

Distractus Refractus Ontologicus: The Dissemination of Michael Martone

by Josh Maday

1 Michael Martone is Michael Martone.

1.1 Michael Martone begins, middles, and ends
Michael Martone.

1.12 Michael Martone is this, that, and the other
Michael Martone.

1.13 Michael Martone is not, however, every Michael
Martone.

1.131 A Google search will support this, though not
conclusively, because this Michael Martone may in fact be that and/
or the other Michael Martone—Michael Martone the locksmith, the
winemaker, the writer, the judge, the hockey player, the teacher; the
fourth grader staring at the mirror reflecting the image of Michael
Martone back into Michael Martone, where Michael Martone is
appropriated, refracted, disseminated. Or vice versa.

2 Michael Martone is a fiction.

NOTE: Any similarity to real persons, living or
dead, is coincidental due to the fact that Michael happens to be a
very popular name, and Martone is unlikely to have been the
invention of any particular Martone alive in the past century.

Michael Martone, despite and due to the wishes,
imaginings, and varying qualities of effort of Michael Martone, is
consumed, digested, and defecated; absorbed and reconstituted by
the system, his acidic formal content neutralized by commodification
in the capitalist market economy.

- 2.01 Marilyn Monroe, Marilyn Manson, Eminem, etc, [. . .] Michael Martone.
- 2.011 George Orwell, George Sand, George Eliot, Lewis Carroll, Stendhal, Saki, JT LeRoy, Dr. Seuss, etc, etc, [. . .] Michael Martone.
- 2.0111 ((([. . .], (Descartes), (Leibniz), (Rousseau), (Hume), (Kant), (Hegel), (Kierkegaard), (Nietzsche), (Husserl), (Heidegger), ((Blanchot), (Deleuze), ((Foucault), (Jacques Derrida)), (Barthes))), [. . .], Borges), Barthelme, Barth, [. . .], Michael Martone, [. . .], etc, etc, [. . .] . . .)

NOTE: This is only a single thread, one meandering stairway in the Escherian algorithm of world history. A comprehensive schematic can be found running backwards through any prism, or by playing a vinyl record in reverse. Or visiting a rope maker. Or tracing a birth (live, still, or partial) back to its origin.

ALSO NOTE: The universe is located in the ellipsis, the comma, and the space.

FURTHER NOTE: God lives in the footnotes (but not intratextual notes such as this, so God is not here).

2.012 Michael Martone is a certain, specific, particular Michael Martone who is particularly particular about being referred to as Michael Martone.

2.0121 Michael Martone is fond of the name "Michael Martone" said in just this way, though with varying emphasis depending on where in the succession of Michael Martones a certain Michael Martone is situated.

2.0211 Michael Martone is a mantra, a rosary, a repetition, an incantation that grows slippery, slimy, and begins to dissolve and fall apart somewhere between mind and mouth like a piece of over-chewed chewing gum (this is to say nothing of flavor (well, nothing further, Your Honor; however, *taste* may in fact factor into this)).

2.0212 The task is and is not to differentiate the who of Michael Martone from the what of Michael Martone.

Good luck.

3
Martone.

Michael Martone is the function of Michael

Consider the proposition: 'Michael Martone (Michael Martone (*Michael Martone x*))' where Michael Martone = Michael Martone.

Only the name 'Michael Martone' is common among the functions (numbingly common; in fact, anesthetizing), and the name by itself signifies nothing (except, of course, in relation to publishing and among experimental literary circles, where meaning is legion, a snake tangle, and hearing the name spoken at social functions manifests mental images and words, setting off synaptic fires along the hearer's neural chains the way a giant spider causes its entire web to tremble when scurrying after stuck prey, quickening said hearers' heart rate and sending beads of sweat down the valley of the back toward Mordor—and the dark ring spreads from the underarms, signifying in return these hearers who are 'in the know,' and Michael Martone may in fact have experienced this as a hearer himself, as one 'in the know,' listening to the name being spoken (sometimes by himself), and wanting very badly to finally meet this fucking guy named Michael Martone.)

The above proposition can also be said, "Michael Martone feels alienated from himself."

3.1 Michael Martone is the simultaneous proliferation and subsequent reunion of Michael Martone—the conglomeration, amalgamation, and corporation of Michael Martone.

3.2 Michael Martone enjoys swimming through, shooting at, and hiding in the subterfuge of Michael Martone.

3.21 Michael Martone is a video game akin to *Centipede*, *Space Invaders*, etc.

3.3 Michael Martone is the red ribbed plastic shell casing with brass head, primer, powder charge, and wad, as well as each individual pre- and post-fired buckshot bearing: potential, kinetic, and residual Michael Martone.

3.x (also 3.01) Michael Martone is a signifier, a semiotic configuration, positing, depositing, calling, recalling, presenting,

representing that which is meant by, imagined to be, and conceptually categorized as Michael Martone.

3.4 (also .01, or BMM (Before Michael Martone (but not that Michael Martone)))

Michael Martone was born, named, held upside down by his ankles, and spanked in front of up to a dozen adult human beings.

NOTE: This note indicates that the note previously occupying this space has gone on to The Great Footnote in the Sky.

3.401 Michael Martone is the linear progression of a circular argument, i.e. conflict with self.

X.X Michael Martone is everyone.

3.401a Michael Martone is simulacra.

3.4011 One day at school, Michael Martone was herded with the rest of his class to the cafeteria. All the lunch tables and benches had been folded up and locked into their compartments in the walls. The students were directed in an activity meant to teach them the value of teamwork (while also introducing them to the symbiosis inherent in social contract). The teacher called this particular exercise the Circle Sit-Down, where the children formed a circle and sat on each other's knees, positioning them at once as the chair and the human sitting on the chair. This paradox troubled Michael Martone the chair, but comforted the seated Michael Martone, who began formulating plans for the mass production of the former Michael Martone.

3.4012 Michael Martone dressed as Michael Martone, taking meticulous care to get the details just right, and stood before the mirror. Based on three basic principles he'd learned at school—power in naming, numbers, and repetition—he turned around three times at midnight and spoke the name “Michael Martone” at the commencement of each revolution. After completing the final revolution he stood facing his reflection and waited. Rumor was, the one he invoked would come forth from the mirror and murder him.

3.41 "Michael Martone was born in Fort Wayne, Indiana . . ." -- Michael Martone, *Michael Martone*, pp. 11, 15, 19, 23, 27, 37, 41, 45, 49, 53, 57, 59, 61, 65, 69, 73, 83, 87, 91, 95, 99, 103, 107, 111, 115, 123, 127, 133, 139, 143, 149, 151, 155, 161, 167, 171, 175, 179, 183, 187

3.411 Many Michael Martones have lived in Indiana, where possibly every Michael Martone in history has lived.

3.42 Indiana was first on Michael Martone's list.

3.43 Michael Martone destroyed Indiana and replaced it with what you do and do not see there today.

4 Michael Martone is the center of Michael Martone's universe, as well as the numerous satellites orbiting Michael Martone, including the spinning, fragmentary arms reaching perpetually around for just one hug before everything falls apart again, before the dust gravitates toward and settles around some other center.

5 One particular Michael Martone wrote things about himself and other Michael Martones and gathered them into a book entitled *Michael Martone*.

5.01 It is the case that Michael Martone experienced certain phenomena. Said phenomena made impressions on Michael Martone, who interpreted, categorized, and stored the impressions chemically. Then, many years later, Michael Martone recalled stored chemical data, filling in blanks where needed and/or desired to suit his purposes of recollection and representation. This idea became physical motion became symbols on paper became characters on a computer screen became narrative became manipulated text tightened around a center: all of which became manuscript, the idea moving beneath the surface of the text having been bounced back and forth between Michael Martone and text similarly to dribbling a basketball while walking, including the loud noise of simultaneous smacking and beating.

5.011

5.012 Michael Martone is penciled in freehand above the solid black line, below which in all caps is the word "NAME," also in

black, infinitely deep against the starched white paper, each character an abyss punched into the pulp.

A mistake is made.

Michael Martone is that remaining graphite pressed into the pores of the paper, that still-visible, ever-visible residue haunting the page regardless of what will be written over it, always hovering in the background drawing eyes to itself, past the façade of new writing and reflecting the reader's attention back in time and back off the page to the writer, to the initial inclination, intention, revealing the slippage of process, haste and trepidation—the eraser chewed, bitten, and nibbled, worn down by the dialectic of thought.

5.013 [: . :]

5.02 Michael Martone lied and may quite possibly be lying at this moment about Michael Martone.

6 Michael Martone is Michael Martone's experiment.

6.xx Michael Martone gave birth to himself (à la Artaud): he was born again, and again, and again, a piece at a time, first an arm, next a pinky toe, then an eye, now a full-grown head of hair, and so on; however, the parts were not assembled in the order in which they came, but rather in the manner of a puzzle.

6.01 Michael Martone is Frankenstein's monster, whose name is Michael Martone.

6.02 Michael Martone, this particular Michael Martone, is an entity similar (and sometimes identical) to Michael Martone.

6.03 Michael Martone's conception of Michael Martone took place when Michael Martone became aware of Michael Martone as Michael Martone, but not necessarily the Michael Martone known as the Michael Martone who wrote or is depicted in *Michael Martone*.

6.031 Michael Martone had had a bad day at school during his fourth-grade year when his too-small spectacles had made a spectacle of him, the subject and object of derisory discussion by classmates (against whom he vowed revenge by becoming more brilliant and talked-about than they ever could, and

then, finally, they would be sorry they had ever said nasty things about his glasses, his person, and his mother) in a modality of Fort Wayne, Indiana. Michael Martone came home and went straight to his bedroom.

6.0311 Michael Martone was fertile soil, and the world was the tree of life reaching deeply with its roots, pushing its greedy fibrous capillaries between every grain of Michael Martone's being, trying to sap out everything.

6.03xx Michael Martone had reached the saturation point.

6.04 Michael Martone wanted to keep himself, not lose his self à la carte at the hands and eyes and mouths and minds of the world.

6.24 Therefore, Michael Martone [took] *hold of himself, clutching his own self to his breast*, and[removed] *that self to a safe place*.

But when *the safe places became ever fewer*, Michael Martone abandoned them for the refuge found in *a complex system of optical illusions, the manipulation of cunningly illuminated facets*, donning the façade of *feign[ed] translucence*.

Italicized words come from the novel entitled *Invitation to a Beheading*, arranged by Vladimir Nabokov.

6.54 Michael Martone sat slouched on the side of his bed, hands in his lap while he listened to *The Dark Side of the Moon*. Studying the album cover, how the prism split a single ray of light into such varied, glittering, attractive, distractive colors, Michael Martone decided to clone himself—create hundreds, thousands of clones, splinter away his accidental qualities and develop them as he pleased, sending them into the world while the essential Michael Martone remained safely intact at the center of things.

6.789 And while the album cover remained still, static, a frozen moment, Michael Martone manipulated the image, reversing the light back through the triangle, and the prism gathered each thread of light back together, weaving it into a perfect whole, something he knew did not really exist, but was the most beautiful illusion he had ever seen.

6.99999999 After defiantly foregoing dinner in order that his head would shrink to better accommodate the hugging arms of his spectacles, a melancholy Michael Martone found a mirror and looked at the reflection—and reflecting on that reflection, he said over and over in a whispered, undulating scale of (Mar)tones:
Michael Martone . . . Michael Martone . . . Michael Martone . . . I'm
Michael Martone . . . I am Michael Martone . . . Michael Martone . .
.You're Michael Martone . . . You're Michael Martone . . . Michael
Martone . . . Hello, Michael Martone . . .

