil Nadu, India offers some insight into these issues (see Nakassis 2012a, 2013b, n.d.). Such youth are largely, but not totally, invisible to international designer and sports brand marketing. They are on the periphery of the authorized fashion brand's umbra. While some global brands like Nike and Reebok have priced down some of their apparel so as to appeal to this large, but relatively poor, demographic, by and large these youth consume on the margins of the global economy, in local "counterfeit" and export-surplus markets that are in little to no substantive competition with authorized brand commodities (Nakassis 2012a). Of course, being on the periphery does not imply that there is a shortage of global brand*ed* forms available to such youth. Global branded forms are everywhere these youth are, pixilated on their cell phone screen savers, silk-screened on their shirts, embroidered on their jeans, puncturing their ear lobes, decorating their hats, watches, wallets, bracelets, bags, shoes and slippers (see Figures 2–8). The branded forms these youth display on their bodies are overwhelmingly, almost exclusively, non-authorized: they are export surplus, defects, or locally-produced copies/interpretations of brand apparel. Such surfeits always betray this distance and difference from the "real" thing in their material form: a misspelled name, a slightly distorted logo, a combination of logos and names from different brands, a different cut or design, cheaper quality fabric, a ripped or X-ed out label (in the case of export-surplus apparel), and so on.

Figure 2. Diesel Shirt (Madurai, 2008)

Figure 3. Yamaha Jeans (Chennai, 2008)

Figure 4. Puma Logo Earring (Madurai, 2010)

Figure 5. Ferarri Wallet (Chennai, 2008)

Figure 6. Levie's Slippers (Chennai, 2008)

Figure 7. Pumaa and Poma Bags (Chennai, 2011)

Figure 8. Nice Hat (Madurai, 2007)

Such material differences inscribe, and are mirrored by, the brand indifference of the youth who consume such apparel. These youth were largely indifferent to the very brands that their garments re-animated/altered, which is to say that while brands proliferate in Tamil Nadu, iterated in myriad forms, recombined, redesigned, and refashioned, the youth who most avidly consume them don't seem to care about what the brands that are being cited are, where they are from, what their "image" or identity is, or whether they are authentic. This is an uncanny brand landscape split by difference and indifference, where authenticity and fidelity have slipped right through the cracks. What are we to make of this citational surfeit? Brands are everywhere, but who cares? Are they brands at all, and if so, then to whom? Before hazarding answers to these question, let me emphasize what I am not saying. My claim is not that such brand (in)differences are a viable mode of anti-capitalist politics, though perhaps they are. It is not to interpret what these youth do with fashion as a kind of "resistance" to hegemonic forms of global capital, though perhaps we might (see Durham 2008). My claim is also not that these youth do not, in some ways and at some times, participate in the brand universe *as* a brand universe, that they are unaware of the brand and its logics, or that they cannot tell the difference between a "fake" and the "real" thing, for they certainly can and, at times, do. It is also not that, upon closer reflection, what these youth do in their consumption patterns is so different from what people do in brand heartlands either, for it isn't.

What I am interested in, rather, is in detailing how the paracitationality that manifests in these youth's fashion practices acts as a constant force of difference, troubling the brand's coherence and stability by being indifferent to it. Such (in)difference is a necessary possibility that must be actively staved off by the brand metadiscourses of marketing and advertising discussed above. The ideology of brand, its grooves well worn, however, makes such youth's (in)difference, reontologization, and paracitation near invisible to the academic gaze (Nakassis 2012b). At best, the surfeits that proliferate on Tamil youth's bodies appear as exotic exceptions to the brand rule, humorous, if criminal, examples of the not-quite, not-yet of capital's periphery. My interest, then, is to pay close attention to such surfeits and how youth engage with them, foregrounding the quality and sociology of that (in)difference so as to see, on the one hand, what it *does* to the brand and, on the other hand, what it enables vis-à-vis youth practices.

Popular with young, non-elite men in urban Tamil Nadu, branded garments—"real" or "fake"—are what these youth call "*style*," a English loan-word that denotes a local mode of youth subjectivity founded in their discourses and practices of value, social status, and gender. *Style* congeals youth experiences of liminality, transgression, and exclusion (Nakassis 2013b; cf. Hebdige 1979). Roughly glossable as "cool", *style* is an inversion of an adult order of things. It is a youth aesthetic that seizes upon the "foreign" and other social imaginaries of "society's" periphery (e.g., the trappings of film stars, "rowdies" [thugs], non-resident Indians, urban elites, and foreigners), bringing them close, domesticating them to the modes of sociality that constitute youth's peer group interactions. Combing one's hair like a film star is *style.* Speaking English is *style*. Conspicuously smoking a cigarette like a rowdy is *style.* Romantic love, riding a bus on its roof, and whistling in a movie theatre can also do *style*. Branded goods are *style* because they are imagined to participate in elite and Western fashion. They do *style* because they are attention getting. They are extra-ordinary. They aren't "normal." They are "different," gaudy, and colorful. They transgress traditional sartorial forms associated with statusful, adult men, "big men" (*periya āḷuṅka*), whose authority is based on their respectability (*mariyātai*) and prestige (*gauravam*).

From the surface of things, then, it would seem that these youth are square within the ambit of global consumerism and the brand ontology. Their fashion would seem to be straightforward parasites and mimics of the global, derivations that provide yet another example of globalization, or better yet, an instance of "(g)localization," the process by which the "same" global form—in this case, a brand—is assigned different "local" "meanings." The problem with such a formulation, however, is that, as I noted above, these young men, while indeed aesthetically enthralled with *brandedness*—that is, the quality of being *like* a brand garment (Nakassis 2012a, 2012b, n.d.)—did not seem to care, or at least to communicate that they cared, about whether the proper names or logos plastered on their bodies invoked actual brands at all; or if they were brands, what those brands were, what their "image" or "identity" was, what they stood for, where they came from, what kinds of commodities they made, what their reputation was, or whether such forms were authentic instances of those brands or even similar to them. Blank stares and incredulous responses like "no one cares about brands" were common rejoinders to my inquiries about why some youth chose to buy or display some branded form. The shell of the brand is here, but not its soul, a situation akin to those Cuna figurines of Douglas Macarthur that Michael Taussig (1993:10, 134) describes in *Mimesis and Alterity*, citing Chapin (1983:356–357) citing De Smidt (1948:37). Could these surfeits be an example of glocalization if they aren't even instances of the brand anymore? Can they have a "different" meaning if they aren't the "same" thing as such?

Tamil youth's displays cite the absent brand through unauthorized re-presentations of it. But such displays don't cite particular brands. Rather, they cite the brand's ontology, the very idea of the brand, or, at least, their idea of that idea. It is brandedness, being like a brand even if not a brand, that make such garments *style,* that make them objects of youth desire and fashion. Such displays are always already marked as citations. They betray their difference from what they seem to be citing, both materially and through the ways in which they are framed in youth's social interactions. As we noted above, it was clear to everyone from the low-quality fabrics, the misspelled names, and the like that such garments weren't the "real" thing, that they were just "local dummy pieces." It was also known from the fact that most youth didn't have the resources to consume authentic, authorized brand commodities (see Newell 2012), a knowledge which manifested less in discussion about the inauthenticity of such commodities than, as we noted above, youth's indifference to the very question of authenticity (see Vann 2006).

Such garments, then, had everything and nothing to do with brands. They invoked the brand, but differed from and deferred on it. And they reflexively communicated this very fact. But why should that be? If *style* is about differentiation and individuation, and brands do that by bringing the "foreign" and the elite close, then why wouldn't these youth care about the provenance and authenticity of the global, which is to say, non-local, brand? Wouldn't the authentic brand be even that much more *style*? Why brandedness and not brand? And why brandedness and not something else?

Style is performed. Its theatre and laboratory is the peer group, a space that is formed through the common experience of exclusion from an adult order of things, and of the transgression of that order, a pattern common among youth cultures around the world (Willis 1977; Hebdige 1979; Weiss 2002; Durham 2004; Lukose 2009; Jeffrey 2010; Newell 2012). In the South Indian context, this includes the hierarchies of age, kinship, caste, and class that organize the everyday world of adult sociality and which form the grid of intelligibility for adult concepts of respect, prestige, and status (see Nakassis 2013b). As distanced from an adult order of things, the peer group is a space of intimacy, solidarity, and egalitarianism, a space that was supposed to be

outside of such hierarchies, where differences of age, class, caste, or kinship were effaced, denied, bracketed, or simply ignored. *Style* transgressed such adult normativities, inverting their logics and playing with their propriety. While *stylish* brand displays figurate elite personhood and fashion, for such displays to "do *style*" successfully—which is to say, be taken up and ratified by their peers *as stylish*—they should not be taken as *literal* expressions of that elite subjectivity and its fashion sensibilities, which is to say that *style* should never get too close to that which it reanimates, appropriates, and cites. For if it did, it would imply a hierarchical difference within the peer group, a differentiation that would perforate the peer group, disrupt and tear apart the tenuous bonds which formed the very context within which *style* was possible. To do *style* meant never doing too much *style.* Indeed, within youth peer groups, treating the display of a brand garment as authentic or authorized—that is, *as* a brand rather than simply *as if* a brand—would be seen as uppity and arrogant, as improperly acting like a *periya āḷ*, a "big man" or adult. One was guaranteed to be teased, made fun of, or explicitly told to stop showing off. Even those who could consume authentic brands by their class position, often avoided doing so, or ignored or denied the fact that they did, voicing their preference for counterfeit brands instead. Such youth spoke about their authentic brand commodities by couching the brand token's value not in the brand token's status-raising potential but in the brand token's "quality" and "durability." This discourse of quality deflected and disavowed the disruptive power and status that the authentic brand good might otherwise create in the intimacy of one's friend circle. For *style* to be performatively manifest, that which *style* made possible had to be disavowed and bracketed.

One result of this ambivalent dynamic of the peer group—the enabling and disabling of *style,* the necessity of performing status differentiation and individuation in a context which eschewed status differences—was that brand displays, as successful instances of *style,* were always figurative, never literal, always citational and liminal, never self-present or concerned with authenticity. Youth fashion's parasiting of the brand managed this ambivalence. Their indifference mitigated the brand's disruptive powers. The brand always had to be kept "in quotes," its status *as a brand* deflected, denied, and ignored. The brand, in this sense, was not a brand. An instance of brandedness, such displays were a prophylactic abstraction and simulation of the brand. And, through their indifference, reflexively marked as such. Negating the brand allowed some quality of it—its "foreign" aura—to be materialized on the body, allowed it to do *style* without alienating one's peers. Citing the brand enabled one to differentiate one's self while still being part of the peer group.

What is of interest here is how the performativity of *style* and the social horizons of status, aesthetics, subjectivity, and sociality which it presupposes bracket the brand's ontological status *as* brand, requiring it to be not(-quite) a brand. Underwritten by *style,* all the indexical trappings of brand—its logo, proper name, and the like—come to be denuded of their indexical specificity (i.e., their capacity to invoke a brand imaginary, identity, personality, and essence). They vaguely point away from the "local," but seemingly nowhere in particular (at least, with respect to the brand in question). All those brand images and meanings carefully cultivated and curated by marketing departments are out the window the minute that no one knows, or cares to know, the brand as such (Nakassis 2012a). In the context of the peer group, these brand citations seem to cite the brand into non-existence. They mine something of it—its quality of brandedness—and discard the rest—its brand image, its aura of authenticity, its provenance—as detritus. (That detritus is, of course, what defines the brand for marketers and intellectual property owners.) Such extracted qualities, while immanent in the brand form, are freed from it by youth's

paracitations. Set adrift from the brand, such qualities come to take on lives of their own, their semiotic form split into so many fractions, each of which might be maintained or altered across iterations, morphing across time and commodity-host (Figure 9).

Brandedness and *style,* from this point of view, are that glimmer beyond the closure that Derrida (1976:14) discusses as the beyond of deconstruction (see part I), the excess of the citation, a difference untethered by the remainder, an iteration that is not a repetition. And yet, this glimmer is not "yet unnameable", as Derrida would have it. It has a name. It just isn't in the trademark registry. It is called Pumaa, Poma, Ferarri, Levie's, Nice, Peekok, Ludan, Boneno, US395, Champion Fighter, Golden Eagle, Zehewutt, among all the other (im)proper (non-)brand names that pepper the fashion landscape of urban Tamil Nadu, signs illegitimate and often unintelligible in the eyes of intellectual property law, yet ubiquitous in Tamil youth fashion.

(Chennai, 2008)

(Chennai, 2011)

(Chennai, 2011)

(Madurai, 2011)

Figure 9. Iterations on a Surfeit Theme

This citation of the brand ontology through such brand indifferent/differentiated surfeits is paracitational. Such citations are, by the very machinations of their citationality, beyond, beside, and not-yet/quite citational anymore. They are acts that are and are not citations, that are

and that suspend the things they cite. Through their indifference such acts negate their reflexive status as citations even as they bear their material marks.

Paracitationality is performative. The paracite is that citational act which brackets the very ontology of the form it cites, which brackets its own status as citation, and in doing so extracts from it some other social horizon of possibility, of material form, social meaning, and performative force. All citations have this potentiality in them, necessarily perhaps. But not all actualize it, or actualize it fully. Tamil youth's brand fashion, for/through all its indifferences and differences, opens this horizon. This isn't to say that such fashion practices ever fully reside in this beyond (though they often do for a time), that they ever discard the brand completely and finally. Rather, it is to say that in their not-quiteness they succeed, in some measure, at displacing the brand and its forms of intelligibility. They performatively place something else in the space of the brand, what Tamil youth call *style*.

Like difference, of course, indifference is a "shifter" (Jakobson 1990[1957]), an indexical sign relative to, and tethered by, some point of view: different from what, indifferent to what? If youth's paracitations go beyond the brand, can we still ask such questions? Or must we ask them, but keep them in quotes, always with the hope of opening another horizon of engagement and questioning by which to ask differently?

Party crashers

What is this beyond of the brand? And can we only specify it negatively? To the first question, we answer: it is *style*. To the second, we cite the first and say, no. The ethnographic study of *style* offers a preliminary avenue to answer both these questions, to look for a positivity underwriting alterity, and to look for the continuity that makes such alterity not simply radical difference, but the play of difference and indifference, what I have been calling the paracite. The study of any brand phenomenon must confront this necessarily possible exteriority (Nakassis 2012b, 2013a), the beyond and outside introduced and induced by the (para)citation, not simply as an exteriority to some more primary center (the brand), but rather as a ethnographic site of inquiry unto itself, not a simple para-site, a side dish in anticipation of the meal's main course, but as the plat de résistance.

As Mikhail Bakhtin (1982) and Valentin Voloshinov (1973) long ago pointed out, a citation is the meeting of voices in a single act, a "border zone" and moment of contact between ideologies, ontologies, aesthetics, epochs, and subjectivities. This makes the citation a singular act that is always more than one. It is an act which re-presents another act and, in that splitting/doubling, is a distinct act unto itself. As I have emphasized, it is the *reflexive* form of the citation that makes this possible. The reflexive structure of the citational act is key, for it means that to do the work of citation the citation must formulate itself, or be so construed, as a particular kind of act: in a metapragmatic word, as a citation. As Tamil youth's fashion practices show us, for a citation to be a citation it has to mark its difference from that which it cites (which implies inscribing a sameness as well, hence the "brand" in *brand*edness). But it also shows that the voicing that makes the citational act multiple and liminal—a brand and not a brand—also has its own accent, an accent which opens up other social projects and performativities that are orthogonal to and semi-independent of the act in question *as an act of citation*. Which is to say that a citation is never just a citation, but is always also something more. This exteriority to the citational act is what I have called its paracitationality. As citations themselves, paracites are doubly split: they are citations (and reflexively formulate this fact) *and* they are performative acts in their own right. They are acts which do their work in the space opened by the citation,

through the decentering and bracketing of that which is cited. But they cannot be reduced to the conditions of possibility of that space. They exceed it. Of course, this was Austin's (1962) point about performatives. Performatives bracket issues of truth through their citational frame (Lee 1997; Nakassis 2013c) and in doing so open up a different dimension of utterance quality, what Austin called "(un)happiness" (or appropriateness to context/convention). (Un)happiness cannot be reduced, however, to propositionality or truth, even as it emerges through them. And as Derrida pointed out, performatives themselves can be cited (and those citations cited *ad infinitum*), multiplying such para-sites of (para)citationality.

I would like to conclude with a return to the question of method, with which I also concluded part I of this essay. Ethnography affords an important vantage by which to explore the paracite.[5] Derrida's (1981:3) "paleonymics" argues that problematic, opposing terms—say "brand"/"counterfeit"—can never simply be disregarded, passed over by neologism or ignored. This is precisely because they form the very epistemic conditions of possibility for that act of disregard. To ignore this complicity is to be complicitous in the very hierarchical oppositions that one hopes to escape. One must, instead, use and reuse such terms, make old discourses speak with new voices, cite until self-difference. Such paleonymics, it seems to me, however, only holds to the extent that the metaphysical enclosure within which the act of deconstruction "takes place" is as coherent and self-enclosed—even if simultaneously "divided, differentiated, and stratified" (Derrida 1976:6)—as deconstruction assumes. What the Tamil case suggests, however, is that the social universe is filled with differences, indifferences, ignorances, alterities, and contingencies that sit uneasily with the rather narrow (and perhaps also ethnocentric) concerns of Western metaphysics and its deconstruction. Such (in)differences problematize that the metaphysical closure ever has much closure at all. To see this, however, requires an openness to such alterity, an openness that is as much methodological as ethical. Put as a question, is the glimmer beyond the closure only ever yet unnameable relative to some limited vantage afforded by our encounter with the text under deconstruction? Is paleonymics only necessitated because of the method through which it speaks? Which is also to say, is it imposed by deconstruction's (narrow) view*ing* of the text, its methodological encounter with its object of inquiry? This isn't the claim that deconstruction theoretically views the "text" narrowly, for it famously does just the opposite (Derrida 1976:163). Rather, it is that, *methodologically,* deconstruction proceeds through a practice that is narrow and conservative in its artefactual focus: it is, at the end of the day, a form of reading contained, by choice or disciplinary habit, within a textualist methodological enclosure. But what are the conditions under which the (en)closure is, indeed, a(n en)closure? What reflexive practices underwrite and constitute the (en)closure? And are we, and if so, when are we, necessarily beholden to them? Or do we need a different epistemology, and thus ontology, of the party and hospitality? And through what method might we formulate this?

Acknowledgments. Thanks to Paul Manning for prompting me to write this essay, and for his helpful feedback in revising it.

Notes

1. For a copy of the letter sent by Louis Vuitton's counsel, see https://www.law.upenn.edu/fac/pwagner/DropBox/lv_letter.pdf. For the response from the University's Associate General Counsel, Mr. Firestone, see https://www.law.upenn.edu/fac/pwagner/DropBox/penn_ogc_letter.pdf.
2. The reflexive apprehension of this fact resonates into proleptic anticipations of this necessary possibility beyond any actual uses of the law, a kind of sonic boom whose cacophony censors without ever having to actually be heard. To take an example familiar to me, an older draft of my 2012 *American Anthropologist* article "Brand, Citationality,

Performativity" contained a screen shot of a still from an Apple advertisement, which I had captured from a youtube video posted online. As necessitated by the publisher, I contacted Apple for "permissions," even though by all accounts such a usage was "fair." Apple denied my request. (Instead, I cited the youtube video and described the video's relevant contents.) The ability to re-produce this visual image was policed not by an actual (or even potentially actual) case that could be won under the law, but by the instantiation of a policy which presumes upon, inscribing in anticipation, the necessary possibility that such a case *could* be brought (a bringing that, even if unsuccessful, would entail its own costs, of course). Without "permission," an image is not allowed to speak a thousand words. In this case, less than one-hundred had to suffice.

3. http://www.cnn.com/2009/POLITICS/11/25/state.dinner.crashers/index.html, accessed December 5, 2012.

4. On this discursive linkage between "piracy" and terrorism in the early 2000s, see http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2004/jul/13/ukcrime.film, http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/03/21/1047749921225.html, or in the US more recently, see http://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2008/03/us-attorney-general-piracy-funds-terror/.

5. In comparison to the theorization of the exteriority of the brand from the perspective of marketers and the law, the rich and growing anthropological literature on brands and their surfeits demonstrates how ethnography of the surfeit affords a unique perspective on the whats and whens of brand (see http://nakassis.com/constantine/anth_of_brand_counterfeits/ for a bibliography of this growing literature).

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