Wide Angle
a journal of literature and film

Mission Statement

Literature and film continually reimagine an ever-changing world, and through our research we discover our relationships to those art forms and the cultures they manifest. Publishing one issue each semester, *Wide Angle* serves as a conduit for the expression and critique of that imagination. A joint publication between English majors and faculty, the journal embodies the interdisciplinary nature of the Department of English at Samford University. It provides a venue for undergraduate research, an opportunity for English majors to gain experience in the business of editing and publishing, and a forum for all students, faculty, and staff to publish their best work. As a wide-angle lens captures a broad field of vision, this journal expands its focus to include critical and creative works, namely academic essays, book and film reviews, and commentaries, as well as original poetry, short fiction and non-fiction, and screenplays.

Editorial Staff 2019-'20

Special Call

This year, along with the general call for submissions, the editorial staff issued a special call for submissions on theories of psychology in literature. This issue includes essays, creative works, and commentaries that address the motivations for human behavior and the complexity of human thought and feeling.

Cover Art

"heart with strings of steel"
By Abby Olive

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Abigail Aho

Drowning in the Sensuous Sea: Lesbian Identity in Kate Chopin's Female Protagonists

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Introduction

In a heteronormative culture such as the United States, sexual minorities are often absent from or poorly represented in texts. However, as Bonnie Zimmerman notes in her essay "What Has Never Been," lesbian critics have developed a method of reading texts that involves "peering into shadows, into the spaces between words, into what has been unspoken and barely imagined" (83). In looking at the narrative blanks in a text and uncovering possible explanations, lesbian critics find representation for sexual minorities. This sort of criticism does not aim to claim that the author of a text intended to write secretly lesbian characters or to argue that a queer reading of the text is the only possible reading, but rather, to examine how a work contains enough narrative space to allow for a lesbian interpretation. Critics who read with this approach often take texts that are traditionally read from the heterosexual viewpoint and examine the implications of a queer interpretation. The works of American novelist and short story writer Kate Chopin gain even greater significance and power when read from a lesbian perspective. Although Chopin's short stories "Lilacs" and "Fedora," as well as her masterpiece novel *The Awakening,* do not necessarily contain direct homosexual content, they lend themselves to a lesbian reading.

Many critics such as Joseph Church and Molly J. Hildebrand have examined *The Awakening* and called attention to the various aspects of Edna's awakening: her development as an artist, her emancipation as an independent woman, her abandonment of motherhood, and her

sexual enlightenment. Although much of the criticism on *The Awakening* analyzes Edna's heterosexual development through her relationships with Léonce, Robert, and Arobin, recent critics such as Elizabeth LeBlanc, Elaine Showalter, and Kathryn Lee Seidel call attention to the homosexual undertones in Edna's relationships with Adèle Ratignolle and Mademoiselle Reisz. Although these critics mention Edna's possible homosexuality, most do not address how her unfulfilled sexuality contributes to her suicide. Especially compared to *The Awakening,* criticism on Chopin's "Lilacs" and "Fedora" is somewhat sparse, but even within the small body of analysis, critics like Christina G. Bucher and Mariko Utsu note the homosexual undertones that make the stories prime candidates for lesbian readings. When brought into conversation with one another, these three works prove themselves to be excellent candidates for a queer reading. Chopin's works, written during a time in which female friendships were encouraged and homosexuality was criminalized and forbidden, portray women who exist outside of the expectations society holds for them. They further violate these expectations by forming relationships with women that are far more intimate than their relationships with men. Edna, Adrienne, and Fedora exemplify the plight of the nineteenth-century lesbian: existence outside of the closet seemed both tenable and just out of reach.

Edna's Relationships with Adèle Ratignolle and Mademoiselle Reisz

Although Edna's relationships with women are not overtly romantic, her relationship with Adèle Ratignolle leads to her first homosexual awakening. In this pivotal encounter with homosexual romance, Edna and Adèle venture down to the sea's edge "for a walk and to be alone and near the water" (Chopin, *The Awakening* 36). Edna is pleased she has managed to pull Madame Ratignolle away from her children and Robert, and she seems eager to spend the morning alone with Adèle (35). Chopin alerts the reader to the possibility of a romantic

encounter by describing Edna's attraction to Adèle: "The excessive physical charm of the Creole had first attracted her, for Edna had a sensuous susceptibility to beauty. . . . Who can tell what metal the gods use in forging the subtle bond which . . . we might as well call love" (35). Although Chopin only describes Adèle and Edna as friends, romantic language such as "physical charm," "attracted," "sensuous," and "love" alludes to the strong possibility that Edna thinks of Adèle as a sexually and romantically attractive woman. As they chat, Adèle gently caresses Edna's hand, calling her "*ma chère*" and "*pauvre chérie"* (38). This tender gesture and affectionate language further indicate that perhaps Adèle's connection with Edna goes beyond the platonic. Edna is initially startled by this intimate touch, but she quickly relaxes and responds positively to Adèle by leaning into her shoulder. Elaine Showalter notes that this physical closeness leads to emotional closeness as the two women share secrets and sympathize with one another (213). After sharing this moment with Adèle, Edna feels "flushed" and "intoxicated," as though aroused (Chopin, *The Awakening* 40). Her physical response to this interaction implies sexual attraction to Adèle. Additionally, this encounter between Edna and Adèle occurs at the edge of the sea, which lends an air of eroticism to their interaction. Throughout the novel, the sea is personified as "seductive" and "sensuous," as though it is a passionate lover (35). The sea serves as a symbol of the erotic, and it is the location of many of Edna's more potent moments of sexual enlightenment. By placing Edna and Adèle's romantic moment close to the edge of the sensual sea, Chopin adds a sense of passionate sensuality to their encounter. Edna steps outside the confines of heterosexuality to take her "first breath of freedom" when she shares her affectionate moment with Adèle (40). This moment, though seemingly innocuous, "paves the way for [Edna's] sensual and sexual awakening" and opens her eyes to the possibility of homosexual romantic attraction (LeBlanc 247). Edna and Adèle's romantic relationship never

fully actualizes, but it is Adèle's gentle touch that first awakens Edna's understanding of her own attraction to women.

Edna's enlightening moment with Adèle Ratignolle encourages her to explore her homosexual desires, which she discovers more fully through her relationship with Mademoiselle Reisz. Critic Kathryn Lee Seidel notes that Reisz "embodies the traits of the female artist as lesbian, at least as the late nineteenth century understood this concept" (1). Although most notable historical events involving LGB populations in the nineteenth century focused on gay men (for example, Oscar Wilde's trial in 1895), Seidel explains that Chopin's audiences would have a rudimentary, highly stereotyped understanding of lesbianism (*Alyson Almanac* 15-17, Seidel 1, 3). Part of this stereotyped understanding included the marital status, physical attributes, and professions of women. Generally, society would have understood the lesbian woman as unmarried and "physically deformed" or masculine (Seidel 3). Lesbian characters were often portrayed as physically ugly or masculine in order to emphasize their unnaturalness and unfemininity, which meant that society came to understand physical deformity as an indication of lesbianism. Lesbians were often associated with non-domestic professions, and these professions were most commonly prostitution or art (3). Mademoiselle Reisz's unmarried status; "homely," "weazened" physique; and career as a pianist allow her to fit the mold of the typical nineteenth-century lesbian (Chopin, *The Awakening* 47). When *The Awakening* is read with this stereotypical framework, Edna's "handsome rather than beautiful" character, separation from Léonce, and desire to become a painter also mark her as striving towards a lesbian identity (25). Mademoiselle Reisz checks many of the boxes of the stereotypical nineteenth-century lesbian, and Edna's relationship with Reisz often blurs the line between friendship and romance.

Edna's interactions with Mademoiselle Reisz allow her to explore her homosexual desires, and their relationship affords her more fulfillment than her other relationships.

Edna's first interaction with Mademoiselle Reisz in *The Awakening* reads much like a sexual encounter. Reisz, a talented musician, sits down to play the piano, and her music dramatically affects Edna both physically and emotionally:

> The very first chords . . . sent a keen tremor down Mrs. Pontellier's spinal column. It was not the first time she had heard an artist at the piano. Perhaps it was the first time she was ready . . . the very passions themselves were aroused within her soul, swaying it, lashing it, as the waves daily beat upon her splendid body. She trembled, she was choking, and the tears blinded her . . . [Edna] was unable to answer; she pressed the hand of the pianist convulsively. (47-8)

Edna's reaction to Mademoiselle Reisz's playing seems almost orgasmic; Chopin's use of "tremor," "aroused," "trembled," and "convulsively" carries sexual undertones that both convey the intense emotions Edna feels and allude to the erotic connection Edna has with Reisz. This wildly passionate response echoes scenes in lesbian fiction of the time period (Seidel 6). Additionally, Edna recognizes the feeling she experiences from Reisz's playing as similar to the feeling she experiences when immersed in the ocean, hence connecting her homoerotic encounters with the ocean to her encounters with Reisz. Mademoiselle Reisz's music has an arousing effect on Edna later in the novel as well; upon Edna's first visit to Reisz's cozy apartment, Reisz performs an interlude described as "turbulent, insistent, plaintive, and soft with entreaty" that leaves Edna in tears (86-7). Edna compares this wave of emotion to an earlier evening in Grand Isle during which she weeps because of "strange, new voices" that awake in her (87). Again, Chopin's use of sexualized diction and reference to the sensuous sea charge the

scene with erotic undertones. Edna's connection between her reactions to Mademoiselle Reisz's music and her initial awakening implies that she experiences something profoundly, sexually transforming through her relationship with the pianist. Although Chopin never writes sex scenes between Edna and Mademoiselle Reisz, the music scenes read as sexual encounters and establish an erotic connection between the two women.

None of Edna's everyday interactions with Mademoiselle Reisz read quite as sexually as the piano scenes, but the two interact with one another in a manner significantly more intimate than expected in a platonic relationship. As LeBlanc notes, Mademoiselle Reisz's humble apartment becomes the only place where Edna feels at peace, and she visits very often (248). Her relationship with the quirky pianist develops into something much closer and more fulfilling than any of Edna's other relationships, and she frequently allows Reisz to touch her, something she was initially uncomfortable with prior to her encounter with Adèle Ratignolle. Mademoiselle Reisz shares a particularly intimate moment when she "put[s] her arms around [Edna]" and caresses her shoulder blades (Chopin, *The Awakening* 106). Although Reisz shares many of these affectionate physical moments with Edna, this particular instance seems to hold special significance for Edna, as she recalls it during a time she is meant to be immersed in a heterosexual encounter. As Seidel notes, Edna's male lover Alcée Arobin is intensely engaged in seducing her when Edna suddenly recalls her moment of intimacy with Mademoiselle Reisz (7). Arobin seems displeased at the interruption, but continues with his advances, and he and Edna share "the first kiss of her life to which her nature had really responded. It was a flaming torch that kindled desire" (Chopin, *The Awakening* 106). In this unprecedented moment of sexual passion, Edna's thoughts are not on Arobin alone, but on her closest female friend, Mademoiselle Reisz, and the intimate moment they shared earlier that day. This blending of

heterosexual intimacy and thoughts of Reisz indicate that Edna "recognizes that she has experienced a similar scene with Mademoiselle" and thinks of Reisz in a comparably sexual manner (Seidel 7).

Homosexual Symbolism in *The Awakening*

In addition to the eroticism of Edna's reactions to Mademoiselle Reisz's music and the intimacy of their daily interactions, Chopin indicates a romantic attraction between Edna and Reisz via the use of symbols. One of these symbols is the garland of violets perpetually pinned into Mademoiselle Reisz's hair. Violets and their color are a symbol of lesbian love; before homosexuality was publicly acknowledged, lesbian women used the flower to covertly indicate their sexual preferences (*Alyson Almanac* 58). Although this correlation between violets and female homosexuality was not widely known until Edouard Bourdet's *La Prisonniere* came to Broadway in 1926, violets were often worn by individuals who did not intend to marry in sixteenth-century England (*Alyson Almanac* 58). Chopin's novel predates widespread use of the violet symbol, but it is possible she was familiar with the tradition at the time of *The Awakening*'s publication. Regardless, the "artificial violets" are a symbol inextricable from Mademoiselle Reisz's identity; they are mentioned four times throughout the novel in reference to her appearance (Chopin, *The Awakening* 47, 84, 102, 108). Reisz's embodiment of the stereotypical nineteenth-century lesbian encourages a reading of the violet adornment as a symbol for homosexuality. One of the most intimate moments between Edna and Reisz occurs when the violets become dislodged from Mademoiselle Reisz's hair; Edna pulls "her down onto the sofa, and taking a pin from her own hair, secure[s] the shabby artificial flowers in their accustomed place" (102). In this moment of physical and emotional closeness, Edna acknowledges the lesbian marker, symbolically affirming Reisz's identity as a lesbian, and adds

one of her own hairpins to Reisz's coiffure. By combining her personal artifact with the bunch of violets, Edna places herself in alignment with a lesbian identity. Her hairpin, a symbol of her own femininity, merges with Mademoiselle Reisz's feminine, lesbian symbol. The two are symbolically united in homosexual love. She confirms her romantic feelings for Mademoiselle Reisz by purchasing her a new bunch of artificial violets to wear to her dinner party (108). In accordance to the tradition of exchanging violets, Edna gives the flowers to Reisz in the very moment she accepts and celebrates her identity as an independent woman. By incorporating the purple flowers into the party scene, Edna makes homosexuality a part of her identity. At this pivotal dinner, Edna also dons her own version of Reisz's bunch of violets: a glittering diamond hair ornament (110). Although she does not directly wear violets, Edna's prominent hair decoration echoes Reisz's floral accessory. The dinner party is Edna's moment to unveil her newly discovered self, and, though she does not fully embrace the violets, her diamond headpiece suggests Edna's newfound identity as a woman who is attracted to other women.

Adrienne's Symbolic Lilacs and Relationship with Sister Agathe

Like Edna, Adrienne's stereotypical characterization, association with floral symbolism, and close relationship with a woman allow her to be read as a lesbian protagonist. Though the relationships illustrated in "Lilacs" are not explicitly romantic, the text allows for the possibility. In short, "Lilacs" tells the story of Adrienne Farival, a Parisian actress who annually returns to the convent in which she was educated as a girl. Although there is no indication that Adrienne is physically deformed, her unmarried status and profession in the arts make her a candidate for a lesbian identity, according to the nineteenth-century lesbian paradigm. Like Edna and Fedora, Adrienne fits the lesbian framework and also develops a close relationship to a woman, Sister Agathe. It is worth noting that Sister Agathe has chosen to devote her life to God, thus publicly

and definitively rejecting marriage, and therefore she aligns with one aspect of the lesbian stereotype. Though Adrienne and Sister Agathe enjoy unmarried life together when Adrienne visits, when Adrienne tries to return next spring, the Mother Superior forcibly shuts her out of the convent for reasons unknown. The story ends with Adrienne's customary gift of lilacs scattered on the convent portico and Sister Agathe sobbing over the bed Adrienne occupied a year prior.

The symbolic significance of Adrienne's annual gift to the convent does not go unnoticed by critics of the story. Every year, the blooming lilac bushes are the impetus for Adrienne's visit. As she approaches the convent during her first visit related in the story, Adrienne's arms are "filled with great bunches of lilacs which she had gathered along her path" (Chopin, "Lilacs" 759). According to etiquette manuals published during the time of Chopin's writing, lilacs indicate the "first emotions of love" (Robinson 639). Therefore, in bringing the lilacs to the convent, Adrienne symbolically expresses the new love budding in her heart. However, reading the flowers as such a symbol immediately provokes the question: Who is Adrienne bringing the flowers for? It follows that the recipient of the lilacs should be the object of Adrienne's affections. Although perhaps the flowers are a gift for the whole convent, the most immediate recipient of the lilacs is Sister Agathe. As Adrienne enters the convent, "Sister Agathe, more daring and impulsive than all" is the first to greet her (Chopin, "Lilacs" 759). The two women reunite in a flurry of passionate kisses and embraces, "in which the lilacs [are] crushed between them" (759). In this way, Sister Agathe receives, acknowledges, and reciprocates Adrienne's feelings of love. She even comes to associate the flowers with Adrienne; she tells the her that she watches for the lilacs to bloom and waits for her arrival (762). Adrienne and Sister Agathe meander intimately through the convent, holding hands and exchanging gestures of affection,

and Sister Agathe says to her, "If you should once fail to come, it would be like the spring coming without the sunshine or the song of birds" (762). Adrienne and Sister Agathe share many of these intimate moments, and critics often call attention to their physical closeness (Utsu 309). During the two weeks Adrienne spends at the convent, she is nearly inseparable from Sister Agathe, and the symbolic nature of the lilacs implies that their relationship goes beyond the platonic.

The final scene of "Lilacs" poignantly illustrates the passion Adrienne and Sister Agathe have for one another by showing the pain they experience upon separation. When Adrienne receives the news that she is not to return to the convent, she "[weeps] with the abandonment of a little child" (Chopin, "Lilacs" 770). Sister Agathe is found in a similar state; in the final scene, she "[kneels] beside the bed on which Adrienne had slept. Her face [is] pressed deep in the pillow in her efforts to smother the sobs that [convulse] her frame" (771). Both women are inconsolably devastated at the news of Adrienne's mysterious banishment from the convent. Notably, Sister Agathe's use of the bed Adrienne used the previous year when her own bed is mere steps away implies a sexual connotation (Utsu 303). Sister Agathe's use of the bed signifies that she grieves the termination of her relationship with Adrienne. In her overwhelming sadness, she seeks comfort in an object which reminds her of her beloved. In the story's final line, one of the lay sisters ventures out of the convent to "[sweep] away the lilac blossoms which Adrienne had let fall upon the portico" (Chopin, "Lilacs" 771). Sister Agathe is prevented from receiving the symbol of Adrienne's love. In banishing Adrienne, the Mother Superior effectively extinguishes her romantic relationship with Sister Agathe and symbolically brushes aside the feelings Adrienne has for the Sister.

Fedora's Characterization

Much like Mademoiselle Reisz in *The Awakening,* as well as Adrienne in "Lilacs,"

Fedora embodies many of the characteristics of the nineteenth-century lesbian. Firstly, she is still

single at age thirty. In the nineteenth century, Fedora would have been seen as violating societal

expectations for women of her age by not seeking the attention of a man (Bucher 380). This

status as a spinster might not have immediately marked her as a lesbian, but her romantic history,

appearance, and behavior certainly would seem unusual to Chopin's readers. Not only is Fedora

unmarried at thirty, she has seemingly avoided serious romantic entanglements thus far. She has

"formed an ideal," "measured such male beings as had hitherto challenged her attention

[according to that ideal] and needless to say she [finds] them wanting" (Chopin, "Fedora" 798).

In this brief picture of Fedora's romantic history, Chopin adopts Fedora's perspective to suggest

she views the men she has encountered as being imperfect and unworthy of her attentions.

Chopin also refers to Fedora's would-be suitors as "male beings," as opposed to "men" or

"gentlemen" (798). The use of this term suggests Fedora sees men as alienated and foreign. They

are a separate category, and the disinterested tone of the passage coupled with Fedora's failure to

engage with any of these men implies that she has no desire to familiarize herself with them. She

is not a mourning, unwilling spinster, but she seems perfectly content to be single and

independent. Her attitude towards her romantic situation places her outside of what is expected

for women of her age and status. Moreover, Chopin's readers would raise an eyebrow at

Fedora's unconventional appearance. She is "tall and slim . . . carrie[s] her head loftily, and

[wears] eye-glasses and a severe expression," a portrait which evokes the caricature of the

austere schoolmarm (798). She is also generally perceived as being much older than she is; the

young visitors feel as though she must be "a hundred years old" (798). Her family and friends

regard her as the classic old maid. Much like Mademoiselle Reisz and Edna in *The Awakening,* Fedora fails to conform to traditional portrayals of femininity; she is angular and severe rather than soft and gentle. She rejects marriage and appears physically different, thus fulfilling two of the three qualities commonly attributed to nineteenth-century lesbians. As Bucher astutely notes, "we may have no concrete evidence that Fedora harbors desire for women prior to the kiss, [but the reader is] already inclined to see Fedora as bending conventional gender roles, [and] is thus more apt to read such gaps in the text as evidence of lesbian desire" (380). Her appearance, demeanor, and romantic history all mark her as a possible lesbian. Fedora is a woman who rejects the options for women that society has afforded her, and consequently, readers often view her as sexually different.

In addition to her disinterest in marriage and her angular physique, Fedora's characterization as an adept horsewoman contributes to a lesbian reading of her character. In the first three paragraphs of the story, the reader learns that Fedora insists on driving to the station to collect Miss Malthers. She argues that she should take on this responsibility because she thinks the horse is too unruly for "the young people" to control (Chopin, "Fedora" 798). Although Christina Bucher admits that nineteenth-century women participated in equestrian activities, "a particular interest in riding, driving, or racing horses suggested a woman's nonconformity" (379). Furthermore, Chopin uses equestrian hobbies to code women as rebellious in her other works; Edna's knowledge of racehorses in *The Awakening* is one such example (379). Though an interest in horses does not directly verify lesbian identity, Fedora's desire to handle the "restive brute" would have marked her as standing outside of typical feminine pursuits to Chopin's readers (Chopin, "Fedora" 798). She exerts her authority over the others by insisting on driving the horse, and none of them oppose her in her desire to drive to the station, implying that this

authoritative behavior is typical for her (798). Fedora's first characterization is that of a woman who adopts a dominant role not typically associated with nineteenth-century femininity. Although her dominance and equestrian hobbies do not necessarily mark her as a lesbian woman, the lesbian feminist critic is likely to see Fedora's atypical characterization as evidence of female nonconformity, which may include a lesbian identity.

Fedora's Whip as a Phallic Symbol

Moreover, Fedora's penchant for equestrianism means that she often possesses a whip, which serves as a phallic symbol throughout the text. When she arrives at the train station to pick up Miss Malthers, Fedora, enamored with the beauty of the station, eagerly awaits Miss Malthers' train, carrying her whip (Chopin, "Fedora" 799). Though it is certainly a practical tool to aid Fedora in controlling the horse, the whip's shape and context imply that it also serves as a phallic symbol. Dyer notes the sexual connotation of the instrument and claims that "Fedora's obsession with her whip hints at . . . sexual dominance" (264). The whip, used to tame the horse, represents power. Although "Dyer's brief characterization of Fedora as a sort of dangerous, whip-wielding dominatrix" is intended to be derogatory, it nonetheless calls attention to Fedora's existence as a woman who stands outside of sexual norms (Bucher 379). Notably, the whip symbol only appears when Fedora is around Miss Malthers. She carries it with her when she first meets Miss Malthers and manipulates "whip and rein with accomplished skill" as she drives her back to the house (Chopin, "Fedora" 800). As Fedora bows to press a kiss on Miss Malthers' lips, she gathers the reins tightly in one hand—and then takes them back into both hands after completing the action (800). Fedora's handling of the phallic symbol occurs immediately before and after her homoerotic act, implying a sexual context for her behavior towards Miss Malthers. In a story that barely surpasses one thousand words, "whip" and "rein" appear five times, making

them thematically significant. Each time the words appear, Fedora is either in the company of Miss Malthers or waiting to greet her, but they never appear when Fedora is around the other characters. Although this makes logical sense, as Fedora only drives horses when in the company of Miss Malthers, the whip's absence from the rest of the story strengthens a homosexual reading of the text.

Fedora's Relationship with Miss Malthers

Much like Edna and Adrienne, Fedora's interactions with a woman go beyond what would be considered merely friendly in the late nineteenth century. Although most of Fedora's brief story centers around her sudden and intense obsession with a young man named Malthers, her interactions with his sister motivate readers to consider the possibility of Fedora's homosexuality. Before she even meets Miss Malthers, Fedora feels irresistibly drawn to her: "Fedora could hardly explain to her own satisfaction why she wanted to go herself to the station for young Malthers' sister. She felt a desire to see the girl, to be near her; as unaccountable, when she tried to analyze it, as the impulse which drove her . . . to touch [Malthers'] hat . . . when she passed it by" (Chopin, "Fedora" 799). Not only is Fedora incomprehensibly attracted to Miss Malthers, she directly compares her desire to see her with her desire for young Malthers, which Chopin has established as romantic attraction. This syntactical pairing has the effect of implying Fedora's attraction to Miss Malthers is romantic. When Fedora meets the woman, her behavior and actions also reflect a romantic attraction. During the ride home from the train station, Fedora encourages Miss Malthers to come to her should she need or want anything and casually embraces her. Fedora even confesses that she "feel[s] that [she] shall be quite fond of" the young woman (800). Finally, Fedora leans over and "presse[s] a long, penetrating kiss upon her mouth" (800). It is this lingering kiss that most significantly triggers a lesbian reading of the

text. Although some critics, such as Joyce Dyer, hypothesize that such acts of affection were socially acceptable manifestations of close female friendships during this time period, Bucher argues that this argument is unsupported (Dyer 264, Bucher 384). Certainly, romantic friendships between women in the nineteenth century were common, but Fedora's kiss surpasses the limits of typical behavior between female friends. Furthermore, Bucher notes that, if nothing else, Miss Malthers' reaction to the kiss indicates that it is not a socially acceptable way to express affection (Bucher 384). Miss Malthers does not interpret Fedora's kiss as a gesture of friendship; rather, she is "astonished, and not too well pleased" (Chopin, "Fedora" 800). She sees this behavior as crossing the line. Additionally, the language Chopin uses to describe the kiss hints at an erotic, rather than friendly, connotation. Chopin's use of the word "penetrating" to describe the kiss implies a sexual connotation; Fedora's kiss indicates a desire for sexual union with Miss Malthers. Though the word may indicate a symbolic and emotional desire, it could also indicate a desire to physically penetrate her. Regardless of Fedora's intentions, the word's sexual implication charges the scene and supports a homoerotic reading. After delivering this kiss, Fedora reclaims the reins, taking back up the phallic symbol. The textual proximity of the reins and whip to the "penetrating kiss" strengthen the sexual connotation of Fedora's interaction with Miss Malthers.

Edna's Relationships with Men: Léonce, Robert, and Arobin

Although many critics argue that Edna's sexual awakening centers around her relationships with Robert and Alcée Arobin, these relationships lack fulfillment and intimacy, especially in comparison to her relationships with women. The novel begins with the understanding that Edna's relationship with her own husband, Léonce, is detached and formal. The two are married, but their marriage is "purely an accident" (Chopin, *The Awakening* 39).

Shortly after they are married, Edna realizes that her "affection" for Léonce is passionless and cold (40). There is no love in their relationship. Moreover, they live completely separate lives and "do not have an interest in each other's activities and thoughts" (Showalter 216). When Adèle Ratignolle suggests that Edna spend more time with her husband, Edna seems horrified and claims they would have nothing to say to one another (Chopin, *The Awakening* 91). Their relationship clearly indicates that Edna is unfulfilled by her marriage. Additionally, Edna matter-of-factly acknowledges her husband as belonging to the same class as the string of men who briefly engaged her attention prior to her marriage, which suggests that she sees him as just another short-lived lover (40). The string of lovers that Edna lists implies that she has a pattern; she may become romantically interested in a man for a while, but her interest gradually fades. In establishing this pattern, Chopin undermines all of Edna's relationships with men. Léonce goes the way of "the cavalry officer and the engaged young man and a few others," and this repeated behavior suggests that Edna's future relationships with men will fizzle in the same manner, including her romantic affairs with Robert LeBrun and Alcée Arobin (40). This pattern seems to hold true in Edna's relationships with Robert and Arobin.

Edna's attraction to Robert is one of the primary pieces of evidence in strictly heterosexual readings of the text, but an analysis of this relationship also reveals indications of Edna's possible preference for women. For one, Elizabeth LeBlanc notes that Edna's physical attraction to Robert may stem from his androgynous appearance and traditionally feminine behavior (250). LeBlanc suggests that Edna is attracted to Robert because his nurturing, kind nature hints at "the suggestive female partner for which her unsuspecting soul longs, housed within an acceptable male form" (250). It is not necessarily Robert's masculine characteristics that intrigue Edna, but rather, those features of his character that would be traditionally attributed

to femininity, that is, kindness and gentleness. At Grand Isle, when Edna and Robert are together, Edna expresses a special interest in Robert—but she also repeatedly rejects his physical advances, nudging his head off her arm several times (Chopin, *The Awakening* 33). She seems to be both interested in him and repulsed by his affections. They may be attracted to one another, but this initial rejection indicates something less straightforward about their relationship. Furthermore, as they are talking by the sea, Edna's "glance wander[s] from his face away toward the Gulf, whose sonorous murmur reache[s] her like a loving but imperative entreaty" (34). In a moment where she should be interested in Robert, Edna is more drawn to the feminine-coded sea. This encounter symbolically conveys Edna's preference for women over men. Moreover, this is not the only instance in which Edna's mind wanders from Robert to a feminine element; while Edna reflects on her reunion with Robert, "a transcendently seductive vision of a Mexican girl [arises] before her" (126). Though this vision is primarily a representation of Edna's bitterness regarding Robert's absence, the vision establishes a pattern in Edna's thoughts: disappointment in encounters with men spurs thoughts of women.

Although Edna expresses longing for Robert throughout the novel, her attraction to him is "rooted in heterosexual fantasy—and in his absence" (LeBlanc 247). Edna constructs a fantastical ideal of their relationship while Robert is in Mexico, and it comes as no surprise that he fails to live up to her expectations when he returns. Chopin writes that "a hundred times Edna had pictured Robert's return . . . She always fancied him expressing . . . his love for her. And here, the reality was that they sat ten feet apart, she at the window, crushing geranium leaves in her hand" (Chopin, *The Awakening* 121). Edna's disappointment is not caused by a failure on Robert's part to act appropriately, but rather, the consequence of her own hyper-elevated hopes. As with Adrienne's lilacs in "Lilacs," Chopin uses flower symbolism in this scene to convey

Edna's emotions. According to Collier's Cyclopedia, geraniums signify "preference" and memory; Edna symbolically shreds the affectionate portrait of Robert she has created within her mind (Robinson 638). Admittedly, Edna and Robert see one another again following the reunion, and their interactions are more romantic than before. Robert confesses he has feelings for Edna, and the two kiss (Chopin, *The Awakening* 131). However, romantic as this interaction may be, Edna cuts the encounter short in order to visit Madame Ratignolle, who is in childbirth (131). Because of Edna's disappointment with Robert's actions at their first reunion, she can be expected to react with enthusiasm when they meet again, and admittedly she does reciprocate Robert's actions with a degree of contentment. However, she unhesitatingly leaves to go to Madame Ratignolle's side as soon as she is summoned, dismisses Robert's offer to accompany her, and ignores his pleas for her to stay (131). Although Edna places value in her relationship with Robert and enjoys spending time with him, her decision to visit Madame Ratignolle symbolically places her relationship with Adèle above her relationship with him. She is visibly uncomfortable with "the scene of torture" she witnesses by Madame Ratignolle's birthing bed, yet Edna still chooses her female friend over her male lover (134). Her relationship with Robert may be a source of excitement for her, but her decision to spend her evening with the woman who first awakened her sexual awareness signifies a preference for women over men.

In the midst of her supposedly overwhelming passion for Robert, Edna also has an affair with Alcée Arobin, a smooth, seductive womanizer. Though their relationship is comparatively intense, especially in relation to Edna's feelings for Léonce and Robert, Edna's connection with Arobin is purely carnal. Their relationship lacks the emotional depth found in Edna's relationship with Mademoiselle Reisz. As with Robert, Edna's mind wanders to women even during her most intimate moments with Arobin. One night, in the midst of Arobin's seduction, Edna brings up

Mademoiselle Reisz and tells Arobin of an intimate moment she shared with her earlier that day (106). Arobin reacts jealously, verbally attacking Reisz and imploring Edna to think of only him (106). He sees Reisz as a threat to his relationship with Edna, and he is justified in doing so. Edna's distracted thoughts of Reisz allow her to experience erotic pleasure with Arobin, and she somewhat recognizes this. In response to Arobin's request to let him compliment her, she replies, "Oh! talk of me if you like . . . but let me think of something else while you do" (106). Focusing on Arobin alone is not enough to provide her with sexual fulfillment; she must relive her experiences with Mademoiselle Reisz to enjoy the encounter. Edna's relationship with Arobin is exciting, but her sexual interaction with him seems to stem from her attraction to Mademoiselle Reisz, and, like Léonce, Arobin is "absolutely nothing" to Edna (100). Overall, Edna's relationships with men represent unfulfilling attempts to force her desires into the social paradigm of heterosexuality.

Adrienne's Relationships with Men: Henri and Paul

Much like Edna, Adrienne seems uninterested in her male suitors. There are two male visitors mentioned in "Lilacs"—Henri and Paul. Both men seem to be interested in courting Adrienne, but she ignores their advances and remains unimpressed. When Adrienne returns from her annual visit to the convent, her servant Sophie berates her for not being present for Henri's visit. She dramatically recounts how Monsieur Henri moped "about the room, picking up Mademoiselle's fan, her gloves, her music . . . [he picked up her slipper and] kissed it . . . and thrust it into his pocket" (Chopin, "Lilacs" 767). Sophie also tells Adrienne that Henri cannot eat and cries at her absence (767). After such a melodramatic retelling, Adrienne's response is cool and unimpressed; she merely laughs and asks for Sophie to bring her a bottle of wine (767). Adrienne seems completely unconcerned with Henri and his dramatic lovesickness. A year later,

Adrienne is evidently pursued by another man, Monsieur Paul. Again, Sophie advocates for Adrienne's male suitor. When Adrienne tells Sophie she is going away, Sophie indignantly argues that she should not leave without saying goodbye to Paul, but Adrienne grows angry and leaves, seemingly unsympathetic to Paul's plight (768). She is eager to visit the convent, where Sister Agathe lives, and she ignores another lover in order to do so. Additionally, Mariko Utsu points out that "the text does not have a single scene in which either Henri or Paul actually meets Adrienne" (305). Although the text has a narrative blank regarding Adrienne's relationships with these two men, the text supports the notion that she is wholly uninterested in them, never meets with them, and spurns their advances in favor of visiting Sister Agathe at the convent. Just like Edna, Adrienne seems much more interested in the company of women than that of male suitors. In this regard, Adrienne is a more fully actualized lesbian in comparison to Edna; Edna uses her romantic feelings for Reisz to make her encounters with men more palatable, but Adrienne avoids romantic relationships with men entirely.

Fedora's Relationships with Men: Malthers

Like Edna and Adrienne, Fedora is generally indifferent towards men. When she finally becomes interested in young Malthers, her affection is marked by several atypical features that strengthen her possible identity as a lesbian or bisexual woman. Prior to her sudden enrapturement with Malthers, Fedora has been uninterested in men; she is unmarried and seems to have no desire to begin a relationship with a man. All this changes, however, when she looks up into the face of young Malthers and is struck by "the sudden realization . . . that he was a man" (Chopin, "Fedora" 798). From this point onward, Fedora is obsessed with Malthers. She seeks out his company, listens to him, and wants him nearby (799). This behavior is indicative of romantic attraction, but some of Fedora's feelings suggest that perhaps she does not love him as

much as her behavior might indicate. Fedora "want[s] him near by her, though his nearness trouble[s] her" and, though she feels uneasy when he is away, she feels "redoubled uneasiness" when Malthers is close (799). Like Edna's refusal of Robert's physical advances, Fedora's inner turmoil suggests that she, too, is simultaneously attracted to and repulsed by the object of her affection. It seems that Fedora is more nervous and uncomfortable around the young man than she is when alone, and it is worth noting that she feels no such discomfort around Malthers' sister. In contrast to feeling "troubled" around Malthers, Fedora is "seemingly unruffled" when she is in the company of Miss Malthers (799, 800). Additionally, Fedora is never in possession of her whip, which serves as a phallic symbol, around Malthers—she only uses it when she is near his sister.

The coat scene is one of the most poignant examples critics reference when describing Fedora's attraction to Malthers, but this scene also illustrates a strange aspect of Fedora's affection. She regularly touches Malthers' hat, but one day she is overcome by an "impulse" and buries her face in the folds of his coat (799). Although this scene represents how passionately enamored Fedora is with Malthers, she is never shown making any physical contact with him. Bucher notes that "while [Fedora] is attracted to [Malthers], she never acts on her feelings" (381). Admittedly, though she may never act, Fedora's failure to make physical contact with Malthers does not negate her attraction to him. Dyer hypothesizes that Fedora's hesitation to touch Malthers is likely due to her "fear of social disapproval and of her own impulses" and asserts that the coat scene substitutes for sexual contact (262-63). However, Dyer's explanation is undermined by the fact Fedora seems undeterred by the aforementioned "social disapproval" that would surely come should her lesbian behavior towards Miss Malthers be made public knowledge. If she is afraid of the societal disapproval that would come as a result of her

expressing attraction for a man, it seems illogical she would not be afraid of the assuredly harsher societal disapproval that would come as a result of her expressing attraction for a woman. Therefore, the reader is prompted to search for other explanations for Fedora's failure to act when it comes to Malthers. Significantly, Fedora expresses no trepidation or hesitation when she kisses Miss Malthers during the carriage ride (Bucher 382). She seems unwilling and unready to initiate physical contact with Malthers, but she seems to have no qualms when it comes to kissing his sister.

Dyer's dismissal of Fedora's "Sapphic tendencies" hinges on the argument that Chopin emphasizes that Fedora is attracted to Malthers' masculinity and is only attracted to his sister because she bears such close resemblance to him (264). However, Christina Bucher notes the features of Malthers that Fedora considers attractive are not necessarily hyper-masculine characteristics (381). Certainly, Chopin makes it plain that Fedora's attraction begins when she realizes "[Malthers is] a man . . . in every sense," but the aspects of his visage Fedora continually contemplates are somewhat androgynous (798). She pays special attention to Malthers' "blue, earnest" eyes, his tanned face, and his "strong, firm and clean" lips (Chopin, "Fedora" 799). Malthers' characterization is reminiscent of Robert LeBrun's characterization in *The Awakening,* and perhaps Fedora, like Edna, is merely attracted to Malthers' feminine or androgynous characteristics. Robert is Edna's societally acceptable object of affection, and Malthers functions the same way for Fedora. Admittedly, a tanned face would be more typical for a man of this time period; men were not expected to protect their skin from the sun as women would be (Bucher 381). However, Chopin omits any mention of a low voice or facial hair, characteristics that would mark Malthers as emphatically masculine. The features she does mention could be just as easily manifested in a woman's visage—and, in fact, they are. When Fedora first catches sight of

Miss Malthers, she immediately notes "the blue, earnest eyes . . . the firm, full curve of the lips; the same setting of the white, even teeth" that she admires in Malthers (Chopin, "Fedora" 800). She certainly feels more comfortable with the feminine manifestation of these features, daring to embrace and kiss Miss Malthers in contrast to the restraint she shows toward Malthers (800). Moreover, Dyer's assertion that Fedora is only attracted to Miss Malthers because of her resemblance to Malthers is undermined by the fact that Fedora is compelled to meet the young woman before she develops attraction to Malthers. Although the timeline of the story is somewhat uncertain, Fedora decides to retrieve Miss Malthers in the first sentence; her dramatic and sudden obsession with young Malthers does not begin until several paragraphs later (798). Chopin informs the reader that Fedora feels inexplicably compelled to meet Miss Malthers and links this feeling to the feelings Fedora has concerning Malthers. However, Chopin does not make the argument that Fedora's feelings for Malthers necessarily cause her attraction to his sister (799). This narrative space allows the reader to interpret Fedora as a character whose homosexual attraction is independent from her heterosexual attraction.

Edna's Suicide as a Surrender to Societal Pressure

Edna's journey of discovering and coming to terms with her homosexual desires culminates in her suicide. As Molly Hildebrand notes, Edna's suicide may be the only practical conclusion to her story; her death can be interpreted as "a recognition of the untenability of a woman's dreams and desires within her current cultural framework and historical moment" (Hildebrand 204). Certainly, it does not seem likely that Edna could lead a fulfilling life as an uncloseted lesbian woman in her nineteenth-century world. At the time, homosexuality was still heavily criminalized; those convicted of homosexuality could face jail time or even the death penalty (*Alyson Almanac* 15-17). At the very least, Edna would be ostracized and condemned

were she to act upon her homosexual desires. As is the consensus among most researchers of the link between minority sexual orientation and suicide, "at least part of the explanation for the elevated rates of suicide attempts . . . found in LGB people is the social stigma, prejudice and discrimination associated with minority sexual orientation" (Haas et al. 22). Fear of societal discrimination could certainly push Edna to consider suicide. If Edna were to reveal her homosexual desires and seek a fulfilling life as an uncloseted lesbian, she would be sorely disappointed, if not dead or imprisoned. Edna's other choice would be to hide her feelings for women and return to the bland life she leads before her awakening begins. Neither of these options would seem fulfilling to Edna, so it is possible Edna arrives at a conclusion similar to Elaine Showalter's: the only way to escape from an oppressive society is in death (219). With this knowledge in mind, Edna's suicide is a fitting end to the novel because her future appears hopeless. She cannot live as her newly enlightened self, so she must die.

Mademoiselle Reisz's intimate moment with Edna confirms the theory that suicide is the natural end for a woman who would wish to live as an uncloseted homosexual. Reisz caresses Edna's shoulder blades and recognizes that she must "have strong wings" in order to be "the bird that would soar above the level plain of tradition and prejudice" (Chopin, *The Awakening* 106). Reisz explains that those who must overcome society's prejudices, such as the discrimination against homosexuals, are often unable to succeed. Right before Edna's suicide, "a bird with a broken wing" flutters in the air and struggles to stay aloft before finally plunging into the sea (138). The image reminds the reader of Reisz's warning. The symbolic little bird correlates to Edna; she is not strong enough to surmount the societal obstacles facing homosexuals in the nineteenth century, and she drowns in the very sea where the bird perishes.

Adrienne's Secrecy and Banishment

Although Chopin creates a believable portrayal of lesbian existence in "Lilacs," Adrienne's story also illustrates the untenability of a fulfilled existence for a lesbian woman of this time period. Adrienne cannot fully embrace an uncloseted lesbian existence within her society, and Chopin demonstrates this by describing the secrecy with which Adrienne visits the convent every year. Although Adrienne makes annual visits to the convent, and gets to partially fulfill her homosexual desires by seeing Sister Agathe, she does so in secret. Sophie, Adrienne's servant of six years, angrily describes how Adrienne runs off every year without explaining where and why she is going (Chopin, "Lilacs" 768). Although some may see Adrienne's unexplained and sudden absences as evidence of "strong egotism and heartlessness" towards Sophie, her secrecy and impulsivity strengthen the argument that Adrienne is conscious of how socially unacceptable her behavior is (Utsu 301). She visits the convent to fulfill her lesbian desires for Sister Agathe, but this relationship is societally forbidden, so she goes in secret. Adrienne's concealment of her destination and purpose allows the reader to understand the untenability of a possible lifestyle as an uncloseted lesbian.

Moreover, the final scene symbolically demonstrates the societal factors that prevent Adrienne from living as a lesbian woman in her society. When Adrienne tries to return to the convent to visit Sister Agathe, the Mother Superior forcibly shuts her out, and the symbolic lilacs are left scattered upon the portico (Chopin, "Lilacs" 770-71). In this scene, the "large, uncompromising, unbending" Mother Superior symbolizes societal and religious pressures that keep Adrienne from fulfilling her homoerotic desires (760). The lilacs, which symbolize Adrienne's love for Sister Agathe, lie abandoned until they are quietly swept away (770). Just as the lay sister sweeps away the lilacs, so Adrienne's society quietly sweeps homosexuality under

the rug and out of sight. Through Adrienne's secrecy and the destruction of the lesbian symbol, "Lilacs" illustrates how lesbian women in the nineteenth century were unable to exist as their true selves while still remaining within society.

Fedora's Repression

Ultimately, though Fedora may identify as lesbian or bisexual, Chopin's story demonstrates the unlikeliness that Fedora will ever be able to live as her true self. Her atypical appearance and behavior have already marked her as an outsider; her siblings and their companions never include her in their "amusements," and they see her as belonging to a different age group (Chopin, "Fedora" 798). The reader senses that Fedora is only tolerated, not loved, by those surrounding her. Her existence inside the closet is already an isolating one, and, given the societal perceptions of homosexuality at the time, her existence out of the closet would be even lonelier. Perhaps Fedora, like Edna and Adrienne, feels the pressures of her heteronormative society; though seemingly unbothered by her unmarried status, Bucher suggests that Fedora's initial attraction to Malthers represents her surrender to the societal pressure to choose a male love interest (381). Malthers, though male, is just "androgynous enough to meet her tastes" and, though she truly desires Miss Malthers, Fedora places her affections on Malthers because he is a socially acceptable substitute (Bucher 382). Moreover, Fedora's horse serves as a symbol that implies Fedora will fulfill Dyer's grim prediction and forever be "a woman who is capable of strong feeling but will never experience full emotional release or sexual satisfaction" (265). Both Dyer and Bucher recognize the "restive," "brut[ish]" horse as a symbol for Fedora's sexual passion (Dyer 265; Bucher 385; Chopin, "Fedora" 798). She must keep the horse, and her sexual attraction, under strict control. Like the horse, Fedora's passion is seen as "brute," perverse, and recalcitrant to nineteenth-century readers and must never be allowed to go uncontrolled (Chopin,

"Fedora" 798). Her kiss with Miss Malthers is "a momentary release of Fedora's true desire," in which she holds the reins with only one hand, but after the kiss, she must again grip the reins tightly and prevent her passions from running free (Bucher 383; Chopin, "Fedora" 800). Because homosexuality has no place in Fedora's society, this is her only safe choice. Her ostracization, complex feelings towards Malthers, and symbolic repression indicate that Fedora has no choice but to stay closeted and emotionally unfulfilled.

Edna's Fulfillment: The Sea as a Feminine Lover

Although it is widely recognized that suicide is the only natural conclusion for Edna, who can never realistically thrive as an uncloseted lesbian in nineteenth-century society, Edna's suicide can be alternatively seen as the ultimate fulfilment of her homosexual desires. The sea is the location of many of Edna's most powerful sexual epiphanies; it is where her first awakening moment with Adèle Ratignolle occurs and also where she experiences her first taste of sexual liberation and autonomy (Chopin, *The Awakening* 36). Edna seems drawn to the ocean early in the novel. The ocean calls to her with a "sonorous murmur" that "reach[es] her like a loving but imperative entreaty" (34). The sea's call articulates Edna's own repressed sexual urges. She craves to dive into the ocean and satisfy her desires. Later that night, in an unprecedented act of independence, Edna swims out into the sea, farther than she has ever gone before (49). Elaine Showalter notes that the land surrounding the sea "suggest[s] Edna's initial autoeroticism;" the "midnight swim . . . takes place in an atmosphere of erotic fragrance" and feminine floral imagery (212). This swim awakens in Edna "first-felt throbbings of desire" (Chopin, qtd. in Showalter 212). It is her first taste of independence, and Edna is forever changed by her experience in the sea. Her midnight swim, brought on by the intense feelings aroused earlier that evening by Mademoiselle Reisz's piano performance, fulfills and awakens her desires for

homosexual intimacy. She swims out into the dark ocean, and "a feeling of exultation over[takes] her" until she feels liberated, autonomous, and powerful (Chopin, *The Awakening* 49). Through this baptismal encounter, the sea becomes Edna's lover. In contrast to Molly J. Hildebrand, who claims the ocean exhibits masculine traits, Showalter claims the sea is a female lover (Hildebrand 205-206). Because "the female body is prone to wetness, blood, milk, tears, and amniotic fluid, so in drowning the woman is immersed in the feminine organic element" (Showalter 219). The sea is coded as female. The ocean is not just Edna's seductive lover—the sea is her seductive *female* lover.

At the end of the novel, Edna commits suicide by immersing herself in the "soft, close embrace" of the sea (Chopin, *The Awakening* 252). Although her society prevents her from ever completely acting upon her homosexual desires, she finds that "the sea instills, or releases, desires in Edna that she can neither articulate, actualize, or abandon" (LeBlanc 252). Thus, Edna achieves sexual fulfilment by immersing herself in the ocean. Her drowning suggests "a sensually satisfying erotic encounter;" she sheds her "bathing suit that represents the last vestige of heterosexual restraint," and "meets her figurative female lover, naked and without fear" (LeBlanc 254). Edna is not afraid in these final moments. Although she has a brief moment of panic, she abandons herself to the erotic embrace of the sea, and Edna "and her lover enter each other and become one" (Chopin, *The Awakening* 139; LeBlanc 255). She unites with her female lover, permanently. Edna's death, though it is an escape from a life of oppression and repression in a practical sense, symbolically represents the ultimate satisfaction of her homosexual desires.

Adrienne's Fulfillment: Annual Visits to the Convent

Adrienne's relationship with Sister Agathe ends tragically, but her story also conveys the sense of hopeful possibility also found in *The Awakening* and "Fedora." Though their

relationship does not last forever, Adrienne reminds Sister Agathe of her first visit to the convent four years prior and cites the scent of lilacs every spring as her impetus for returning every year since (Chopin, "Lilacs" 702). She has gotten to spend several years with Sister Agathe, and each of her visits has been accompanied by the symbolic fragrance of love. Both women look forward to the visits, because they are allowed to live in love and intimacy, at least for a short while. Like Edna's relationship with Mademoiselle Reisz, Adrienne's relationship with Sister Agathe provides her with a sense of unparalleled peace. When Adrienne first smells the lilacs, she is pulled out of her "heaviness of heart" and "despondency" and rushes to the convent immediately (762). Though Adrienne implies that the scent of lilacs is so powerful because it merely causes her to remember her past, the symbolic context of the flower suggests that Adrienne overcomes her depression because she feels the stirrings of love (762). The scent of the flowers brings Adrienne meaningful serenity and joy. While she is at the convent, Adrienne is truly in her element; she walks with "a bounding step" through the pastoral landscape arm in arm with Sister Agathe, which is a great contrast to the indolent "reclining" she does at home in Paris (763, 765). It is clear that Adrienne feels it is "indescribably sweet to rest . . . with this gentle-faced [Sister Agathe]" (763). The peace she feels at the convent is a welcome interruption from the stress and annoyance of her everyday life. Though their relationship is periodical and finite, the optimistic reader notes that the longevity and positive impact of Adrienne's relationship with Sister Agathe portrays female homosexuality as something fulfilling and beautiful. The Mother Superior ends the relationship, but its very existence in the first place implies that perhaps a relationship of this nature can survive. Adrienne's world is one in which, at least for a little while, lesbian women can have fulfilled, meaningful existences.

Fedora's Fulfillment: Glimmers of Hope

Though Chopin's "Fedora" implies a grim future for Fedora in a world where she must always repress her homosexual urges, the final scene lends a glimmer of hope to her situation. When "Fedora" is read optimistically, the reader can find instances of peace and fulfillment in Fedora's life. Alienated as she may be, her companions seem to at least tolerate her, and she seems to find her place in looking after her siblings and their friends (Chopin, "Fedora" 798). Additionally, the fact that Fedora's kiss with Miss Malthers occurs at all suggests that perhaps a future outside of the closet exists for her. Following the kiss, Fedora gathers the reins and continues driving homeward, "seemingly unruffled" (800). Chopin's use of the word "seemingly" hints that perhaps Fedora is flustered by the kiss, and Bucher notes that this open-endedness nudges the reader to question what Fedora could be thinking (386). Is she contemplating Miss Malthers? Young Malthers? The tenability of her newly discovered desires? Or is she truly unconcerned? It is possible that Fedora, now that she has experienced a sexual awakening as Edna does, will find a way to live as herself and fulfill her homosexual inclinations.

Conclusion

When read through the lens of lesbian feminist literary criticism, it is possible to see how the narrative space in Chopin's works allows for an interpretation of homosexuality. Edna, Adrienne, and Fedora are all unique characters that exist outside of the societal restrictions imposed upon them, and their stories portray what life was like for the nineteenth-century lesbian. Although these women were repressed and misunderstood, Chopin's stories reflect a hopeful outlook for the future. Her works afford the careful reader an opportunity to examine a population of women who were rarely represented in their time and who continue to be

misrepresented now. Her characters both fulfill stereotypes and resist them; speak bravely and

stay quiet; and overcome obstacles and surrender to them. Above all, Chopin's works resist a

definitive reading from any perspective. Chopin merely presents Edna, Adrienne, and Fedora,

and allows the reader to see them for the complex female characters they are.

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Essay

Claire Davis

Paddock and *Parcae*: The Folk Traditions of Witches in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*

William Shakespeare's incorporation of story material and themes from traditions long dead marks his ability to present complex characterizations of historical characters and situations. While this seems natural for completely fictional plays, such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which molds various folk traditions together by setting the story in an idealized, arcadian Greece populated with English folk spirits and features a nested play from Roman myth, Shakespeare's dabbling into the folklore of other countries and ages is present in his histories and tragedies. This is especially true in *Macbeth,* which contains the most explicit references towards folk belief through the characters of the Weird Sisters. The Weird Sisters, or colloquially, the witches, while mostly conforming to English folk tradition in their forms of ancient, haggard women with animal familiars at their disposal, also owe much of their characterization in the play to the tense and confusing relationship between conceptions of witchcraft across the British Isles. By examining these conflicting opinions within the British Isles as well as tracing references to other countries' folklore, the characters of the witches in *Macbeth* take on a complex yet powerful role, further contributing to Macbeth's uncertain agency within the play.

The contemporary perception of witches among Shakespeare's audience was most likely fear of their powers tempered by disbelief. While the seventeenth century saw many witch hunts and executions throughout England, Darren Oldridge states that much of the theory surrounding the mechanics of witchcraft suggested that any curses, spells, or enslavement of demons was not

only a fabrication sold to the ignorant but also a lie disseminated by the Devil himself (2). This portrayal of witchcraft as primarily deception, both on the part of the witches, who deceive their clients as to the reaches of their power, and the Devil, who convinces the witches that they have power to curse and cast spells, could come from a particularly Protestant need to disavow Catholicism in England. Oldridge writes that in an effort to cut ties completely with Catholic church culture, such beings as saints, ghosts, and fairies had to be dismissed as superstition at best and suppression tactics by the Catholic Church at worst (2). This concern of scrubbing Catholic culture from English culture remained a major theme of English Reformation literature throughout the decades, and the resulting preoccupation with forming a Protestant opinion of the occult led to much consideration of witchcraft in both theological texts and literature. Many contemporary theologians, such as Reginald Scot in his *The Discoverie of Witches*, wrote that the entire enterprise was run by charlatans and con artists without any demonic pact at all (5). Nevertheless, other prominent figures, such as George Gifford with his religious dialogues and King James I of England with his publication of the *Daemonologie*, fed the idea that witchcraft was connected to demonic activity. As a result, the seventeenth century saw many trials accusing supposed witches (usually poor, widowed women) of ruining crops, killing livestock, and even bewitching children. Shakespeare's contemporary audience, then, was quite familiar with the concept of magical hags, and Macbeth's and Banquo's initial suspicion of them is validated by the audience's own fears of the occult.

Nevertheless, the English opinion of witches was not widely accepted, even within the British Isles. Ronald Hutton writes that while the seventeenth century saw hundreds of witchcraft trials, the large majority of these were confined to the south and east of England, while the northern Scottish territories and Ireland only reported a handful of cases in court (43). This is not

to say that the area was devoid of witches, nor that most witch-hunts occurred out of court by mob rule: rather, the Scottish and Irish did not view witchcraft to be as dangerous and malevolent as the English (Hutton 56). This distinction remains even within Scotland: "It seems true in general that Scottish Gaelic witches has a more unpleasant and ferocious reputation in regions bordering the Lowlands, and a more benign one the further into the Gaidhealtachd a person went" (57). Instead, the Scottish Gaels "regarded magic, at least to some extent, as a legitimate means of furthering one's own designs and thwarting enemies" (58). The Scots' benign attitude towards magic, despite experiencing similar crop failures and sudden deaths, manifested itself by instead explaining such disasters as the work of fairies, which were much more dangerous in the folk beliefs of the Hebrides than in England (60). For example, while the belief of the evil eye (glares that cause curses to inflict the subject) is common to both cultures, each contextualizes it with accordance to its view of the origins of supernatural evil; in England, such piercing glances were thought to be intentional acts of witchcraft, while in Scotland, the curse was often considered accidental and uncontrollable (60). This benevolent attitude towards witchcraft becomes especially important when considering *Macbeth*'s origins in Holinshed's *Chronicles* as a Scottish history-myth and somewhat explains Macbeth's trust in the witches as a Scottish lord; while the witches appear inhuman and fearsome, he does not negate their power, nor consider it deception, but rather responds to them as legitimate members of society.

The clash of English and Scottish conceptions of witchcraft complicates outright condemnation of *Macbeth*'s witches, as the story originates in Scottish history and folklore but was performed primarily for an English audience. Holinshed's *Chronicles*, a major source for Shakespeare's play, only refers to the three witches as "resembling creatures of the elder world," which can be taken to mean any number of mythic women, from the beautiful nymphs to hideous

hags (268). The fact that Shakespeare chooses to represent these women as unnatural yet horrific women reflects an English portrayal of witchcraft and cunning women, which further condemns Macbeth as both a sinner and a gullible fool for returning to them for advice in Act 4, Scene 1. However, their Scottish roots and the fulfillment of their prophecies concerning both Macbeth and Banquo imply that the power is, in fact, real and ought to be feared, if not respected. In this reading, Macbeth's return to them as aids in his campaign to rule reflects a more Scottish mindset, indicating the idea that magic is a tool for advantage rather than an inherently evil practice.

Beyond the British Isles, Shakespeare's invocation of Greek and Roman myth further complicates the witches' role in the story by recalling both dangerous and powerful forces within a wholly different but equally as known context. Robert Kilburn Root, a classical scholar who turned his focus towards classical reception in Shakespeare, believes that Shakespeare was familiar with both Ovid and Homer and plundered their works shamelessly for material: "he found in Ovid, and in classical mythology as a whole, what all the Renaissance found before him: a treasure-house of fascinating story wrought out in rich magnificence of detail, all but devoid of any deep spiritual significance" (8). However, Root does note that Shakespeare's experience with classical tradition seems limited to primarily those two authors, which negates any argument for comparing *Macbeth*'s witches to the *lamia* (vampire-witches) of Apuleius' *The Golden Ass*, despite both works' use of musical invocation to cast spells and the ominous presence of screech owls to portend doom (Leinweber 79, 81). Shakespeare's classical source material, then, is isolated to a select few authors who incorporate general mythology rather than specific folklore in their poetry.

Shakespeare's references to classical witchcraft come in the form of Hecate, which he places as a being over the witches, and the *Parcae*, or the Fates. Shakespeare borrows the concept of Hecate as a dark patroness of witchcraft from Roman myth itself, which broke the figure of the standard moon goddess into three, distinct parts: Diana, the virgin huntress; Luna, the celestial moon; and Hecate, the chthonic embodiment of darkness. As a result of her association with night and darkness as well as the underworld, Hecate's role as patroness of witches was an association all too easy to make, even in ancient cultures (Root 53). Her role in surviving classical literature features most prominently as the source of Medea's powers, which Ovid mentions in his *Metamorphoses* as the witch returns from a visit to Hecate's altar when she first lays eyes on Jason (7.74-5). Hecate's character in the play matches the dark imagery that surrounds her in myth: when she appears in Act 3, Scene 5, she proclaims herself "the mistress of your charms" and orders the witches to "at the pit of Acheron / Meet me i'th' morning" before announcing that she will catch the foam falling from the moon and call the spirits that will confuse Macbeth to his death (3.5.6,15-6, 23-9). Her self-proclaimed associations with the witches, Hell, and the moon all stem from the classical tradition, which cements the witches as participants in a dark, mysterious tradition beyond English myth.

Additionally, Shakespeare invokes Hecate in situations beyond witchcraft but considered equally as heinous, such as Macbeth's murder of Banquo. By this point in the play, Macbeth has already broken both the code of warriors and the code of hospitality by killing his visiting lord in his home, and he assures Lady Macbeth that ". . . ere to black Hecate's summons / The shard-born beetle with his drowsy hum / Hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done / a deed of dreadful note" (3.2.44-7). As Root indicates, Macbeth here does not appear to be directly calling on the goddess to aid him in his machinations but rather uses her name as a metaphor for

his celerity in killing Banquo (55). Nevertheless, his inclusion of her as a personification of the night creates a connection between his murderous mindset and her powers, which comes to direct fruition when he visits the witches again in Act 4, Scene 1, where apparently Hecate has summoned the spirits that portend his doom. By invoking Hecate alongside both the witches and Macbeth's murders, Shakespeare asserts the dangers of witchcraft within his play and affirms the evil behind the practice.

Nevertheless, the witches' actual actions within the play also suggest the powerful and amoral proclamations of the three Fates. As daughters of Night and Erebus (the darkness found in the underworld) from the beginning of time, the three sisters; Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos; continuously spin, measure, and cut the length of humans' lives. Their association with the night (like Hecate) and their number matches that of the witches, who greet Macbeth with his past, present, and future title at their first meeting: "Hail to thee, Thane of Glamis! / . . . Hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor! / All hail to Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter" (1.3.48-50). Likewise, Banquo's descriptions of them as old women with thin lips, thick fingers, and unnatural beards matches a classical conception of these women as elderly spinners, rather than ageless spirits (1.3.43-6). There is also compelling evidence that these women catalyze the events of the play, as they remark that they have an appointment to keep with Macbeth and later give him explicit assurance that his ambitions will be met, regardless of his actions (1.1.7, 1.3.50). Throughout the play, the three witches' true, if misleading, proclamations of Macbeth's fate shape the frame of the play, which invokes a classical idea of the Fates.

The indication of more witches in the play troubles the interpretation of the witches as the three *Parcae*, leading some past scholars to draw connections between *Macbeth*'s witches and the Scandinavian tradition of the fates, which are called *norns*. These spirits share many

characteristics with the Roman *Parcae*, also sometimes appearing as old spinning women and holding the secrets to a person's fate, but they also were not limited to the number three, as they themselves were not personifications of the ideas of past, present, and future (Arrowsmith 208). Nevertheless, Thomas Spalding in his *Elizabethan Demonology* argues against this reading of the witches, as he claims that the *norns* of Scandinavian folklore were more often represented as beautiful, ageless women (which, interestingly enough, fits Holinshed's interpretations of events) rather than aging, grotesquely unnatural hags (94). Additionally, Spalding cites their base concerns over being slighted out of chestnuts by a sailor's wife as too demeaning a depiction of these divine women who tend to the world tree Yggdrasil's roots (92). However, the fact that scholars continue to associate the witches with this aspect of Scandinavian lore indicates a tendency to regard the witches as higher beings with control over Macbeth's situation rather than as deluding and petty widows, which speaks again to the figures' power. Within their sphere of influence in this context, Macbeth becomes less of an ambitious lord and more of an instrument of fate.

Since the first production of *Macbeth*, many other authors have noted the strange melding of traditions within the witches' characters: Coleridge once wrote in his review of *Macbeth* that

> The weird sisters . . . are wholly different from any representation of witches in the contemporary writers, and yet presented a sufficient external resemblance to the creatures of vulgar prejudice to act immediately on the audience. Their character consists in the imaginative disconnected from the good, they are the shadowy, obscure and fearfully anomalous of physical nature, elemental avengers without sex or kin. (qtd. in Dyer 27)

In his estimation, the witches represent a more creative take on the practice of witchcraft, making something wholly original from the fragments of folklore available to Shakespeare and, therefore, representing a wholly original ethical standard by which to judge them. Their apparent connections to the *Parcae* and Hecate indicate a far more compelling power than Shakespeare's contemporaries' opinion of witches, even when considering the Scottish Gaels' casual response. The witches' presence in the play, then, draws power from Macbeth's agency as an ambitious lord. By announcing his titles and revealing his future, the witches do not aid Macbeth so much as command him into his fated role of king. Macbeth's use of the witches as advisors, while inspiring disgust in the English public, also reveals his reliance on them, and it is through his overconfident interpretation of their portents that he meets his doom. Without the witches, Macbeth is only a thane; with them, he is only a pawn.

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Essay

Carol Graffeo

Walden Pond and the Ganges River: A Postcolonial Understanding of Thoreau's *Walden*

Henry David Thoreau invites his New England audience to discover the ultimate reality available exclusively in the natural world in *Walden; or, Life in the Woods*. In Thoreau's cry "Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity!" he urges his readers to pause their hurried lives, open their eyes to the truths expressed in nature, and peer within to explore themselves and the world (86). The result is a treasured American memoir regarded by many as a prophetic work in addressing the current issues of climate change, technological advances, and urbanization. Thoreau's worldview is steeped in classical Eastern religious and philosophical influences that were unfamiliar concepts for his original audience. This perspective is especially apparent as he describes his spiritual connection to the waters of Walden Pond. As Thoreau's memoir progresses, he crafts a Transcendentalist theology characterized by simplicity and reverence for Nature, borrowing heavily and enthusiastically from Eastern religious traditions. This reality poses the central question that has guided my research and writing: When Thoreau engages with ancient Eastern texts and thought at Walden Pond, is he exploring the world through literature and sharing his findings, or inauthentically appropriating the sacred texts and practices in countries and cultures that he cannot call his own? To answer this question, I will first turn to Edward Said's *Orientalism;* second, provide a social, historical, and religious context for the New England Transcendentalist movement; and last, apply Said's theory to analyze *Walden.* This postcolonial understanding will provide a fresh perspective for Thoreau's Transcendentalist theology and influential identity as an Orientalist.

Key Terms Defined

Before continuing with the context and analysis, it is necessary to define key terms used often in this paper, namely: "East," "West," "privilege," and "theology." To focus the scope of this project, it is important to clarify these oftentimes vague and generalized terms. When Thoreau uses the broad term "East," he is idealistically referring to countries and classical cultures including China, India, and Persia. As will be analyzed later on, Thoreau's enthusiasm for Eastern cultures as a Western scholar deems him, in Edward Said's terms, an Orientalist. The "East" and the "Orient" are outdated terms today, but were commonly used in Transcendentalist literature. Secondly, the term "West" is another often-used concept with vague implications; in this essay, the "West" encompasses the scholastic traditions and cultures of European and American countries, including Britain, France, the United States, and Germany. The term "privilege" has a two-fold importance. It not only refers to the socioeconomic and geographic privilege that Thoreau experiences as a Harvard-educated scholar in New England, but also includes the male privilege permeating the lines of each page in *Walden* and many secondary sources. This gendered reality is important to recognize, as women are an afterthought in Thoreau's theology, but it is not the main focus of this particular analysis. Instead, I am focusing on the context and implications of Thoreau's Orientalist theology expressed in his writing. Before this venture, "theology" must be clarified as a term that extends beyond Christianity in *Walden.* Thoreau's theology documents his "study of religious faith, practice, and experience . . . the study of God and of God's relation to the world" (*Merriam Webster*). Thoreau seeks to transcend the Protestant tradition, unbounded by the Calvinist and Unitarian norms in New England.

Said's Postcolonial Theoretical Lens

In his childhood and schooling spent in the British colonies of Palestine and Egypt, Edward Said experienced first-hand the stereotypes and degradations imposed by Orientalism. In Said's magnum opus *Orientalism*, he exposes various forms of Orientalism embedded in Western literature. Through a careful study of key Western authors, ranging from Homer to Karl Marx, Said explains Orientalism and the role of Orientalists in these works, while distinguishing between the Orient (the Near and Far East) and the Occident (Western nations and cultures). Further, Said explores the harsh reality of Orientalism as an act of Western dominance, an evolving human construct, and as a hierarchical exchange laden with centuries of Western imperialism. By closely analyzing Western texts and uncovering the patterns of dominance imposed by the West on the East, Said offers a powerful theoretical lens for his audience to apply to all Western texts involving the foreign and "Other" Orient.

Although the majority of Western countries take part in Orientalist studies and mindsets, Said's Orientalism focuses on Britain, France, and the United States. Further, Said delves into the implications of European imperialism in the eighteenth century and beyond as he "stud[ies] Orientalism as a dynamic exchange between individual authors and the large political concerns shaped by the three great empires—British, French, American—in whose intellectual and imaginative territory the writing was produced" (14-15). The impacts of the imperialist age permeate the writings of Orientalists, for "nearly every nineteenth-century writer . . . was extraordinarily well aware of the fact of empire" (Said 14). With this cultural reality in mind, the Western Orientalist interpreted Eastern concepts and texts through a primarily political lens, grounded in a sense of personal superiority over the East. These scholars, including nineteenth century American Transcendentalists, were not separated from their national and political

identities when approaching another culture. When an Orientalist "comes up against the Orient as a European or American first, as an individual second," they participate in a history of unbalanced discourse between cultural powers (Said 11). Through the close study of individual writers and their works, Said traces the evolution of Orientalism and Orientalists throughout the ages, distinguishing these stages as pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial. He first documents the beginnings of Orientalism as a term and concept: "The choice of 'Oriental' was canonical; it had been employed by Chaucer and Mandeville, by Shakespeare, Dryden, Pope, and Byron. It designated Asia or the East, geographically, morally, culturally" (30). These key figures in the Western canon developed Orientalism as an "intellectual power," creating and communicating certain ideas and stereotypes about Eastern cultures (Said 42). Catalyzed by Napoleon Bonaparte's French imperial conquests, Western intrigue in the "Orient" blossomed: "The period of immense advance in the institutions and content of Orientalism coincides exactly with the period of unparalleled European expansion; from 1815 to 1914 European direct colonial dominion expanded from about 35 percent of the earth's surface to about 85 percent of it. Every continent was affected, none more so than Africa and Asia" (qtd. in Said 41). Said refers to this influx of Orientalist thought and literature as an "Oriental renaissance" because of newly available translations of sacred and common texts originally in Asian, Middle Eastern, and Indian languages (42). Texts including the Hindu Vedas and *Bhagavad-Gita,* Buddhist, and Confucian works became available in Europe and then America, which many Western scholars interpreted as a "newly perceived relationship between the Orient and the West" (Said 42). By studying the beginnings of Orientalism based in political power and dominion, this language of authority and conquest is evident in Orientalist literature and studies. This returns to Said's original intent and purpose for *Orientalism,* "to illustrate the formidable structure of cultural

domination and, specifically for formally colonized peoples, the dangers and temptations of employing this structure among themselves or upon others," and to display that "too often literature and culture are presumed to be politically, even historically innocent . . . society and literary culture can only be understood and studied together" (25, 27).

Ultimately, Said encourages his audience to implement this postcolonial understanding in their own studies and interpretations of Western texts in advising, "[t]he things to look out for are style, figures of speech, setting, narrative devices, historical and social circumstances, *not* the correctness of the representation nor its fidelity to some great original" (21). Oftentimes in Orientalist literature, the author's intention is revealed both in their incorrect representations *and* in their writing style and problematic tone; this correlation in Thoreau's *Walden* contradicts Said's claim. The fundamental aspect of Said's text for this essay involves the layered definitions of Orientalism including: (1) the Orientalist scholar, who imposes incomplete knowledge to the reader through text; (2) the Oriental, who as a constant subject symbolizes the "Other" and mystical foreigner who is idealistically defined and dominated; and (3) the Western consumers of Orientalism who, as readers, must "accept Orientalist codifications as the true Orient. Truth, in short, becomes a function of learned judgement, not of the material itself, which in time seems to owe even its existence to the Orientalist" (Said 67). These definitions convey that Orientalist studies reveal more about hegemonies within Western culture than the actual cultures studied. Said observes writers like Thoreau as scholars and enthusiasts of the Orient, who impose incomplete, romanticized, and classical facts and ideas about other cultures as timeless realities for their audiences. While Thoreau and his Transcendentalist peers never actually visit the countries and peoples that they study and write about, namely the Chinese, Persians, Indians, and "Hindoos," they are content with studying these cultures at a limited distance. Accordingly, the

Transcendentalists claim to understand the "Orient" strictly through Eastern classical literature. Thoreau in particular builds his philosophy by establishing imaginative authority over these people groups, demonstrating the Western practice of domination and imperialism even in the realm of literature, philosophy, and religion. Thoreau's confidence in shaping his theology inspired by bits and pieces of Eastern thought and religion is an ideal Orientalist case study, for he studies these cultures to gain an understanding that benefits his unique worldview and philosophy at the expense of cultural and historical accuracies. Said further argues, ". . . having transported the Orient into modernity, the Orientalist could celebrate his method, and his position, as that of a secular creator, a man who made new worlds as God had once made the old" (121). As Orientalists, Thoreau and the Transcendentalists develop a certain doxology and god-like mastery over these various texts and cultures to form a new worldview suited for their New England audiences.

New England Transcendentalism: Social, Religious, and Historical Contexts

The Transcendental period from 1830-1850 was as much a social and religious movement as it was a literary moment in American history. In Anne C. Rose's revisionist piece *Transcendentalism as a Social Movement,* she portrays the key Transcendentalist writers as not only influential in the academy, but as "fully part of the social life of antebellum America" (vii). She describes these men and women Transcendentalists as "determined social reformers who lived at the outset of the urban industrial revolution, without question the decisive moment of transition of modern times, and their aspirations speak eloquently of human resilience in the face of tremendous social and moral dislocation" (vii). Through their writings and personal examples, these scholars emphasized the importance of trusting human intuition and self-reliance to gain liberation from flawed human institutions. New England Transcendentalism was founded in

Boston's Unitarian Church, a liberal-leaning group when it came to subjects such as Christian doctrine and the interpretation of sacred texts. In comparison to their Calvinist neighbors, the Unitarians were a branch of their own in terms of their liberal theology and strong emphasis on human reason, intellect, and societal morals. Rose notes, "[a] moral society had become as important as eternal salvation" in Boston in the 1830s-50s, reflecting a secularizing community shaped by global and progressive ideas (13). Many Unitarians did not consider themselves bound to gaining spiritual insight from a singular sacred text such as the Bible, as Rose observes, "Unitarians did not dismiss Scripture. But their acceptance of rationalistic 'higher criticism,' by making room for the advancement of the secular mind, licensed the cosmopolitan interests of Bostonians aware of European literature and letters and intent on producing their own" (12). Geared with this critical lens towards texts, Boston intellectuals were encouraged to explore the Orientalist literature coming out of Europe, and inspired to engage with these newly available wisdom texts and cultures. Eventually, the early Transcendentalists distanced themselves from the Christian tradition entirely and developed a new "religion" based in philosophy, the study of comparative religions, and a focus on the inherent potential of each human to experience freedom from the constraints of institutions, whether governmental or religious.

Arthur Versluis further develops this concept of Transcendentalism as a religious movement in *American Transcendentalism and Asian Religions.* This branch of thought would not be possible without the incorporation of world religions, as Versluis notes, ". . . at the center of the entire American Transcendental movement was the encounter of the world religions" (13). This religious movement shifted away from orthodox Calvinistic and Unitarian roots, and instead adopted what Versluis terms "currents" of Oriental thought, German Transcendentalism, Christian mysticism, and European Romanticism (6). The philosophy was not without its faults,

Versluis writes, "[for] just as Western colonizers would send back physical artifacts from distant lands, artifacts thereby divorced from the cultures to which they belonged, so too the Transcendentalist intellectual colonizers sought to take from the world religions that suited them . . ." (5). These borrowed Eastern traditions are not only severed from their cultural contexts, but their significance is transformed by writers like Thoreau to benefit an American perspective. This "divorce" of sacred texts from their cultural contexts is a form of colonization that cheapens the depth and meaning of the original rich literature. Without the "discovery of the Asian religious traditions," Versluis writes, this Transcendentalist religious and social movement and "vision" would not have been possible (10). At the darker root of Transcendentalism is an incomplete representation of Asian religions borrowed to enhance a dominating American movement.

Henry Thoreau first encountered Eastern literature during and after his senior year of college, a subject outside of Harvard's philosophy curriculum at the time. After reading Emerson's *Nature,* the "testament of Transcendentalism," and *A Historical and Descriptive Account of British India* by Hugh Murray, Thoreau became fascinated with the classical history of India, inspired by images of the ascetic, yogi, and mystical contemplator (Albert 104). It is important to note that this *Account of British India,* Thoreau's first encounter with Eastern subjects, was written in an imperialist and Orientalist perspective that "betrays the usual Victorian and imperialist prejudices toward the 'natives'" (105). After graduating from college, Emerson took Thoreau under his wing as a mentor, guiding him to discover and reach his potential as a writer and member of the Transcendentalist movement (104). From Thoreau's graduation in 1837 to his move to Walden Pond in 1845, he immersed himself in the available translations of Asian texts, including the Hindu *Bhagavad-Gita,* Vedas, and the *Laws of Manu,*

Sufi texts, and the Western philosophical classics. He also officially left the Unitarian Church in New England at the age of twenty-three. When Thoreau set out to Walden Pond, he brought with him Emerson's copy of the *Bhagavad Gita,* translated by Charles Wilkins in 1785 (Hodder 102). Thoreau sought to discover for himself the "meanness" or sublimity of life and address his central religious problem: human ignorance and the failure to reach one's potential (85-6). With Western and Eastern wisdom texts in tow and the privilege to spend his days in contemplation, Thoreau began his life at Walden, put his philosophy of simplicity into practice, and published the finished piece in 1854.

Thoreau Crafts his Theology: An Analysis

The location and isolated qualities of Walden Pond provide freedom for Thoreau to explore his inner self, the outer world, and develop a personal theology. As the memoir progresses, Thoreau builds his philosophy on the pillars of simplicity, awakening, reincarnation, and innocence. In his "Solitude" reflection, Thoreau describes Walden Pond as an isolated place: "My nearest neighbor is a mile distant, and no house is visible from any place but the hill-tops within half a mile of my own. . . . It is as much Asia or Africa as New England. I have, as it were . . . a little world all to myself" (123). Disconnected from distractions present in his Concord "village," Thoreau can discover truths through quiet observations of the world outside of and even beyond his solitary cabin. Living simply and in solitude is a form of rebellion against a corrupt society for Thoreau. As he establishes his dwelling along the pond's shores, his personal life echoes the cyclical nature of his surroundings. The life in these waters symbolizes the cycles of spiritual and natural vitality for Thoreau, as he writes, "[t]he phenomena of the year take place every day in a pond on a small scale. . . . The day is an epitome of the year. The night is the winter, the morning and evening are the spring and fall, and the noon is the summer" (282). This

observation of the steady cycles guiding the natural world translate to Thoreau's spiritual life, as he repeatedly alludes to Hindu texts and ideas involving reincarnation and double-ness of the soul. Living so near to Walden Pond, a place devoid of superficiality and pretense, Thoreau gains inspiration to face his own double-ness and flaws. Critic Melvin E. Lyon notes on this double-ness, "[a]long with [Thoreau's] natural self, he has a potential spiritual self, higher and better than the former, and the ability to evolve from his natural self to his spiritual self" (292). Thus, the location in which Thoreau chooses to abide and write in solitude provides a setting of clarity, ecstatic moments of sublime reflection, and a quiet view of cycles governing nature as well as Thoreau's spirit.

On the shores of Walden Pond, Thoreau experiences a return to innocence and a spiritual awakening, as well as the discovery of the divine within himself. The essence of humanity, according to Thoreau, is a divinity meant to be realized, honored, and explored. This innate divinity, a central idea in the Hindu *Upanishads,* would have been a radical concept for his Protestant audience in New England (Cowan and Echterling 63). In Thoreau's pluralistic vision of heaven and the ideal life, he views all religious texts as sacred and universally relevant: "That age will be rich indeed…when the Vaticans shall be filled with Vedas and Zendavestas and Bibles, with Homers and Dantes and Shakespeares, and all the centuries to come shall have successfully deposited their trophies in the forum of the world. By such a pile we may hope to scale heaven at last" (98-99). Initially, it appears that Thoreau lacks a personal connection to his Artist and Builder God, but in reality, he desires a relationship with the divine. Thoreau yearns to ". . . walk even with the Builder of the Universe . . . not to live in this restless, nervous, bustling, trivial Nineteenth century, but to stand or sit thoughtfully while it goes by. . . . Rather than love, than money, than fame, give me truth" (308-9). While Thoreau adopts a view of God as a distant

creator and sustainer of the world, he actively seeks access to the divine through enjoying and studying the "Artist's" work in nature (286).

In Thoreau's theology, one discovers salvation through meditation, the waters of Walden Pond, spring rains, and reunion of the self with Nature. For Thoreau, meditation and gaining self-knowledge is salvific, requiring the rejection of the animal self and the pursuit of those Higher Laws (205). Describing his own meditative experience at Walden, Thoreau notes, "I realized what the Orientals mean by contemplation and the forsaking of works" (105-06). Lacking a specific source or point of reference, Thoreau falls into an Orientalist habit in making overarching and romanticized claims about the "Other" Orient. While his intentions for meditating and gaining spiritual knowledge appear pure-hearted, Thoreau fails to offer his audience a source, ultimately sounding flippant and careless towards religious accuracy and honoring another culture. Taking a more naturalistic approach, Thoreau also finds salvation in the purifying rains of spring: "A single gentle rain makes the grass many shades greener. So our prospects brighten on the influx of better thoughts. . . . *In a pleasant spring morning all men's sins are forgiven*" (294, emphasis added). Salvation for Thoreau comes in these fleeting moments of connection. Whether he is practicing yogic meditation or simply observing the cycles of the world around him, Thoreau yearns to reconnect himself with the natural and higher world to reach his full potential. Living in ignorance, slumber, and disconnection from the natural world is at the root of modern humanity's problem, Thoreau concludes. Cowan and Echterling place *Walden* as a remedy to today's "myth of the isolated mind," in that it "symbolizes modern man's growing alienation from nature, from others, and disconnection from one's own subjective experience" (qtd. from Stolorow & Atwood 56). While he takes an overarching Orientalist approach for several points, Thoreau concludes that salvation from the

modern person's slumber, ignorance, and even loneliness is found in this simple reconnection with the natural world.

As an Orientalist, Thoreau is selective about his worship spaces and practices, and in this process blurs the distinctions between different religious and cultural traditions. For Thoreau, Nature is his main source of divine inspiration, but *not* the object of his worship. Hodder discusses this important distinction, in that "nature was a perpetual point of departure, the matrix of [Thoreau's] life, not some final conclusion" (101). In the forest "shrines" that Thoreau visits on his meditative walks, boat rides, and baths in Walden Pond, he realizes that "Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads," and experiences fulfillment and enlightenment in the present moment (266). Living by simple means and even in poverty is a source of inspiration for Thoreau, which further alienates him from his Harvard-educated peers. In this disconnection from his New England reality, Thoreau casts himself as the misunderstood and foreign mystic. To him, poverty is connected to a sort of liberation from the material world and gaining enlightenment. Thoreau looks to the sea of past philosophers and discovers a connecting factor of poverty: ". . . The wisest have ever lived a more simple and meagre life than the poor. The ancient philosophers, Chinese, Persian, and Greek, were a class than which none has been poorer in outward riches, none so rich inward" (12). While this claim might hold true to his limited resources and translated texts, Thoreau idealizes the religious practices of four different people groups with one stroke of his pen and imposes his incomplete knowledge on the reader. In the end, Thoreau was an individualist and pluralist in taking his own assumptions and contemplations as the ultimate source (Hodder 102). These claims convey a sense of entitlement to borrow fragments from other faith traditions to form his individualized worldview.

In Thoreau's theology, one must transcend religion itself to experience the Divine, and to discover one's potential and essence of life. This experience leads to an awakening from ignorance and slumber, in which Thoreau addresses in his "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For" segment: "To be awake is to be alive. I have never yet met a man who was quite awake. How could I have looked him in the face?" (85). Because Thoreau experiences the truth through Nature and is awakened to the interconnectedness of life, he considers himself blessed and favored. For example, when Thoreau writes, "[s]ometimes, when I compare myself with other men, it seems as if I were more favored by the gods than they, beyond any deserts that I am conscious of," he clearly displays his entitled perspective (124). Beyond this belief in spiritual favor, Thoreau's theology includes the interconnectedness of all creation, cultures, and even time periods. Perhaps this worldview impacts Thoreau's idea of exploring the world, peoples, and ages through his mind and meditation. He addresses this cyclical and limitless relationship in his "Economy" chapter: ". . . I have been anxious to improve the nick of time, and notch it on my stick too; to stand on the meeting of two eternities, the past and future, which is precisely the present moment; to toe that line" (14). Thoreau not only links the concept of time and geographical locations, but also connects different cultures and religions to formulate his pluralistic perspective. In this "meeting of two eternities," Thoreau creates a new mythology inspired by these world religions based in his own understanding.

Perhaps the strongest example of Thoreau's interconnected philosophy is in his concept of Walden Pond as a sort of "mediator" and middle ground between heaven and earth (Hodder 100). Walden Pond is the connecting factor between the East and the West in Thoreau's mind. Thoreau's comparison of Walden Pond to the waters of the Ganges River in India is instrumental in his theological development. One morning as Thoreau walks to his pond in reverie and

meditation, he envisions a Hindu priest, Bramin, sitting near Walden's waters. Thoreau boldly declares, "[t]he pure Walden water is mingled with the sacred water of the Ganges" (279). Symbolically uniting this American pond to the Ganges River worlds away demonstrates Thoreau's ability to powerfully meditate and explore his mind, as well as his Orientalist mindset. William Wolf notes on the significance of Thoreau's mysticism: "The unitive experience not only transcends time, it overcomes the separations and strangeness of space, leading to communion with forms of life other than human, even to fellowship with inanimate matter" (121). Walden Pond serves not only as a literary symbol in this narrative, but as a mystical site that catalyzes Thoreau's spiritual awakening. With this, he is creating not only a personal theology, but a mythology at Walden Pond and establishes himself as spiritually and morally attuned in the process.

Walden Pond itself symbolizes Thoreau's liberating experience of reconnection to the natural world. From morning baths in the pond to sun-lit meditation along its shores, Thoreau views these waters as sacred reflections of the ideal human qualities of depth and purity (Lyon 290). Thoreau especially evokes Eastern mysticism and religion in recounting his bathing ritual in the pond's waters: "I got up early and bathed in the pond; that was a religious experience, and one of the best things which I did. . . . Morning brings back the heroic ages" (83). This union with natural elements heightens Thoreau's awareness of his spiritual nature in contrast to the religious practices of his staunchly Calvinist neighbors in Concord. While the majority of Protestants during this time focused beyond the bounds of earth on life after death, Thoreau sought to "suck out all the marrow of life" and find meaning in awareness of each moment (85). Through this intentional and delightful practice of awareness, Thoreau discovers that spiritual and physical realities intertwine in the natural world.

A central text for Thoreau's theology and loose adoption of Eastern religious thought and philosophy is the Hindu *Bhagavad-Gita.* Fascinated by this work, Thoreau deems—in American terms—that it is necessary to renounce the ways of the world, disconnect from materialistic desires, and awaken to truths discovered in the present moment. In his "Ponds in the Winter" segment, Thoreau reflects, "[i]n the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonal philosophy of the *Bhagvat-Geeta,* since whose comparison with which our modern world and its literature seem puny and trivial" (279). As Thoreau absorbs wisdom from this ancient dialogue between Arjuna and Krishna, he attempts to apply Krishna's words to his own meditative life in the woods. In deep study and reflection, Thoreau connects with nature along with his spiritual self in a manner mimicking the practical aspects of yoga. These words in the *Bhagavad-Gita* reflect Thoreau's intention to attain wisdom and live sincerely: "The yogi should retire into a solitary place, and live alone. He must exercise control over his mind and body. He must free himself from the hopes and possessions of this world. He should meditate on the Atman unceasingly" (75; ch. 6). Accordingly, if yoga is defined as a "liberating method" and "unifying" practice that brings the natural and spiritual self together, then Thoreau's life at Walden Pond correlates, however loosely, with that of a yogi (Macshane 326-27).

Thoreau wholeheartedly lived out his philosophy, at least for the extent of his Walden Pond experiment. His ideas did not remain in the "ivory tower" of his mind or scholarship; instead, Thoreau demonstrated his pluralistic philosophy and documented the experience for his New England neighbors and the larger world to see. With his explorative account of Walden Pond, Thoreau urges his readers to likewise find escape from the ruts and routines of joyless labor. By ridding his mental and physical life of distractions and experiencing the natural world, Thoreau discovers that, "God himself culminates in the present moment. . . . We are enabled to

apprehend at all what is sublime and noble only by the perpetual instilling and drenching of the reality which surrounds us" (971). He recognizes the duality of humanity and the choice between living a life asleep to truth and living in a spiritually founded state. Thoreau realizes that developing spiritual awareness contrasts expectations in a materialistic and success-driven world.

In the end, Thoreau's time at Walden Pond was a limited and unsustainable experiment. "I left the woods for as good a reason as I went there," Thoreau concludes. "Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live, and could not spare any more time for that one. It is remarkable how easily and insensibly we call into a particular route, and make a beaten track for ourselves" (302). The Transcendentalist could not conform to his own established "ruts" and routines at Walden Pond, and was curious to explore his mind and the world in fresh ways. Ironically, Thoreau transcends the sacred texts and concepts that he once considered ideal. After *Walden* was published in 1854, Thoreau received a vast collection of Eastern texts from a British friend, Thomas Cholmondeley in 1855. Versluis notes that this collection was the rarest and "largest collection of Orientalist volumes in America in private hands at the time" (92). Despite this impressive library of Orientalist resources, Thoreau's later publicized writings steered away from Eastern thought and religious practices. After the publication of *Walden,* Thoreau eventually dismissed much of his Orientalist scholarship in favor of a more naturalist philosophy.

Conclusion

Thoreau's personal theology shaped by selective pieces of Eastern thought and religion deems him an Orientalist, for he studies these cultures to gain an understanding that benefits a distinctly American worldview at the expense of cultural and historical accuracies. Thus, Thoreau and his writings must not be interpreted as politically or historically innocent. In the vein of Said's theory that "society and literary culture can only be understood and studied

together," I argue that Thoreau and his greater literary movement were undeniably influenced by and connected to Orientalism and its social consequences (27). As modern-day readers sensitive to the dangers of misrepresentation and cultural appropriation, how are we to interpret texts like *Walden*? Should we ignore the pretentious, privileged, and narrow-minded aspects of Thoreau and his literature? Should we allow this knowledge to ruin the goodness, truth, and relevance found in the text? Or, should we recognize Thoreau's shortcomings, bring these issues of inaccuracies and generalizations to light, and allow a postcolonial lens to enrich our understanding and contextualization of *Walden*? Thoreau displays a double-ness within his own consciousness that correlates with the audience's layered interpretation of the text. His mind is both "in the clouds" and on earthly, practical matters. There is a tension between the idealized Walden Pond experience and the reality of life in nineteenth century America, and Thoreau realizes his limitations and flaws in a rare statement of humility: "However intense my experience, I am conscious of the presence and a criticism of a part of me, which, as it were, is not a part of me, but spectator, sharing no experience, but taking note of it; and that is no more I than it is you. . . . This doubleness may easily make us poor neighbors and friends sometimes" (128). When Thoreau engages with Eastern text and thought at Walden Pond, he explores the world through literature and meditation, but in the process, inauthentically labels the sacred texts and practices in countries and cultures that he cannot call his own. Authors like Thoreau are pioneers of American literature, but do not deserve complete idealization. If we read *Walden* without a critical eye and gloss over its problematic passages, we miss a vital element of the conversation. By diving into these uncomfortable entries that reveal Thoreau's shortcomings, one can better understand the roots and inspirations of his writing and the problematic trends of the greater Transcendentalist movement. Tempered with a fuller understanding, contemporary

and diverse readers can value Thoreau's accomplishment and contribution while asking new and informed questions that keep *Walden* in the literary canon. This critical perspective balances a due regard for Thoreau with an acknowledgement of his shortcomings as an Orientalist. Most importantly, rather than becoming outdated and eventually forgotten entirely, *Walden* can remain in today's literary conversation and inspire its readers to awaken to their true potentials in the rich and present moment.

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Essay

Celena Hathaway

Understanding the Female Soldier's Experience in *Soldier Girls* Through

Feminist Institutionalism and Feminist Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis

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T here is significant overlap between the sciences and humanities, which, in literature, is most evident through the application of literary theory, including psychological, sociological, feminist, and political theories, to name a few. What is lacking, however, is the unique collaboration between the socio-political theory of institutionalism and feminist theory, or feminist institutionalism and, more specifically, an example of how this particular approach can be applied to literature. Journalist Helen Thorpe provides fertile ground for feminist institutionalism in her nonfiction book *Soldier Girls*, an extensive report that exposes the intimate realities of three very different women in the Indiana National Guard who deploy to Afghanistan and Iraq. Thorpe uses literary journalism to chronicle the women's lives before, during, and after their deployments, harmoniously weaving their individual experiences with gendered power dynamics, hegemonic masculinity, sexual assault and harassment, and dual identities into a seamless whole. Not only does the book provide an opportunity for feminist institutionalism to be applied to literature, but the surprisingly poignant narrative style also gives a unique insight into military culture. The aim of my thesis is twofold in that I will first argue that feminist institutionalism is relevant to and can be applied to literature and, second, I will demonstrate how feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis is also a relevant approach for a more holistic understanding of the female soldier's experience in *Soldier Girls*.

Introduction: What is Feminist Institutionalism,

and Why Is It Relevant to Literary Analysis?

In this section, I will first discuss the differences between and applications of three interdisciplinary theories: new institutionalism, feminist poststructuralist discourse analysis, and feminist institutionalism in order to accomplish two goals: 1) to explain the significance of feminist institutionalism and its origins and; 2) to demonstrate how feminist institutionalism can and should be applied to literature as a subset of feminist literary theory. First, it is essential that I define exactly what an institution is. To be considered an institution, an entity must be comprised of formal and informal rules, formal meaning that it is structured by a set of rules and informal meaning unspoken rules, values, or standards. Formal and informal institutions are contrasted by the types of rules to which they adhere. According to Mackay et al., formal institutions are comprised of "rules-in-form," or formalized rules, while informal institutions utilize the learned do's and don'ts, or "rules-in-use" (576). Examples of formal institutions include places that enforce a recognized set of rules and regulations, such as labor unions, corporations, and religious organizations, while examples of informal institutions include occurrences within those formal institutions like work culture and political ideologies. Most importantly, however, the two types of rules are not mutually exclusive, as informal rules tend to emerge when there is a void in a formal institution that cannot be filled through the proper channels or if there exists a need to achieve change that cannot be accomplished otherwise. The military, for example, is an institution that is comprised of both formal and informal rules.

In order to best understand what feminist institutionalism is and where it comes from, it is necessary to understand the meaning of new institutionalism. In the broadest sense, new institutionalism is a compilation of "structures, rules, and standard operating procedures" that

serves as "a general approach to the study of political institutions" and "emphasizes the endogenous nature and social construction of political institutions" (March and Olsen 2). Though the concept of new institutionalism can be interdisciplinary, it is most commonly reserved for political analysis and is the fundamental study of how institutions interact with society and how they affect human behavior through rules and norms. Though research conducted within the confines of new institutionalism is particularly useful in the social, historical, and political sciences, recent applications have grappled with using gendered analysis to highlight the exclusively gendered aspects of the norms, rules, and standards within these institutions—an already established weapon in the feminist literary theory arsenal.

Feminist institutionalism emerged as an approach that emphasizes gender in political institutions and, more specifically, the disproportionate power balance between men and women within institutions. Traditionally, feminist institutionalism asserts that "institutions are thoroughly permeated with gender" and, according to Doina Ljungholm, this disproportionate power balance between men and women in political institutions can "permit men to establish the requirements of women's admission to the political system" (249). Because the scope of this thesis revolves around the military as its political institution, it should be noted that the military does not discriminate *admission* based on gender (with the exception of certain exclusionary combat roles); however, as evidenced by *Soldier Girls*, gender discrimination permeates every facet of life for women upon entry into the military, including whether or not they receive the necessary training that directly effects their ability to perform their jobs, whether or not they pass weapons qualifications, and whether or not they are taken seriously when accusing a male colleague of sexual assault. Conversely, feminist poststructuralist discourse analysis (or discourse analysis as I will refer to it henceforth), which infers that individuals alternate between

both powerful/dominant and powerless/victim subject positions and provides that no speaker is ever entirely one or the other, is integral to the scope of this thesis because it challenges the tendency of literary analysis to pit oppositions against one another by *not* placing any one opposition over the other (Baxter 245). For example, discourse analysis avoids polarizing women as solely victims and men as solely villains in any oppositional sense, which is directly applicable to the male/female dynamic in *Soldier Girls* that I will discuss later in my thesis. Ultimately, I will argue that *Soldier Girls* exhibits both feminist institutionalism *and* discourse analysis as the book displays women as both disadvantaged and equal. Finally, institutions like the military are influenced by gender in that they have been inherently dominated by men, leaving little room for a female perspective: "the relationship between gender and institutions has largely been overlooked" and "has failed to engage with the now extensive feminist literature concerned with women in political institutions . . . despite shared interests" (Mackay 579). This leaves a void in literary analysis which feminist institutionalism is uniquely qualified to fill.

But how can the institutional domain as a whole, which is inherently sociological and political, be applied to literature when, historically, institutionalism and feminist theory have been so vehemently opposed? How does one reconcile such an intrinsically patriarchal institutional domain with woman-oriented feminist literary theory? Clearly, the answer is through the medium of feminist institutionalism, since the two have numerous vested interests. First, institutionalism and feminist theory both take a pluralistic approach, both acknowledge that formal and informal institutions exist, both see institutional and social processes as gendered, both believe that institutions create and sustain gender power dynamics, and both analyze individuals based on their level of agency. Second, they both share the same goals in highlighting the existence and injustice of a biased, gendered power structure, as well as

highlighting the unequal distribution of power and resources, how this inequality affects both individuals and society as a whole, and what changes should come about following the acknowledgement of these issues. Furthermore, feminist institutionalism offers tools and strategies that provide a sharper, more accurate analysis of how gender influences agency in the gap between formal and informal institutions. Ultimately, there is significant academic advantage in recognizing that feminist institutionalism deserves a proper categorization within feminist literary theory since the latter's primary function is to establish women as worthy objects of study.

Soldier Girls: When Feminist Institutionalism Meets Literary Journalism

Soldier Girls exhibits all of the characteristics of literary journalism in a setting that is ripe for feminist institutionalism for a number of reasons, including its nonfiction, fact-driven, comprehensively researched approach that takes place in arguably one of the most disproportionately gendered institutions in the world. In addition to exploring formal rules and certain informal norms that favor masculinity over femininity, the book evaluates the manner in which three female soldiers—Michelle, Desma, and Debbie—are professionally disadvantaged compared to their male counterparts, yet they remain relatively equal socially. Thorpe interweaves the personal narratives of these women who are different ages and from different socioeconomic backgrounds over the course of twelve years as they share combat experience in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as their struggles at home both before and after they deploy. She details the struggling paths that led them to the military and how their interpersonal and familial relationships suffer as a result, as well as the risky substance abuse, promiscuity, and infidelities that so easily become their go-to coping and survival mechanisms. Thorpe also chronicles the unique stressors that accompany the attention of men, including sexual assault, unwanted

pregnancy, abortion, and even how both engaging in sex and rejecting the sexual advances of men negatively affect their careers. Finally, she adds that physical injuries become a daily reminder of traumatic experiences that the women would rather forget and that the psychological trauma can become overwhelming, especially when they experience the deaths of fellow soldiers. Overall, the unique narrative includes reconstructed dialogue, personal diary entries from each woman, and interviews with secondary characters that collectively accomplish more than simply lending insight into the female soldier's experience—it provides a raw, intimate glimpse into the power of unlikely friendships in times of intense isolation, and how sometimes these friendships are the only thing keeping these women alive.

Applying Feminist Institutionalism to Literature in *Soldier Girls*

In order to apply feminist institutionalism to *Soldier Girls*, it is necessary to first understand how the military qualifies and operates as an institution and how this institution affects the lives of the three women. The United States military qualifies as an institution because it consists of both formal rules, such as the Uniform Code of Military Justice that serves as its internal legal justice system, and informal rules that members abide by that dictate certain behavior, such as the good old boys club and the belief that women do not belong in combat. Though the formal rules until recently have discriminated against females in certain military roles, it is the informal social norms that are particularly resistant to change. However, despite the formal attempts to improve them, it is the informal norms that explain why female soldiers tend to be disadvantaged professionally compared to their male counterparts. Michelle, Desma, and Debbie all serve in the Indiana National Guard, which is part of the Army, and throughout the book they hold reserve and active duty statuses, though not simultaneously. This means that while they are on reserve status, they hold civilian jobs, yet can be "activated" for training and

deployments. In other words, the members of the Indiana National Guard can be called to serve at any time with as little as two weeks' notice (like their Afghanistan deployment) or as long as nine months' notice (like their Iraq deployment) and be forced to leave their civilian lives behind, which often includes children or grandchildren, elderly parents, sick friends, or longing lovers. In the next section, I will introduce the specific obstacles that Michelle, Desma, and Debbie must face during training and on deployments, which include hegemonic masculinity and the pervasive sexual assault and sexual harassment epidemic that often effects the females' ability to do their jobs.

Men as Dominant: Hegemonic Masculinity in the Military and in *Soldier Girls*

Feminist institutionalism contends that the military is an inherently masculine-oriented institution that revolves around the historical, masculine role of soldier as male; femininity, by contrast, is countered against this masculinity and is therefore less-than. Annica Kronsell explains that institutions like the military "have been monopolized by men and their norms have been defined on the basis of male bodies and masculine practices" (284). Consequently, these practices have been normalized and regularized. Roman Hinojosa adds that the military "offers men unique resources for the construction of a masculine identity defined by emotional control, overt heterosexual desire, physical fitness, self-discipline, self-reliance, the willingness to use aggression and physical violence, and risk-taking, qualities tightly aligned with the military" that are "also in line with the hegemonic ideal" (Hinojosa 180). While this concept is not reserved exclusively for males, almost every male soldier in *Soldier Girls* exhibits at least one of these traits, including Patrick Miller who attempts to emotionally control Michelle into submission as her superior. Though Michelle, an outspoken, stubborn, intelligent twenty-two-year-old with an affinity for punk rock music and smoking weed, considers Miller a friend when they are

stateside, he quickly becomes her mortal enemy while on deployment in Afghanistan: "Miller annoyed her with his driven, promilitary attitude. He was a slight man with a buzz cut and an Alabama twang," and Michelle describes him as having a "'huge Napoleon complex'" (Thorpe 134). Miller maintains his promilitary attitude, which contradicts Michelle's nonconformist attitude, refuses to tolerate Michelle's repeated tardiness, and responds by cursing her out and "going ballistic until she broke down crying" on a daily basis (Thorpe 137). Eventually, Miller "got even more loud and vulgar, as if he could browbeat Michelle into submission" in his personal mission to convert her from a reluctant soldier into an enthusiastic one (Thorpe 139). He did not succeed. Miller, however, is not the only male to use his rank in order to take advantage of a female subordinate. Using the following examples from the book, I will begin discussing the sexual assault and sexual harassment epidemic that pervades military culture and introduce the root causes and myths surrounding sexual assault, including gender stereotypes, alcohol, blaming the victim, and how the military reporting system fails victims.

"Another Kind of Friendly Fire": The Sexual Assault and Harassment Epidemic in the Military as Demonstrated by *Soldier Girls*

The area in which the gendered implications of feminist institutionalism and the perpetuation of informal rules are most prominent can be found in the high rates of sexual assault, harassment, and discrimination of women. Desma, a twenty-eight-year-old mother of three who is deliberately undiplomatic, has difficulty with authority, and is also wholly revered by her peers for her altruistic nature, carefree attitude, and refusal to conform to what she considers arbitrary standards, finds herself in a similarly inappropriate situation with not one but *two* male superiors. The first male superior to exert his rank and superiority is Desma's military recruiter. After he processes her initial enlistment, he "sexually assaulted her after she signed her

contract . . . although she never reported the incident" (Thorpe 65). Desma's case is the perfect

example of how the process upon which military personnel rely to report incidents of sexual

assault fails victims. Military members who are victims of sexual assault and harassment have

two choices: 1) they can file a *restricted* report, which does not involve the chain of command

and is supposed to ensure confidentiality; or 2) they can file an *unrestricted* report that involves

the entire chain of command and a formal investigation, thus forfeiting confidentiality. The

former does not always remain confidential, however, and the latter involves multiple people

across several military agencies. In addition to the fear that their case may not remain

confidential, victims "generally report that they were not believed and that they suffered from

retaliation by other unit members" (Castro et al., 8). The book does not expound on the details

surrounding the incident between Desma and her recruiter. During a personal interview I

conducted with Desma Brooks, she opened up about her reasoning behind not reporting. Though

Desma is less concerned about retaliation from her recruiter, she is indeed concerned about

whether or not people would believe her: "I was young, using this as an opportunity to get out of

a terrible situation and raise my son," she says. "He made it seem like no one would believe me"

(Brooks). It is this kind of sexual misconduct, the kind at the hands of fellow soldiers, that

Michelle refers to as "another kind of friendly fire" (Thorpe 49). A different female soldier in the

book, unfortunately, who *does* report her alleged sexual assault, experiences firsthand the reality

of no one believing her: "The young woman was viewed as unreliable by her peers, however,

whereas the man she accused was well liked. The rape charge ignited a stormy controversy, with

most of the troops lining up behind the accused man. There was little support for the young

woman's position, partly because she had been drunk" (Thorpe 223). The book explains that the

soldier accused of the rape is instead convicted of the lesser charge of adultery, and the young

woman is not only outcast by her peers but also punished by being assigned to an undesirable post for the remainder of the deployment. This incident alone exemplifies multiple myths in military rape culture, including blaming the victim, alcohol, and even the angel mirage myth (the belief that a well-liked top performer is incapable of such a reprehensible act like sexual assault); "It is possible to be the best troop in the unit and be a sexual perpetrator—the two facts are independent of each other" (Castro et al., 3-4). Statistically, Thorpe explains, it would have been less likely that their battalion complete an entire year-long deployment without such an incident since these types of incidents were on the rise: "eventually as many as one-third of women who served in Iraq and Afghanistan would report having been subjected to a sexual assault of some kind during their deployments" (Thorpe 222). It is during their deployment to Afghanistan, which is detailed throughout the first half of the book, that the women begin to realize how outnumbered they are as they settle into life at Camp Phoenix in Kabul, the capital of and largest city in Afghanistan. With the ratio of men to women becoming more skewed as the deployment progresses, the female soldiers become more cautious than ever, and at one point, Desma even begins carrying a knife on her person at all times.

The sexual assault and sexual harassment epidemic demonstrates how informal norms perpetuate gender discrimination against female soldiers, and sexual harassment is an experience that all three women shared. The informal norms embedded into military culture are perpetuated because they are institutionalized, meaning that most military recruits accept and adhere to the norms of the institution in order to assimilate, specifically regarding the stigma surrounding sexual assaults. According to a 2010 survey conducted by the DoD, sixty-seven percent of female soldiers admitted that they would not feel comfortable reporting sexual assaults, while fifty-four percent reported that they fear reprisal from their peers and the military as an

institution if they were to report a case. Additionally, almost half of the males *and* females surveyed believe that these kinds of cases were not important enough to be reported. This demonstrates a problem within the culture of the institution surrounding sexual assault cases and proves that the informal norm of accepting and/or ignoring sexual misconduct has been institutionalized. Furthermore, because females account for eighty-eight percent of sexual assault victims in the military, this cultural indifference has disproportionately affected female soldiers more than male soldiers (DMDC 42-43). At any given training command or duty station, at least one of the female soldiers experiences unwanted attention from men, gender discrimination resulting in a hostile work environment, emotional abuse, or sexual propositions from superiors. For example, when Desma transfers to a previously all-male unit, the men "made it abundantly clear that they had preferred being an all-male group" and "had been instructed to keep their distance from the female soldiers" because a squad leader allegedly tells them that the females are not their allies and orders them not to talk to or socialize with them (Thorpe 278). They shun Desma and refuse to communicate with her even when it concerns important issues regarding work. She is forced to use a sort of sexist translator, a sympathetic male soldier who relays messages from Desma to other male soldiers who are often directly in front of her refusing to acknowledge that she is speaking to them, and they only address the male translator. Furthermore, in order to be fit to deploy, it is required that she qualify at the shooting range on numerous weapons, and when Desma fails to qualify at her new command four times after never having failed to qualify before, she begins to wonder if her alleged failures are, in fact, fabricated. She later confirms her suspicions when she obtains a copy of her results and discovers that she qualified *all four times*. When she initially requests a transfer from her unit, her platoon sergeant shoves her paperwork in the shredder, and it is not until she tells a high-ranking officer

that her training for the upcoming deployment is being withheld from her that she is granted a transfer (Thorpe 277-279).

Meanwhile, Michelle receives a much different experience regarding male attention when she is in training after first joining the National Guard. While the other females in her company are training for other jobs, Michelle discovers that she is the only female specializing in weapons training. Even though she outscores the highest speed, lowest drag soldier in her class, her classmates vote her competitor—a male—to be class leader. She attributes this to her being female and concedes that she would have to be a male in order to truly be accepted. Still, "Michelle could not earn the full respect from the male soldiers, but outside of the classroom, she could not escape their attention" (Thorpe 23). When Michelle is having trouble with her deployment boyfriend, her superior, Patrick Miller, says, "'Well, if you ever want to make Ben jealous,' Patrick said—then he raised one hand into the air—'pick me.' Great, now her boss was hitting on her, thought Michelle. That's life in the army for you'" (Thorpe 202). Furthermore, when Michelle is working with the Romanians in order to become familiar with the AK-47s, a Romanian officer says things to Michelle that "were so vile she could not bring herself to repeat his comments even years later; anytime the officer got her alone, he told her disgusting things he longed to do in graphic, obscene detail" (Thorpe 147). Perhaps the outlier in the group, however, is Debbie, a fifty-one-year-old lifer who becomes a grandmother while on her deployment to Afghanistan. She is oldest woman in Bravo company and finds herself as more of a mother figure to the males and females in her company with her benevolent, assiduous, welcoming demeanor. Debbie alternates between envy and relief when she considers the level of attention that the younger females receive from their male counterparts. Nevertheless, as a female in a male-dominated military culture, Debbie eventually finds herself in an uncomfortable situation

with a twenty-two-year-old Turkish national during her Iraq deployment. What Debbie considers

to be a platonic friendship quickly turns into Debbie having to fend off the man's repeated

advances when he proclaims his love for her, even though he is aware that Debbie is happily

married. She shrugs off the seriousness of the matter by joking to her husband that she has an

"Iraqi boyfriend," but she nevertheless has to end their friendship.

Alas, these three women and their shared experiences of sexual misconduct are only one

piece of the puzzle that constitutes the bigger picture concerning the collective experiences of

females who serve, particularly those who suffer from military sexual trauma. The increasing

number of females who seek medical help when they get out of the military poses a unique

challenge for medical professionals since more women are serving now than in previous wars.

Additionally, according to research conducted from 2001-2006, females "are serving extended

and repeated deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan, potentially putting them more at risk of

physical or mental health problems than female veterans from previous eras" (Haskell et al.,

267). Military sexual trauma is defined as "severe or threatening forms of sexual harassment and

sexual assault sustained in military service"; in active duty females, sexual assault happens at a

rate of three percent, sexual coercion at a rate of eight percent, and unwanted sexual attention at

a rate of twenty-seven percent (Haskell et al., 268). According to demographics at the time of the

Indiana National Guard's deployment to Afghanistan in 2004, Michelle, Desma, Debbie, and the

other females made up about eleven percent of the 146,000 soldiers with boots on the ground,

which totals about 16,000 females (Institute of Medicine 18). When the percentage of incidents

is applied to this number, it reflects that approximately 480 experienced sexual assault;

approximately 1,280 experienced sexual coercion; and approximately 4,320 experienced sexual

harassment or unwanted male attention. It is important to note that these are *reported* incidents,

and that many go unreported. At any rate, females in the military experience sexual trauma at a much higher rate than their civilian counterparts.

In this section, I explained the manner in which feminist institutionalism negatively affects female soldiers in *Soldier Girls*, such as how the good old boys club promotes the belief that women do not belong in combat and justifies preferential treatment for men, as well as how female soldiers are disproportionately affected by the cultural indifference surrounding the severity of sexual assault cases. I also discussed how the three women have been disadvantaged professionally because of this and used examples of how hegemonic masculinity contributes to various types of misconduct, including gender discrimination resulting in a hostile work environment, emotional abuse, sexual assault and harassment, and overall unwanted male attention that affect their experience as female soldiers. I also included a brief summary of the demographics and statistics of the types of military sexual trauma that female soldiers experienced during the deployment period of the three women highlighted in *Soldier Girls*. In the following section, I will apply discourse analysis to specific examples in the book and discuss how women in the military tend to develop dual identities to show that the combination of these two concepts are what make the females *socially* equal to their male counterparts.

Woman-Warrior:

Dual Identities and Feminist Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis

"The guys loved when she did that sort of thing—proved she was one of them and not one of them at the same time," Thorpe writes as she recounts the time Michelle put a burly male soldier in a hold, straddling him while wearing a fancy dress at a Marine Corps Ball (Thorpe 49). Michelle is balancing her identity as a *warrior* with her identity as a *woman* without compromising either, thus sustaining a woman-warrior identity. "Women must overcome the

stereotype that females, who traditionally are not supposed to kill or be violent, cannot be soldiers," and in doing so, "women may have to employ strategies, such as overemphasizing or underemphasizing their femininity, to redefine their gender to assimilate into the military culture," according to Victoria Culver (65). While feminist institutionalism essentially theorizes that women are wholly disadvantaged compared to men, and while I have proven how that tracks *professionally* in the book, there are several instances in *Soldier Girls* where Michelle, Desma, and Debbie are presented as *socially* equal to their male counterparts, which aligns more with the discourse analysis that I will explain in the next section. There are other great equalizers that are consistent throughout the book, like drinking, sex, and illicit affairs, but it is the dual identities, or the woman-warrior complex, that ultimately contributes the most to social equality of the females. For example, Debbie is described as the kind of woman who can "make grown men shrink with her smuttiness" and "has always gotten along seamlessly with the men who surrounded her—she was not the type to mutter if a guy started talking about anatomy" (Thorpe 28). When her unit fell under scrutiny after a couple of other females filed a complaint about vulgar language and her leadership implemented strict rules regarding sexual harassment, Debbie did not feel torn between the males and females. She felt that the overall atmosphere of the unit was much more relaxed and cohesive *before* the change: "It was not that she did not believe in equality, she simply prized belonging more highly," meaning Debbie valued being "one of the guys" over maintaining her own feminine identity, and she acted accordingly (Thorpe 37). In her book *Camouflage Isn't Only for Combat: Gender, Sexuality, and Women in the Military*, Melissa Herbert posits: "When examining pressure overall, a significant minority (49 percent) believe that women are pressured or encouraged to act either feminine or masculine. A little more than one-quarter of women see only pressure to act feminine, while one-third of the women believe

that there are pressures to act masculine" (Herbert 52). There are also ways in which female soldiers compensate for these pressures or insecurities that depend on whether they have a *warrior* insecurity or a *femininity* insecurity. For example, women with a warrior insecurity adapt their behavior by "rarely wearing makeup, keeping hair trimmed short, participating in 'male' sports, swearing, working out, and drinking," whereas those who have a femininity insecurity would perhaps adapt their behavior by "wearing makeup, wearing traditional feminine clothing…avoiding vulgarity," and emphasizing their femininity (Culver 69). I would argue that all three women in *Soldier Girls* exhibit a warrior insecurity, although the degree to which each one of them experiences this varies greatly, and that underemphasizing their femininity is one of the factors that contributes to the women being more accepted by their male counterparts. In addition to alternating dual identities, the women also alternate between positions of being powerful and being powerless, which brings me to the next section that discusses how the book should also be looked at using a discourse analysis lens.

Feminist Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis and its Application to *Soldier Girls*

So, what exactly is discourse analysis and how does it apply to *Soldier Girls*? I mentioned earlier in this thesis that discourse analysis describes the matrix in which individuals find themselves alternating between moments of powerfulness/dominance and powerlessness/victimization. It also avoids categorizing females as solely victims or males as solely oppressors, in addition to avoiding pitting those two opposing forces against one another. Discourse analysis can best be defined, at least as far as this thesis is concerned, as the opposite of feminist institutionalism in that it does not "presume that women as a category are necessarily powerless, disadvantaged, or oppressed by the 'other'" but instead argues "that female subject positions are complex, shifting, and multiply located" (Baxter 3). Judith Baxter, who pioneers

this theoretical approach, explains that discourse analysis can help analysts determine the precise moment when a person shifts from moments of powerfulness to powerlessness and vice versa (3). This approach is significant to the scope of this thesis because the female soldiers find themselves in this precise complex power matrix throughout the book, where they alternate between powerful and powerless; this, in addition to their dual identities and their interactions and communication with male soldiers demonstrate why discourse analysis cannot be overlooked as relevant to the book.

During her deployment to Iraq (her second deployment), Desma was in charge of the motor pool, meaning she was responsible for signing out vehicles to anyone who needed them, as well as performing the simple maintenance required to keep them running and making sure they were in peak condition at all times. One day, although the drivers were responsible for cleaning out their own vehicles after they used them, a soldier refused to "get his Honey Bun wrappers and Rip It energy drink cans out of the truck," and walked away after Desma ordered him to clean it out (Thorpe 328). She responded by shouting expletives and throwing her Kevlar helmet at him, an act that landed her in anger management for the second time. This situation demonstrates how Desma held a position of power as an authority figure who was qualified to give orders yet was powerless at the same time because her subordinates chose not to listen to those orders.

Additionally, when Miller is berating Michelle at the beginning of their deployment to Afghanistan, Michelle begins to fight back by ignoring him, disrupting the superior-subordinate, male-female power dynamic. While Miller is her superior, and rank prevents Michelle from fighting back verbally or physically, she takes control over the situation by pretending she cannot hear him when he is yelling at her. Debbie recounts, "'You could just tell, you know, that look

on the face—she can hear Patrick yelling, but she's not going to answer him. . . . We were just dying laughing, because we knew what she was doing. She was shutting Patrick out'" (Thorpe 165). Michelle "sensed that she had the power to make him uncomfortable and liked that it gave her the upper hand" (Thorpe 165). Like Desma, Michelle is also both powerless and powerful almost simultaneously. Similar to life at Camp Phoenix in Kabul where the unit was "neither safely at home nor properly at war," the complex gendered dynamics often leaves the women "betwixt and between" feeling powerful and powerless (Thorpe 188). The women all develop woman-warrior dual identities and experience the revolving power matrix described by discourse analysis. Both of these concepts directly contribute to how they negotiate their identities, their male-female/superior-subordinate relationships, and positions of power throughout the book.

Soldier Girls provides fertile ground for applying the primarily sociopolitical theory of feminist institutionalism and feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis to literature. Helen Thorpe offers a raw, poignant narrative style through literary journalism, reconstructed dialogue, diary entries, and interviews with secondary characters that lend unique insight into military culture. This thesis argues that the book also reconciles the traditionally patriarchal theory of institutionalism with feminist theory by using a feminist institutionalism lens, as well as how this *can* and *should* be applied to literature. And while feminist institutionalism was my primary application due to the staggeringly disproportionate balance of power that professionally favors males over females in the military, feminist poststructuralist discourse analysis is also important as it theorizes that males and females are equal socially, at least as far as gendered power relations are concerned. These two applications seem to contradict one another, yet they are both crucial for the reader to have a more holistic understanding of the female soldier's experience on deployments and at home. The three women highlighted in the book all experience the unique

stressors associated with being a female in a hegemonically masculine institution like the military, including developing dual identities, gender discrimination, sexual assault and harassment, and unwanted male attention. However, by forging unlikely friendships and having each other's six, Michelle, Desma, and Debbie are able to overcome these often-egregious shared experiences, survive hellacious conditions, and come out on the other side worthy of calling themselves true woman warriors.

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Essay

Will Carlisle

Depression & Governance in *Citizen Kane*

Although Orson Welles is widely remembered for his brilliance as a filmmaker, his expertise extended far beyond the director's chair, given his prominence as an actor, writer, radio personality, and political activist. Furthermore, Welles's voice arose at a pivotal moment in the history of America as his life began amid World War I in 1915 and ended during the Cold War in 1985 ("Orson Welles"). In 1941, Welles released his debut film at only twenty-five years of age: *Citizen Kane.* Despite his youth, much of Kane's extensive experience in mass media and politics is distilled within the framework of the film. However, this film's depth and significance are by no means exclusively the products of Welles's complexity and talent. Rather, *Citizen Kane* is a monumental artifact of the ideological climate in America following the Great Depression. The film's explicit distrust of corporate America and the corrupting nature of greed give modern viewers a revelatory viewpoint for understanding this era of American history. In *Citizen Kane*, Orson Welles presents Charlie Kane as both a foil of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and an analogue of William Randolph Hearst in order to condemn the conservative distrust of federal aid while promoting benevolence and altruism above the pursuit of the American Dream.

To begin with, *Citizen Kane* is a film steeped in its present-day context. Therefore, a proper understanding of the ideological climate of America in 1941 is crucial for interpreting the political and social commentary throughout the film. In order to understand 1940s America, one must begin in the 1930s, an era that dramatically changed the United States with the Great

Depression. While the Great Depression held manifold consequences for the American public, it ultimately culminated in redefining the American trajectory. Until 1929, Americans joined one another in the race to die richer than they were born, training their offspring to pursue success and status with the tenacity and earnestness of their parents. However, the Great Depression tore straight through the American Dream, leaving holes bigger than those in the pockets of destitute Americans. The crisis ushered families into an era of disorientation, followed by adaptation and reorientation (Elder 24). This era taught families ingenuity and restraint in spending their money; instead of seeking more money (which was not an option), they sought to maximize the resources that were available to them (25-28). Glen Elder credits the Depression with teaching the American people to live in scarcity and discipline, much opposed to the culture of abundance and opulence that reigned in the 1920s (284). Such a shift effectually redirected the gaze of the American majority from financial success to equity and aid for all. These priorities were dramatically enforced by the election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1932 (Whaples, n. pag). Roosevelt entered the White House with determination and vigor, forcing through legislation for countless government aid programs as part of his "New Deal." Roosevelt believed adamantly in "the potential of the economy to benefit all," and he made every effort to balance the interest of all citizens, rich and poor (Elder 284).

However, this revolution was by no means without opposition. Many conservatives loathed Roosevelt's progressive policies, believing that they were fundamentally threatening to America's democratic governance. Most notable, perhaps, among Roosevelt's dissenters was William Randolph Hearst, a newspaper mogul from New York. The relationship between Roosevelt and Hearst was one of great turbulence where Hearst evolved from an avid supporter and promoter of Roosevelt to his greatest voice of opposition (Winkler 259). Shortly after

Roosevelt was elected, Hearst began to grow suspicious of Roosevelt's New Deal Programs, believing he was overstepping his boundaries as president. Midway through Roosevelt's first term, Hearst declared that he had officially seen enough: "Early in April 1935, Hearst wrote his man Coblentz: 'I think we have to settle down to a consistent policy of *opposition* to this Administration'" (Winkler 262). Thus, one of America's greatest news moguls became a staunch dissenter to the new American way.

It was here, amongst this ideological tension, that Orson Welles, a young voice bursting with potential, entered the public arena. Welles accrued an extraordinary amount of success in his early years as an actor and radio personality, and at twenty-four years old, RKO Pictures gave him the opportunity to direct his debut film. Welles was outspoken about his "strong liberalism and championing of New Deal legislation" (Brady 379). Additionally, Roosevelt and Welles became fast friends, collaborating on war-time radio programs, political speeches, newspaper columns, and more. Consequentially, Welles and Hearst became steadfast enemies, targeting one another in their media and spurning one another's messages (Brady 377). Therefore, when RKO offered Welles his first studio deal, he began crafting a film with which he could undercut his opposition while reaching the masses with his message. Ultimately, this film became the most monumental of its era: *Citizen Kane*.

Throughout the film, Welles advances his narrative primarily through the development of Charles Foster Kane, the newspaper mogul who stands as the center-point of the story. While there is much to be said about the complexity and significance of Charlie Kane, a historical reading of the film requires that Kane be held up to the cultural light surrounding 1940s America. In this light, it firmly stands to reason that Charlie Kane is based heavily upon public figures that were contemporaries of the film. Although many scholars disagree on the original

inspiration for Charlie Kane, it seems most logical to approach the character as a hybrid of two men: Franklin Delano Roosevelt and William Randolph Hearst. First, Kane operates as a foil of Roosevelt, and second, he operates as an analogue (literary representation) of Hearst.

First, Welles develops Charlie Kane masterfully in order to create a dramatic foil of Roosevelt, whom he deeply admired (Brady 373-374). By the time that Welles released *Citizen Kane* in 1941, Roosevelt was concluding his second term in office after 8 years of presidency, and his sights were set on an unprecedented third term. The film provides substantial evidence of this foil, as well as a strong political message in favor of Roosevelt. Literary foils are essentially characters that share striking similarities with a protagonist while maintaining key differences that result in a meaningful juxtaposition of the two. Especially in the early stages of the film, Charlie Kane's character development is resonant with the life of President Roosevelt. To begin with, Kane's childhood, though quite different from Roosevelt's, seems to dramatically depict a key principle of Roosevelts early years: guaranteed affluence. Roosevelt was born into a wealthy New York family in great possession of land, connections, and opportunity. Notably, Roosevelt's father greatly prioritized his wealth; he was raised in an environment where affluence was revered and desired ("Roosevelt, Franklin Delano" 838). This lust for status is equally apparent in the scene at Kane's childhood home. Against his will, Kane is sent away from all innocence, playfulness, and family for the sake of wealth and affluence. This great exchange teaches Charlie Kane a life-altering lesson: the price of pursuing the American Dream (*Citizen Kane* 00:06:50). Though the stories of their childhood are different, they share common roots in the soil of the American Dream. Additionally, Kane's persona as a young adult is quite comparable to that of Franklin. According to Sean Savage, Roosevelt was known for his personable nature yet seemingly shallow substance, a trait that echoes similarly throughout the developmental years of

Charlie Kane's career (837). This charismatic ambition is a defining trait of both, and it ultimately allows them to achieve the success and acclaim for which they strive. This ambition is fully displayed as Kane launches his attack against *The Chronicle*, a rival newspaper, and begins building a media empire of his own. Kane's carefree celebration with his staff (and marching band) exemplify the confidence, ambition, and cockiness for which Roosevelt was known. Furthermore, as a politician, Charlie Kane's political banter is strikingly similar to that of President Roosevelt. While discussing his role in society, Kane asserts, "I am the publisher of *The Inquirer*. As such, it is my duty . . . to see to it that the decent, hard-working people of this city are not robbed blind by a group of money-mad pirates because, God help them, they have no one to look after their interests!" (*Citizen Kane* 47:30-47:40). The political platform that Kane constructs as he runs for office is reminiscent of Roosevelt's platform: use privilege and power to defend the lower and middle class. Despite such similarities, Welles draws a hard line of fate between Roosevelt and Kane. If they both share an affluent upbringing, charismatic ambition, and outspoken benevolence, why would Welles endorse Roosevelt while condemning Kane? It is here, within this tension, that Welles renders a judgement that pierces to the level of motive. He uses nuance to reveal extensive differences behind two seemingly analogous individuals; although Charles Foster Kane claims a platform of benevolence and humanitarianism, his treatment of individuals on a personal level reveal two damning characteristics: dishonesty and greed. These two characteristics are perhaps most prevalent in his two marriages, first with Emily, followed immediately by Susan. First, his marriage to Emily reveals his devastating dishonesty. Although Kane's marriage to Emily begins quite joyfully, it is soon damaged, and ultimately destroyed, by Kane's first great error: his affair with young Susan Alexander. The affair is long concealed in order to clearly portray Kane's utter lack of trustworthiness. Though

Kane has quite the silver-tongue, especially with women, it only acts to conceal self-centeredness and dishonesty. Ultimately, he cannot be trusted. Secondly, Kane's following marriage to Susan reveals his debilitating greed which ultimately dehumanizes all those in his path. Shortly after their marriage, Kane devotes an inordinate amount of time, money, and other resources to force Susan into the spotlight as an opera star, even when she pleads that he would relent. Kane's actions, though they initially resemble generosity and kindness, ultimately reveal themselves to be violently selfish. Susan ultimately confronts him in this, comparing his treatment of her to his habit of purchasing art by saying, "What's the difference between giving me a bracelet or giving somebody else a hundred thousand dollars for a statue you're going to keep crated up and never look at? It's only money. It doesn't mean anything" (*Citizen Kane* 1:42:43-1:42:51). In fact, Kane's obsession with purchasing statues is another fascinating clue that reveals the nature of Kane's treatment of others. The parallel that Susan draws between herself and Kane's art collection is of paramount importance. It signifies the fact that Kane treats all people as objects which he should acquire, use, and dispose of when fitting. Every act of kindness and benevolence is a business transaction that ushers another captive into his hold.

However, Charles Foster Kane is far more than a campaigning strategy for Roosevelt. Welles's portrayal of Kane is just as much a declaration of war, aimed sharp and unabashedly at William Randolph Hearst, one of Roosevelt's key dissenters. According to Morris Beja, the original audiences of Welles's film would have had a "pervasive awareness that the life, career, and character of Charles Foster Kane have a real historical basis—in the life, career, and perhaps the character of William Randolph Hearst" (254). Many key moments of Kane's development are directly proportionate to the life of Hearst, a news mogul turned unsuccessful politician (Kael 3). The blatant aristocracy, the yellow-journalism involvement, and the unsuccessful political

campaigning of Kane eerily resemble the life of Hearst, and Welles seems to mock him with the ultimate failure and unraveling of Kane (Feuerherd). Most notably, perhaps, is the unfolding of Kane's affair with Susan Alexander, who would eventually destroy his marriage. This affair-turned-divorce almost perfectly parallels Hearst's affair with actress Marion Davies. Such common threads affirm the fact that Charles Foster Kane is an analogue of William Randolph Hearst. A literary analogue is a character in a work that is essentially adapted from outside of the work; this adaptation typically elaborates upon or criticizes the character which it mimics (*Encyclopedia Britannica).* Clearly, Kane's unraveling and isolated death is a chilling condemnation upon the name of William Randolph Hearst. What then, according to Welles, is worthy of such harsh condemnation? Greed and dishonesty. Once again, the nature of Kane's actions imply that he is a completely hollow character, devoid of true benevolence and unworthy of trust. This can be observed in Kane's relationships, especially with Jedediah Leland and Bernstein. Even while their relationship dynamics are primarily positive, Kane's personal life utterly lacks true intimacy. Despite their companionship, Kane still dies alone, and all that his friends have to praise about him is his ambition as a businessman. Hearst provided Orson Welles with the ideal example as he perfectly modeled "the story of a grand old man of capitalism who was running out of time and money" (Beja 297). Welles photographically affirms the isolation of Kane by constantly incorporating shots where Kane is framed within an archway or window, often while others exist outside of the frame. This cinematic technique climaxes as Kane deliberately walks away from the scene of his final divorce; the camera slowly pans as he walks through a mirrored section of his hallway, visually multiplying himself into an infinite number of reflected frames (*Citizen Kane* 1:51:10-1:51:30*).* These instances of isolation are ultimately indictments against the character of Kane, and effectively that of Hearst. Such deep, bitter

isolation ultimately stems from the dishonesty, greed, and selfish ambition in which Kane is rooted. This is Kane's ultimate warning for those that favor politics and philosophy in pursuit of the American Dream. Riches vanish, dishonesty isolates, and greed dehumanizes all you encounter until every relationship becomes one rooted in manipulation and control.

According to Orson Welles, if Americans would persist in the pursuit of wealth, status, and comfort, the country would be sure to lose all innocence and love. Such values would lead to a deathbed cloaked in remorse, like that of Charles Kane as he hopelessly stammers, "Rosebud" (*Citizen Kane* 0:1:57). As America moved forward from the Great Depression, Welles urgently implored his audience to redefine the future. Like Kane, America was born into the pursuit of wealth and the desire for independence. However, wealth must be used only for the benefit of others, and freedom ought to be leveraged in order to free those oppressed. Welles's dual use of Kane as a foil and analogue of prominent political figures made his point unmistakable in the landscape of 1941 America.

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Essay

Colby Gilley

***The Third Man* and *Rashomon*: The Triumph of the Individual in a Post-War World**

"You know what the fellow said. In Italy, for thirty years under the Borgias, they had warfare, terror, murder, and bloodshed, but they produced Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and the Renaissance. In Switzerland they had brotherly love. They had 500 years of democracy and peace. And what did that produce? The cuckoo clock."

—Harry Lime, *The Third Man*

August of 1945 witnessed the end of the deadliest conflict in human history, an international atrocity that claimed some eighty million lives, erasing entire generations and communities, and decimating militaries, polities, and economies worldwide. As populations around the globe attempted to orient themselves in the new, post-war world, they often looked to art—especially the burgeoning form of cinema—to make sense of the past decade. From films noirs to problem pics to haunting documentaries, filmmakers in both Axis and Allied nations sought ways to create meaningful cinema in the wake of massacres, genocides, and war crimes. As men that had once fought for opposing sides on a distant battlefield were now encountering identical problems upon returning to their respective homes, artists and thinkers began to question the nature of humanity. They sensed that a refreshed national allegiance or a new political ideology would be insufficient to rehabilitate humanity in the wake of the war's horrors.

The growing global trend of exploration into human nature becomes evident through a comparison of international post-war films. Two in particular offer themselves for comparison, as they synthesize both the concerns specific to their regions and those shared by humanity, examining the current state of the world, the human condition, and a potential means of escaping the mess—namely, Carol Reed's *The Third Man* and Akira Kurosawa's *Rashomon*. Like many post-war films, each film centers on a crime, yet they both take an elusive and obfuscating approach to truth and closure, preferring to focus on the human response to desperate situations. Operating in ruined settings and fixating on acts of injustice, both films create microcosms of their respective post-war realities within which they can investigate and interrogate human protagonists faced with unimaginable horrors. *The Third Man* and *Rashomon* demonstrate a globally unifying post-war humanism as both films locate the hope for escape from the desolation of World War II in the affirmation of the human individual, who, finding himself in a ruined world, must reject the institution in favor of the self. The individual completes this refutation by simultaneously admitting the effects of and freeing himself from the decrepitude of the past in a self-asserting act of justice.

Released in 1949, *The Third Man* was largely a work of British thought, evident in its director, Carol Reed, its writer, Graham Greene, its production company, London Films, and one of its distributors, British Lion Film Corporation (under the direction of Hungarian-born Alexander Korda). With war in Europe having effectively ended after Germany's unconditional surrender on May 8, 1945, Great Britain found itself faced with the great task of rebuilding its fallen cities and economy. According to historian Paul Addison, "The most visible costs of the war were economic" (7), and it was on this front that the country strove to make the most substantial changes going forward. The first general election following the war saw Winston

Churchill's Conservative Party fall to Clement Atlee and the Labour Party, who were determined

to engineer a welfare state in Great Britain (Burns, n. pag.). Influenced by the apparent efficiency

of Soviet socialism, many leftists sought to achieve "the shining example of a 'middle way' of

democratic socialism, between Soviet tyranny and the selfish cruelty of American capitalism"

(Burns, n. pag.). Thus, many of the sanctions and infrastructures established on the British home-

front slowly morphed from war-time measures into more permanent policies as the country

pursued efficiency in its rebuilding efforts. In the years immediately following World War II,

Britain sought to inspire optimism and to unify its populace under an increasingly centralized

form of government.

Yet *The Third Man* also sprang from substantial American influence, as lead actors

Joseph Cotton and Orson Welles and the other primary distributor, David Selznick, were

Hollywood mainstays of the 1940's. Though the American home-front did not face the same

immediate challenges of reconstruction that Britain's did, the United States had remained

engaged with Japan until the Japanese announcement of unconditional surrender on August 15,

1945. However, this surrender came about only after the U.S. had dropped two atomic bombs on

the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing some 200,000 individuals (many of whom

were civilians). This display of violent power shook the U.S. itself and the rest of the world,

instilling both fear and horror, and raising ethical debates over the use of nuclear weaponry

(Hales, n. pag.). This culture of fear and ethical ambiguity exhibited itself in Hollywood

primarily through the film noir genre. This historically sensitive genre, characterized by David

Cook as a "cinema of moral anxiety" (Cook 294), exercised profound influence on the

production of *The Third Man*, especially via the film's American contributors.

Thousands of miles away from both Britain and America, the island nation of Japan had lost its entire Pacific empire and was paralyzed by U.S. fire-bombings and nuclear bombings that had produced some 900,000 casualties in a matter of days (Cook 569). In response to Japan's subsequent hasty surrender, the Allied Occupation Forces under the command of General MacArthur landed in Japan on August 27, before an official treaty had even been signed (Standish 155). The Occupation, lasting from 1945-1952, marked a hard shift in Japanese history as the Empire disintegrated, traditional Japanese institutions and practices were dissolved, and principles of Western democracy were imposed upon the crippled nation (Yomota 98-100). One of the Occupation's primary means of achieving Japan's "democratization" was the Civil Information and Education Section (CIE), which exercised substantial censorship power over Japanese films, from their creation to their production to their distribution (Cook 570, Standish 156). It was in this ruined country, which was being actively divorced from its past by foreign influence, and under harsh censorship laws glorifying Western ideals that Akira Kurosawa released *Rashomon* in 1950. Despite the film's conflict-ridden birthplace, *Rashomon* resonated with both Japanese and European audiences alike, introducing the Western world to the brilliant accomplishments of Japanese cinema, beleaguered though it was by foreign censorship and occupation.

Both *The Third Man* and *Rashomon* sprang from nations that were not only physically rebuilding from the wreckage of the war but were undergoing massive social upheavals as well. Within such an environment, these films suggest that a real escape from devastating postwar conditions lies in the human individual. The remainder of this essay will exposit the process of self-assertion found in these films, as they establish a deteriorating environment, reject conventional institutions and systems, and affirm the individual's capacity for just action.

Integral to the development of the self in both *The Third Man* and *Rashomon* is the environment in which the individual finds himself. Both films portray ruined and broken settings, creating microcosms of their larger historical reality that acknowledge the world's hopelessness and decay—both physical and moral. *The Third Man* takes place in a crumbling Vienna, merging contemporary reality with film reality in its display of postwar Europe. The film opens with a narrator recounting that "I never knew the old Vienna before the war, with its Strauss music, glamor, and easy charm. . . . I really got to know it in the classic period of the black market" (1:47). As this exposition unfolds, the camera offers us establishing shots of the city and its inhabitants that reflect the narrator's words, synchronizing the imagery with the words and plunging the audience into the narrator's Vienna. Indeed, this Vienna lacks any trace of "glamor and easy charm." The narrator's description of the black market is paired with brief clips of illegal trades and bodies floating in an icy Danube—the city has become a moral cesspool. Vienna is also a fractured city, as the viewer learns, divided into five, separately controlled zones: the American, the British, the French, the Russian, and an international zone in the middle of the city, patrolled by a joint police force with members from the four national zones. This lack of unity within the city causes numerous problems throughout the film, as the various occupying forces pursue their own interests, oftentimes at the expense of the others. The physical destruction of the city is made apparent from the opening scenes as well, with the narrator dismissing the mountains of rubble as not "any worse than a lot of other European cities. Bombed about a bit" (2:33). It is in this Vienna—riddled with crime, quartered by occupying foreign powers, and thoroughly bombed—that the film's protagonist, Holly Martins, finds himself.

The Third Man exercises few reservations in its depiction of postwar Europe. Set in the very time and place of its actual production, the film conflates the filmic world with the real world to emphasize the decrepitude of modernity. Europe, like the Vienna of the film, is beset by crime, divided by untrusting nation states, and still languishing in the ruins of the war. The camera techniques, too, affirm this within the film. The pervasive use of Dutch angles and chiaroscuro convey both the unease and the moral ambiguity of the film's setting—nothing appears clearly or evenly, and everything seems off-kilter. Thus, both Holly Martins and the contemporary viewer of *The Third Man* are tasked with finding some meaning in this mire of ruin and evil.

In like fashion, the initial scene of *Rashomon* establishes the depressing environment in which the film takes place. Set in medieval Kyoto, the film opens with close-up shots of the destroyed Rashomon gate, drenched in a torrential downpour. Finally, the camera pulls away to reveal the remnant of the splintered structure, once an icon of Japanese power, looming in the midst of debris. A woodcutter, sitting under the gate alongside a priest and waiting out the storm, sighs and utters the first words of the film, "I don't understand. . . . I just don't understand" (2:20). The viewer soon learns that the Japan of the film has been wracked by "war, earthquake, winds, fire, famine, the plague . . ." (4:30), and that the Rashomon gate now serves as a dumping spot for corpses and unwanted children. Moreover, these two men have just heard three conflicting testimonies about a disturbing crime: the rape of a woman and the murder of her husband. The environment of *Rashomon* is nothing less than utterly hopeless.

Although set some eight hundred years prior to its contemporary reality, the film poignantly transfers the desperation of postwar Japan onto the medieval past. The original viewers of *Rashomon*, much like the woodcutter and priest, sat in the desolation of a once-proud

empire that had been reduced to rubble by disaster, haunted by violent death and unspeakable crimes, and astounded at the condition of their environment. The camera further conveys these troubles as reflected in the filmic word. It presents the shattered Rashomon gate in piecemeal closeups, emphasizing its state of dilapidation. Moreover, as it enters the forest—the realm of the film's central crime as recounted in the characters' testimonies—the camera forcefully moves and whirls throughout this "kinetically" lit environment, increasing the viewer's disorientation (Kauffman 96). Just as in *The Third Man*, *Rashomon*'s environment offers a microcosm of contemporary crisis, confronting both protagonist and viewer with hopelessness and desolation.

In responding to these depictions of postwar reality, both films present the failure of institutions and systems of authority to improve the condition of their domains, ultimately requiring the individual to revoke his trust in them. When Holly Martins arrives in Vienna, he encounters a city managed by the very nations that bombed its great cathedrals and concert halls. Such a configuration suggests a latent distrust in the ruling powers, as the film winds its way among the ruins made by those who now "protect" the city. This distrust takes form in *The Third Man* most evidently through the film's portrayal of the law enforcement. Though Holly comes to Vienna to meet his old college friend, Harry Lime, he soon learns that Lime has died in an accident. However, Holly begins to suspect that Lime's death was not so innocent of an affair, launching his own investigation into the matter. Throughout Holly's amateur snooping, he continually returns to Major Calloway, the head of the British zone's police force, with his findings. However, Calloway refuses to aid Holly, claiming that Lime's death "was the best thing that ever happened to him" (8:07) and chiding him with "I told you to go away Martins" (54:55). While Calloway may indeed have the naïve Holly's safety in mind, Holly's intuition is ultimately correct, and it is only because of his effort that they end Lime's deadly penicillin

racket. The inefficacy of the international police coalition is subtly displayed at the outset of the film when Holly tells an American MP he is a friend of Harry Lime—a high-profile racketeer wanted by the British police—to which the dopey MP responds with a disinterested "Okay" (3:17). Despite Maj. Calloway's apparent commitment to combatting the crime of Vienna, the various departments of law enforcement repeatedly fail to create positive change in the city.

The Third Man also rejects the ethics of institutions in a paradoxical display, conflating the problematic moral disposition of governments with the figure of Harry Lime. As Holly comes to find out, Lime has faked his own death in order to throw the police off his trail. In one of the more iconic scenes of the film, the two men finally reunite during a secret meeting on a large Ferris wheel, where Lime offers Holly a stake in his lucrative racket—a scheme that takes advantage of the intense demand for penicillin by selling a diluted form of the drug for sky-high prices. As Holly asks Lime to consider the victims of his enterprise, Lime encourages him not to be "melodramatic" (1:17:55). Instead, Lime opens the door of the compartment and gestures to the people down beneath, asking Holly if he would "really feel any pity if one of those dots stopped moving forever?" (1:18:01). Lime justifies his attitude by reminding Holly that "Nobody thinks in terms of human beings. Governments don't. Why should we? They talk about the people and the proletariat, I talk about the suckers and the mugs. It's the same thing" (1:19:30). As Lime gazes down from his elevated position on the inhuman dots drifting between revolving rides scattered around the fairground, the film condemns the mechanistic utilitarianism embraced by governments that only "calculate how many dots [they] can afford to spare" (1:18:13). In the wake of a war that witnessed human lives poured out like water in the name of national interests, *The Third Man* cannot trust those systems of authority that, in a postwar about-face, claim to seek peace and unity.

Rashomon, too, depicts the failure of institutions and authoritative systems to fulfill their purpose. From the outset, there is a noticeable lack of order in the environment of *Rashomon*. The gate stands in ruin and the people have languished under war and disaster, yet no government, king, or lord appears who might protect the people and rebuild the city. Having joined the woodcutter and priest in the shelter of the gate, the commoner remarks, "On top of this gate, you'll find five or six unclaimed bodies" (4:25), testifying to the commonplace nature of violent crime. Such a ubiquity is further affirmed by the appearance of the bandit, Tajomaru, who is introduced as "the notorious bandit everyone speaks of" (12:29). In *Rashomon,* corpses lie unwept, bandits ravage as they please, and petty thievery abounds; no system of law or enforcing authority rises to restore the ruin.

The film's rejection of established institutions characterizes its meta-cinematic approach to the arrangement of the law court. While the bandit, the woman, and the dead samurai give their testimonies, they speak before an invisible judge and jury, responding to unvoiced questions. The decision to omit any trace of judiciaries and to have the witnesses face the camera extends the realm of the film to encapsulate the viewer, placing one in the role of judge. This emphasizes the absence of institutional authorities from the film, effectively erasing them from a situation in which they would otherwise naturally appear. Moreover, it cements the fact that institutions are dismissed in favor of the individual, as this arrangement grants all judicial authority to the single viewer and one's own perspective. Implicit in this decision is the rejection of a metaphysical system of authority: the authority of truth. The film provides four mediated, conflicting versions of the crime, all recounted to the commoner: the bandit's version, as told by the woodcutter; the woman's version, as told by the priest; the dead samurai's version, voiced through a medium in court and told to the commoner by the priest; the woodcutter's version, told

by himself. All four versions differ in key respects, as each speaker lies to preserve his or her own honor in the story (Prince 130). However, the film does not labor over the details of the accounts to determine a "true" version. The viewer, as judge, may make what one will of the situation, and the film moves on—of what use is truth when the world has fallen to pieces and wickedness pervades humanity? Like *The Third Man*, *Rashomon* turns away from established systems of authority, understanding that they cannot stave off the hopelessness wrought by human sin.

Having portrayed the failure of protecting institutions in war-ravaged environments, the films locate hope in the actions of the individual. Faced with the horror of pervasive sin, the protagonists must establish themselves as agents of justice. In *The Third Man*, Holly must finally kill Lime, asserting himself as an effective deliverer. The importance and necessity of this act is emphasized by Harry Lime's role as Holly's "psychological double" throughout the film, which compels Holly to mature in preparation for an inevitable face-off with Lime (Rea 98). The script cleverly hints at this doubling throughout the film: the similarity between the names "Holly" and "Harry"; Holly's early mistaken reference to himself in the third person, as though speaking from Harry's perspective; Anna's continual slip-ups in calling Holly, "Harry"; the oft expressed need of both men to grow up (Rea 98). To recount every visual and spoken indication of this theme would be to recount the whole film.

Holly's maturation and mortal rejection of his Jungian shadow requires that he recognize the moral decay that has engulfed both the world and his bifurcated self. When Holly arrives in Vienna, his understanding of human errancy is nothing more than a shallow façade enforced by his failed career as a writer of cheap Westerns, of which Maj. Calloway repeatedly reminds him. As such, Holly conducts his investigation in naivety, hoping to uncover a wrongful conviction

and a murder behind his best friend's disappearance. Over the course of the film, Holly comes to grips with the weightier reality of the situation, fully recognizing Lime's depravity during their conversation in the Ferris wheel. After this confrontation, Holly decides to follow Maj. Calloway's earlier advice and leave Vienna, but Calloway takes him by a children's hospital in route to the airport where Holly witnesses the agonizing effects of Lime's diluted penicillin on the patients. Holly instead resolves to remain in the city and aid Calloway with his plan to apprehend Lime, even helping the police squadrons corner Lime in the sewers. In the climactic moments, a trapped and wounded Lime shoots at an officer and attempts to crawl up a spiral staircase, toward an exit. While the remaining officers and Maj. Calloway tend the hurt man, Holly retrieves the man's gun and strides after Lime. Hidden from the officer's view, Holly faces his wicked double, with whom he exchanges a drawn-out, pained—yet knowing—glance, before the camera cuts away and a gunshot rings throughout the stone passageways (1:39:30). The viewer watches Holly emerge from the end of a long tunnel, alone and shrouded in mist, a darkly ironic version of one of his own novelette characters, "The Lone Ranger of Santa Fe."

By the end of the film, Holly's own maturation and action has changed his environment. Though naïve, he began and maintained his investigation by himself, despite the discouragement from civil authorities, thus maturing to the point that he fulfills the role of the law enforcement in bringing down Lime. In this act of justice, Holly simultaneously affirms his mature self over his double and his individual morality over the institutional ethic that Lime represented. *The Third Man* places hope and efficacy in the mature individual who, having acknowledged the ruinous condition of the world and its effects on himself, performs the positive act that institutional authority has failed to accomplish.

Rashomon echoes *The Third Man*'s conclusion that the power to move past the moral mire of humanity resides in the individual. Writing on the presence of Zen philosophy in Kurosawa's films, Stephen Prince claims that "Zen posits enlightenment upon a renunciation of the ego and desire" (Prince 122). Indeed, the film makes this the woodcutter's ultimate task, though he is slow to accomplish it. Following the woodcutter's version of the crime, the commoner calls him a liar, doubting that any of the stories are true. However, the dismal conversation is interrupted by a child's cries. Upon finding an abandoned baby hidden in a corner of the gatehouse, the commoner attempts to steal the kimono in which the child was wrapped, much to the indignation of the woodcutter. He passionately condemns the act, declaring to the commoner that "Everyone is selfish and dishonest, making excuses. The bandit, the woman, the man, and you!" (1:11:50). However, in the ensuing tussle, the commoner rounds on the woodcutter, cleverly pointing out an inconsistency in the woodcutter's story: a valuable dagger, which had been referenced in the other testimonies, had not been accounted for in his. As the commoner accuses the woodcutter of stealing the dagger, the once-passionate woodcutter retreats, passively enduring the commoner's barrage of blows and insults. After the commoner lopes off into the rain, stolen goods beneath his arm, the woodcutter and priest remain rooted to their spots for some time, the former lost in his shame, the latter consoling the crying child.

Caught in this lie, the woodcutter soberly acknowledges his wrongdoing. Though he was quick to denounce the sin of the others, his arrogant indignation blinded him. Now, however, he recognizes that the stain of this ruined world has tainted even himself. Just as the bandit, the woman, and the samurai all crafted stories to protect their own pride and honor, so too did the woodcutter by carefully omitting his act of thievery. Discussing this shared flaw of these characters, Kurosawa once declared that "Egoism is a sin the human being carries with him from

birth; it is the most difficult to redeem" (Prince 130). Yet, coming to terms with his failure, the woodcutter turns away from this sin. Approaching the priest, he tearfully offers to adopt the baby. Taken aback by this generosity, the priest tells the woodcutter, "Thanks to you, I think I can keep my faith in man," and hands over the child (1:15:38). The final moments of the film show the woodcutter, with the baby in his arms, striding away from the ruined gate as the rain ceases and the sun reappears.

In his moment of crisis, the woodcutter matures through an admission of his sin and a recognition of the ubiquitous effects of an evil world. Though some characters refuse to see past their egos and others adamantly justify their cynicism, the woodcutter decides to act rightly, as though to shout "people do not have to submit meekly to injustice and to poverty of the spirit" (Prince 122). The woodcutter recognizes his own capacity to free himself from the hopelessness his situation. In a world filled with those who flounder in sin and ruin, the woodcutter asserts himself—not his ego—through a world-changing act as he leaves the desolation of the past behind him and spreads the brightness of hope upon the earth, bringing new life with him.

World War II gave birth to an era of crisis around the globe. Men and women who had witnessed a general wasting of human lives in defense of one ideology or another and who had watched both the "good" and "bad" sides commit comparable acts of horror now returned to their lives as laborers, artists, and academics. Yet the terrors of the past did not disappear. Both *The Third Man* and *Rashomon* demonstrate a keen awareness of the quandary of humanity when it has perceived its own depravity. As such, both films serve as rebuttals to the cultural postwar "solutions" they face: the former rebuking the naïve sentiment that a more centralized government will usher an era of hope and optimism into Britain, the latter condemning the U.S.'s egotistical imposition of modern, Western ideals as the way forward for a ruined Japan. The

films understand that a shift of institution alone will not improve the world—the locus of change must be the human individual. In this way, *The Third Man* and *Rashomon* empower the postwar viewer, offering a hope that is within reach of each person, even in a destroyed and decaying world. For, although institutions will continue to fail their people and many will remain cynical egoists, a Michelangelo or a da Vinci can rise from the ashes. While the world may be drowned in rain and shrouded in deep shadow, these films affirm that "any one of us could choose to be one of those shafts of light that penetrate the darkness" (Rea 103).

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Katie-Bryn Hubbard

Hollywood's Pink Age: A Critical Review of J.E. Smyth's *Nobody's Girl Friday*

Bette Davis. Mary C. McCall Jr. Katharine Hepburn. Edith Head, Dorothy Jeakins, Barbara McLean, Margaret Booth, Anita Colby, Joan Harrison, Mary Pickford, Harriet and Louella Parsons . . . the list goes on. Perhaps the reader remembers a couple of these names—all of these women held both political and creative power during Hollywood's Golden Age. However, too many of women's names have been forgotten, their stories glossed over by a (too frequently male-authored) version of Hollywood's past which, more often than not, fails to captures the nuance of historical reality. Historian and author J.E. Smyth seeks to correct this egregious oversight and lend such nuance to Hollywood history in her most recent work, *Nobody's Girl Friday: The Women Who Ran Hollywood.* Narratives of Hollywood's history all too frequently reduce women in Hollywood to mere pretty faces, competent secretaries, and the occasional script girl, but armed with thorough research, Smyth reminds us all of the invaluable contributions of the women who, once upon a Golden Age, wielded far more power than commonly acknowledged despite differences in their personalities and methods. Through thoughtful discussion of several key figures—most notably Bette Davis, Mary C. McCall Jr, and Katharine Hepburn—*Nobody's Girl Friday* expands the scope of women's power in the film industry of the mid-twentieth century and succeeds at giving some of Hollywood's boldest and brightest women the chance to be remembered.

Before fully launching into discussion of any specific impressive women, Smyth reframes Hollywood's historical narrative with a general reference to studio employment records as published in *Film Daily*: ". . . in the absence of complete studio employment records, (*Film*

Daily) gives a fairly comprehensive map of the various professions, guilds, unions, and clubs operating in one of the United States' largest and most powerful corporate enterprises." She continues, "Anyone expecting a list of uniformly male names is in for a few surprises" (1). She lists the six women who comprised half the board of directors at Cecil B. DeMille Productions, Inc. in 1942-43 (Cecilia DeMille Harper, Constance A. DeMille, Anne Bauchens, Beatrice Warner, Marion Crist, Jeanie Macpherson), and several dozen more women who not only worked in the film industry in the early 1940s but held leadership positions at production studios both big and small. Indeed, the introduction reads like a catalogue, listing women who held executive positions, as well as women agents, publicists, union workers, writers, editors, producers, and critics; clearly women were not as few and far between as frequently suggested. Unfortunately, this introduction does leave the reader's head spinning—the list of names is so long as to reach monotony—but perhaps that is the point: women significantly populated positions of power.

If the introduction starts off a little slow, the book begins to shine as it admiringly profiles its first key-figure, Bette Davis. "The Fourth Warner Brother" was an ardent advocate for female employment and empowerment in the film industry and in American politics, and indeed earned her place as a titan of feminism in the industry (25). Smyth notes that Davis was raised by an independent single mother before detailing her career, which was characterized both by her individual strength and ability to cooperate (25-26). Notably, unlike many other stars and starlets of her day, she built her career entirely within the studio system (27). Smyth emphasizes the uniqueness and significance of this fact, writing, "Davis put her 'team player' capital to good use" (28). Smyth continues, "As president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, president of the Hollywood Canteen, and public Democrat, she built networks of working

women inside Hollywood and inspired her female fans to develop their independent political voice and faith in equal rights" (28). Smyth's work thus makes one of its key implications about the importance of Bette Davis' contribution to feminism in Golden Age Hollywood: Davis was an active political agent who worked within the studio system to rally other members of that system to work for equal rights. Her many and varied leadership positions and long legacy as a powerful industry woman capable of fostering powerful industry relationships make her a key figure in feminist Hollywood history.

Other women would maintain and further Better Davis's union work; perhaps the most notable of these was Mary C. McCall Jr., to whom Smyth dedicates an entire chapter of the book, affectionately titled "Madame President" (119). She begins the chapter with perhaps McCall Jr.'s most significant political accomplishment—she made history on November 12, 1942 when she was elected the first female president of the Screen Writers Guild (119). Of course, as "one of the most visible and vocal women in the industry" in an age of communism and Cold War paranoia, the staunch unionist was later blacklisted, but not before earning herself a reputation for being one of the toughest women in the industry, even acquiring the nickname, "Sir" (144, 149). Smyth smartly includes a photo taken in 1951 of McCall Jr. leaning stiffly against her desk, drink in one hand, pipe in the other, and a huge, shaggy St. Bernard at her feet; clearly McCall Jr.'s power in the industry carried a gendered connotation. Smyth sets up a slight contrast: McCall Jr., unlike the beautiful if unconventional and opinionated starlet Bette Davis, leaned into a masculine persona. However, both women used their power not only for the advancement and protection of women but of all Hollywood screenwriters. Like Davis, Mary C. McCall Jr. was an advocate for unity and an active force for productive community in the film industry of their day.

Not all women fostered the same sense of community among industry women as Bette Davis and Mary C. McCall Jr. In this regard, Katharine Hepburn marks a stark contrast from the other woman in Smyth's book. Like Mary C. McCall Jr., she famously disregarded femininity in appearance and mannerism. To quote Hepburn herself, "There are men and then there are women like me who have lived like men" (211). Hepburn famously dressed in sporty and casual clothes such as "slacks and Salvation Army menswear castoffs" and "was known for sticking her nose in the air" (215, 213). A classically feminine and community-oriented union organizer and team player she was not.

Unlike Mary C. McCall Jr., however, this more masculine persona, perhaps unsurprisingly, manifested in Katharine Hepburn's legacy an interesting question that speaks to the very problem *Nobody's Girl Friday* addresses. Smyth asks: "In uncritically celebrating Hepburn as a feminist icon and lambasting studio-era Hollywood as a misogynist industry, have the post-studio-system media 'professionals' and public turned on the American business that was once most inclined to promote women's careers?" (212). Could it be that Hepburn's celebrated reputation for being "the woman who didn't need Hollywood anymore than she needed glamour or studio-era feminism" (238) has bent the historical narrative of Hollywood feminism in favor of strong individualism and away from the cooperative version of the movement that existed during the heyday of the studio system? Smyth offers no definitive answer, but raising this very question speaks to her insightfulness into the shifting character of Hollywood feminism. Perhaps the waning of the problematic but inherently cooperative studios as the primary driving force in the Hollywood film industry created the historical narrative that under-appreciates the efforts of earlier women who wielded so much power at the height of the Golden Age. Perhaps the celebration of such unapologetic and independent women as Katharine

Hepburn has diminished our remembrance of the accomplishments of the earlier active union women who cooperated for their own advancement in the industry. As Smyth writes, "If there is only one Katherine Hepburn, it was because she intended to be the last woman standing" (213). Hepburn is a goddess of Hollywood feminism, and her legacy will continue to inspire generations of women to hold their heads high and fight for themselves, even if her example does not offer the same emphasis on community and collaboration as some of the other women who came before her.

Nobody's Girl Friday: The Women Who Ran Hollywood is a strong testament to the power women held during Hollywood's studio era. Author J.E. Smyth's work is thoroughly researched, and her portraits of the key figures—particularly those discussed in this review—are insightful and interesting. Bette Davis, Mary C. McCall Jr., and Katharine Hepburn biographies are the most detailed and central to the book's overall narrative. Through their stories, Smyth crafts a new narrative for Hollywood feminism—one that gives women the credit they are due for their efforts to improve the lives and career opportunities for women, and even offers a suggestion as to why these women are so often forgotten. The book's aim is to remind readers that women were not always so outnumbered and overpowered in Hollywood as they seem to be now—indeed, once upon a time they quite literally ran the show—and in this effort, Smyth succeeds. I recommend this book to all scholars of film history—particularly young women looking for inspiration and encouragement to continue fighting for their right to work and be creative in Hollywood today.

Essay

Emma Pugh

Art is Long and Life is Short: A Reading of Score in Polanski's *The Pianist*

Roman Polanski's *The Pianist* depicts the struggle of a Polish-Jewish pianist trying to survive the Holocaust during World War II. This film interpretation is essentially one man's story set within the prison-like boundaries of the Warsaw ghetto that had been created for Polish Jews. Similarly, the audience is trapped within the confines of Wladyslaw Szpilman's limited point of view, for we observe much of the action through windows or around other obstacles that typically work to shield both Szpilman and the viewer from the physical brutalities of the war. However, this separation lends itself to a different war—an internal fight. Because the narrative is intimately personal, the film is capable of documenting the painful horrors of traumatic isolation, loss, suffering, and ultimate survival. To more powerfully and acutely project the raw emotions of the protagonist onto the audience, Polanski ingeniously uses carefully chosen classical music pieces throughout the film as an aural expression of the protagonist's emotions as the world as he knows it crumbles around him.

Polanski opens the film with a piece of music that demonstrates the protagonist's reaction to a monumental historical event that will change his life forever. The first scene takes place in September 1939, as Szpilman, who is playing the piano, broadcasts Chopin's Nocturne in C-sharp minor live on the radio. Appreciating the relationship between this piece and the emotions it evokes does not require an expertise in musical theory. The untrained ear recognizes that the melody is dramatic and vivid, notably quavering between two notes at times. These notes feel

brittle and sharp, piercing the heart of the listener and creating a feeling of grief and inconsolable pain. The bass, on the other hand, is smooth and constant, seeming to carry the piece through each pang of emotion that the melody expels. The nocturne is appropriately gripping, as, halfway through the piece, Szpilman is interrupted by the sound of distant explosions. He glances up but does not otherwise react. Within seconds, another explosion sounds, breaking the glass window and jarring both character and viewer alike. Clearly shaken, Szpilman plays on, though his producer is motioning for him to stop and retreat downstairs, and the debris from the ceiling begins dropping on his shoulders. Just as the building around him begins to crumble, the world as Szpilman knows it is falling, and he continues to play the piano in an attempt to hold onto something recognizable and maintain control. In a moment of aural majesty, the piano music is replaced by the deafening intensity of a shattering window and the full effects of a final explosion. Szpilman is forced to let go, and the Nazi's officially invade Poland. This reflects a realization on the part of Polish Jews and Europe as a whole as the tensions of a coming world war become a reality. The final scene, which takes place in 1945 after the war has ended, continues the opening scene. Szpilman, who has miraculously survived the war and faced unimaginable challenges, sits in the radio studio once again and plays Chopin's Nocturne in C-sharp minor to completion. This piece, which just *feels* like an emotional rollercoaster as the tones of pain and turmoil that are heard in the first scene, turn hopeful as the song continues and peaceful as the song concludes, echoing both the course of the war and the film.

In a particularly moving scene of the film, Polanski cleverly uses a piece of music to create a moment of companionship in light of the deep isolation Szpilman is experiencing. A German man, who was working against the Nazi regime, leaves Szpilman in a flat where he could hide for an extended length of time and tells him to "keep as quiet as possible" so as not to

reveal himself. The audience watches the protagonist, who is now alone in the flat, walk over to a piano and sit down in front of it, and, before he can touch the keys, viewers hear a non-diegetic song playing. The song, Chopin's Andante Spianato in G major, builds with the rising sound of strings and brass before the hammer of piano keys resounds. A quick glance at Szpilman's hands reveals that his fingers are suspended just over the keys, silently miming playing; however, the audience is being invited into Szpilman's imagination just as he hears the music in his mind's ear (1:36:29).

The decision to incorporate this song into this particular scene was certainly a moment of creative genius. As Stein notes in "Music and Trauma in Polanski's 'The Pianist' (2002)," Chopin's Andante Spianato in G major is one of his few pieces not for solo piano; to function as it was meant to, the piece relies on other instruments (Stein 450). Therefore, Szpilman must, at least subconsciously, imagine the existence of other instruments and, thus, other musicians. In doing so, he conjures the existence of dynamic interaction with others through this piece as a sort of creative solution to the reality of inner torment, loss, isolation, and silent solitude he is facing. Additionally, this community Szpilman creates in order to feel less alone is a reflection of a reality manifested in the number of people who work on his behalf and aid his survival. The Jewish officer who initially kept him from boarding the train with his family, the husband and wife who provide him with a hiding place and food, and finally, the German soldier who spares Szpilman's life and gives him food and a coat when he is dangerously close to starving or freezing are the prominent figures who work on Szpilman's behalf, just as the ensemble in Chopin's piece works to highlight the role of the piano. On a much larger scale, the interaction with other instruments in this piece mirrors the contribution of the Allied Powers during World War II, who worked together towards the survival of places like Poland that had been invaded by

Nazi Germany. In a moment of loneliness for the character, who reflects the initial solitude of Poland as the first country to fall to Nazi Germany, Polanski chooses to use Chopin's piece in order to bridge the gap between isolation and community.

In a climactic scene towards the end of the film, Polanski uses music to enact a kind of redemption by humanizing the protagonist who has become almost animal-like in his fight to survive, allowing him to feel deeply again. The scene shows that Szpilman is in hiding once again, dangerously close to freezing or starving when he is discovered by a German leader Captain Hosenfeld. When Szpilman reveals that he was once a prominent Polish pianist, Hosenfeld asks him to play something. Szpilman's fingernails are long, uncut, and crusted with dirt; his hair is long and beard is thick. He is rail thin, magnified by the worn, baggy clothes he wears, and his muscles are stiff as he appropriately sits down at a neglected, weathered grand piano. He begins to play Chopin's Ballad No. 1 in G minor, Op. 23, which has a contemplative and peaceful overall tone as it shifts from loud and assertive notes to a softer, more slow, smooth, and melodious tone. The piece moves in and out of this pattern, creating meaning and emotion in the bold, emphatic notes and allowing time for introspection and reflection in the quieter moments. As Szpilman plays, he undergoes a magnificent transformation from an almost-animal state, concerned only with survival, to a human being, who, through the interaction with art, is allowed to experience feeling once again.

While Szpilman is the protagonist and creates the music here, a large part of this scene focuses on intimate close up shots of Captain Hosenfeld, revealing his disillusionment and visible emotional exhaustion from the war. As Szpilman seems to become human again, so, too, does the German officer as he rediscovers his conscience and sees Szpilman as an individual human life, rather than something subhuman as the Nazi party as a whole inherently viewed

Jewish people. Hosenfeld recognizes Szpilman's musical talents and, by taking pause to appreciate art in the midst of war, comes to terms with his moral compass, ultimately saving the pianist's life. Additionally, as Hosenfeld very well understood, the Russians were just across the river, imminent to retake Warsaw. While this meant salvation for Szpilman, it also meant certain death for the German officer. Torn in the incongruity of his own dark reality and the ideals he had embraced, Hosefeld found an opportunity for small personal redemption. By saving Szpilman, he was thus saving a small part of himself from the inglorious ending he knew inevitably awaited him and his party as the Allies prepared to reclaim Nazi-occupied territory. In a moment of reflection and transformation for both Szpilman and Hosenfeld, Polanski suitably includes Chopin's Ballad No. 1 in G minor, Op. 23 to enhance and to communicate the characters' emotional reaction to the horrors they have both faced, prompting a chance for redemption and hope.

The Pianist is a beautifully touching and tremendously moving film due in part to a phenomenal narrative and talented actors, but it largely cultivates these effects because of the carefully chosen musical pieces from where a bulk of the emotion and sentiment is felt. Polanski cleverly chooses pieces from Chopin, a Polish composer, for the protagonist to play throughout the film, emphasizing that Szpilman is both a musician and a Polish native despite being unjustly treated as an outsider in his own land. To more powerfully and acutely express the secondhand and often unfamiliar experiences of the protagonist, who is acting as a representative of a whole race of people, to the audience, Polanski ingeniously uses carefully chosen classical music pieces throughout the film as an aural expression of the protagonist's emotions as the world as he knows it is radically changing around him. Part of the ingenuity of a film that largely relies upon music is that, as seen in the case of the German officer and Szpilman as well as the audience's

own interaction with the film, music is a unifying agent, allowing a variety of people to experience the same emotions though their stories may be vastly different.

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Essay

Julianne Smith

***Double Indemnity*: The Femme Fatale and Gender in Postwar America**

After the victory of World War II, American society found itself in a much more damaged internal state than it had originally anticipated. Movie-goer audiences soon began to see the general cultural sentiments of anxiety and discontentment represented on movie screens across the country as Hollywood responded to postwar life in America (Cook 290). Hollywood responded to the end of the war by introducing new types of films, such as problem pictures and semi-documentary crime melodramas. These films dealt with various social issues and had a great amount of success during the late 1940s. As David Cook points out in *A History of Narrative Film*, nearly one-third of the films produced in Hollywood in 1947 had "problem content" of some kind (290). Most notable of these new genres that came from postwar Hollywood was film noir. Cook characterizes film noir as downbeat, graphic, and nihilistic, and describes these films as "assuming the absolute and irredeemable corruption of society and everyone in it" (293). One such corrupt character that film noir introduces is the overly sexualized femme fatale, who through her deceptive nature leads unsuspecting men astray. An intriguing example of the femme fatale can be found in *Double Indemnity*, which Cook and other critics typically regard as the prototype of film noir upon which other films were built (293).

Double Indemnity follows the twisted story of insurance salesman Walter Neff and Phyllis Dietrichson as they plot to kill Phyllis' husband in order to claim the money from the accident insurance policy that Phyllis secretly purchased in his name. Throughout the film, the

viewer sees Walter and Phyllis fight for power and dominance, both within their relationship and in the planning and execution of the crime they commit. The idea of gender and the struggle for dominance in *Double Indemnity*, especially as it is presented in the character type of the femme fatale, offers an interesting perspective on gender during the 1940s in America, when traditional gender roles were undergoing a significant shift. *Double Indemnity* portrays gender roles through the lenses of male dominance, human sexuality, and female manipulation, which reinforce the idea that film noir and the femme fatale herself were created in an attempt to reclaim the male-dominated narrative of prewar American culture.

Women played a crucial role during World War II as they filled positions that were once taken by men who were now fighting in the war. According to an article by historians at the National World War II Museum, approximately 350,000 women served in the war effort both at home and abroad ("History at a Glance"). Women became volunteers and took on a variety of jobs to help the war effort. This wartime period in the United States saw a shift from women being limited to jobs that were solely considered "women's work" to taking on roles once filled by men. Once women began taking on these bigger roles, not only did they play a crucial part in the war effort, but they did so while maintaining the same household work they had been doing previously. These women were balancing demanding jobs, being mothers, and running households while also dealing with the emotional turmoil of war and watching their husbands, sons, and other family members go overseas to fight. These women were physically and emotionally strong and proved themselves worthy of the roles they were filling. However, once the war ended, they were not met with the respect that they deserved.

According to an article from *The Reader's Companion to U.S. Women's History*, "Gender ideology permitted women's entry into nontraditional employment but stressed that

their new economic and social roles were 'for the duration only.' Women were encouraged to retain their 'femininity'; the iconic 'Rosie the Riveter' was depicted wearing overalls and nail polish" (Michel). The author goes on to discuss how despite hostility from some male workers, many female workers hoped to remain employed after the war ended. However, as soldiers returned home, male veterans were given priority over women for postwar jobs. The government granted women who served in the war effort some veteran benefits such as the G.I. Bill, but they received lower pay and their dependents were denied allotments (Michel). The hopes of continuing to work while pushing towards a more equal future seemed to be crushed as women were forced to return to the prewar narrative of American culture. According to historians at the National World War II Museum, "The nation that needed their help in a time of crisis, it seems, was not yet ready for the greater social equality that would slowly come in the decades to follow" ("History at a Glance").

The various male characters in *Double Indemnity*, especially insurance salesman Walter Neff, represent the idea of male dominance that was prevalent during the 1940s in American culture. The title sequence of the film opens with the silhouette of a man on crutches, which one can infer is Walter as he impersonates Mr. Dietrichson (0:00:42). The sequence begins with a long shot of the silhouetted figure slowly walking towards the camera. As the sequence continues, the silhouette progressively closes in until his figure takes up nearly the entire frame. This closing in of the male figure enforces the idea of male dominance from the first moments of the film. Although the man appears to be wounded, as indicated by the crutches, he maintains an upright posture and consistent pace as he approaches the camera. He is wounded, but he prevails and overtakes the frame, asserting a sense of dominance over the story that is about to be told. The theme of Walter being "wounded" is seen throughout the film. According to Hugh S.

Manon, a professor of cinema studies at Clark University, "Walter's voice-over throughout *Double Indemnity* serves as a constant reminder that what we are seeing is not a tale of attainment but the crestfallen lament of a wounded man" (18). This imagery of a sort of hero that is wounded but prevails could allude to American men returning home from war. Many Americans likely saw a sight similar to this scene in *Double Indemnity* as their loved ones returned home from war. Even though many of these veterans were wounded either physically or emotionally, they returned victoriously to their dominant positions in American society.

Walter Neff represents male dominance through his confident attitude that easily leans towards aggression. When Walter arrives at his company's office, Pacific All Risk Insurance Co., he keeps his composure despite the gunshot wound in his shoulder (0:03:26). Although he is visibly in pain, Walter calmly walks into claims manager Barton Keyes' office to confess his crimes into a Dictaphone. He sits down at the desk, lights a cigarette, and prepares to tell his story. As he starts recording, he states, "Dear Keyes, I suppose you'll call this a confession when you hear it. Well, I don't like the word confession. I just want to set you right about something you couldn't see, because it was smack up against your nose" (0:05:27). The viewer sees Walter in his weakest moment, confessing to two murders while suffering from a gunshot wound. However, he has a confident and almost demeaning attitude as he prepares to set the record straight and reveal the facts that Keyes could never quite figure out himself. In this moment, Walter is asserting himself as the one in control. He wants Keyes to know that he is the only one who knows the truth and has control over it. The viewer knows that control is slipping through Walter's fingertips as others are starting to follow the trail of evidence that will lead to him, but he desperately holds onto control, and he confesses in order to maintain control over his story.

Walter's confident yet slightly aggressive attitude can also be observed during his first visit to the Dietrichson's home. From the moment Walter first arrives at the house to inquire about a policy renewal, he asserts his dominance and confidence as he pushes into their home, despite the housekeeper's efforts to turn him away (0:07:49). As Walter waits for Phyllis, the housekeeper points him to the living room and, sensing his sly attitude, makes the comment that they keep the liquor cabinet locked. Walter replies saying, "It's all right. I always carry my own keys" (0:08:53). Although this is a simple witty comeback from Walter, it seems to have much bigger implications. Walter gets what he wants, and if he doesn't, he will find a way to manipulate the situation until he does. He is self-centered and confident in his ability to achieve what he wants. Walter craves power, wants the upper hand, demands to be right, and he will achieve this through whatever means necessary. This desire for power is made especially evident throughout his relationship with Phyllis. From the moment Walter first sees Phyllis at the top of the stairs wrapped in a towel, he is mesmerized by her beauty and feels as though he must have her. As Phyllis walks down the stairs after getting dressed, the camera focuses on her legs as she descends the stairs, signifying that this is Walter's point of view (0:09:45). He sees her as an object that is his for the taking. This objectification is made clear through his persistent flirting. Walter disregards the fact that Phyllis is a married woman with a stepdaughter and intensely pursues her based on superficial physical desire. This initial behavior signifies the way in which Walter ultimately views Phyllis, through the objectifying lens of desire and dominance.

In addition to Walter's objectifying behavior, he also tries to assert himself as dominant by belittling Phyllis. Throughout the film, Walter refers to Phyllis as "baby," which could allude to their romantic or sexual relationship. However, as the film progresses, it seems as if this term of endearment could actually be Walter looking down on Phyllis. One could infer that Walter

sees Phyllis as almost childlike because of her unrealistic desires. This patronization draws a parallel to how women were commonly perceived in American culture. Their desires to remain in the workforce and provide for themselves or a family were seen as unrealistic. They were not considered equal to their male counterparts. The first instance of Walter's belittling attitude occurs during his and Phyllis' second meeting. As Phyllis discusses buying an accident insurance policy for her husband without his knowledge, Walter begins to catch on to what she is planning. As he starts to walk towards the door, he turns around and says, "Look, baby, you can't get away with it" (0:24:42). Walter walks over to her and positions himself above her, asserting a sense of dominance verbally and physically. Walter leaves Phyllis' home and tries to distract himself from what has just happened; however, he cannot seem to get his mind off of Phyllis and their interaction from earlier that afternoon. As he paces around his living room, he states, "I was all twisted up inside, and I was still holding onto that red-hot poker. Right then it came over me that I hadn't walked out on anything at all. That hook was too strong. That this wasn't the end between her and me" (0:23:08). When Walter hears a knock on the door, he knows exactly who it is. During Walter and Phyllis' interaction, he keeps his cool, confident composure, saying things cannot be the same as they were when they first met and agreeing that maybe she should not have come. However, as she goes to leave, he succumbs to his desires, grabs her, and kisses her. In this moment, Walter unknowingly loses the control he so desperately holds onto and falls prey to Phyllis' manipulative ways. He is consumed by his temptations and desires and is willing to do anything to have her, including murder.

Although Walter believes that he has the upper hand, it is easy to see that Phyllis holds a significant amount of power in their relationship. Phyllis captivates him with her seductive nature and manipulative behavior. Deborah Walker-Morrison, a professor at the University of

Auckland, describes the femme fatale as a sort of "spider-woman" due to her nature of luring men into her seductive trap of committing murder only to be disposed of afterwards" (25). According to Walker-Morrison, "Many commentators have noted how the fatale as spider-woman combines physical seductiveness with lethal ambition: a drive for personal independence within which the man is no longer a romantic object of desire" (25). Phyllis craves independence and a life that is not controlled by the men around her. The first evidence of this desire for independence is presented when Walter is looking around her living room and notices the portraits of Mr. Dietrichson and Lola on the piano (0:09:19). Phyllis is not part of this physical presentation of the family, and one can infer that she does not want to be. Phyllis stands against the traditional familial structure and clearly has no desire to hide her distaste for her husband and stepdaughter. Phyllis is desperate for a sense of freedom and uses men in order to achieve it. Through manipulating Walter into committing her crimes, she is achieving her own freedom by eliminating her oppressive husband and ultimately leaving Walter behind. This portrayal of a woman who rejects a traditional familial structure and craves independence could be a reflection of how women were perceived at the time. Women who joined the workforce had to balance their work with motherhood, and this could have been seen by some as neglect of their responsibilities as mothers. Men returning home from war felt threatened by this new familial structure and realized that women were no longer reliant on them to support a household.

One of the defining characteristics of a femme fatale, as demonstrated by Phyllis in *Double Indemnity*, is manipulation through sexual attraction and desire. From the moment she meets Walter, Phyllis knows the power that she holds over him as he gazes at her. She sees an opportunity with him and knows the way in which to achieve what she wants. Phyllis is not impressed with Walter's relentless flirting and sexual advances, made clear through her slightly

annoyed and non-reciprocal facial expressions. However, she knows what she wants, and she knows how to manipulate the situation in her favor. As she begins talking with Walter, she puts lipstick on in the mirror before intentionally positioning herself in her armchair with her legs crossed and ankle out (0:10:00). She wants him to notice her and be enticed by the sexual nature that she projects. She allows Walter to feel as though he has the upper hand, in order to keep him unsuspecting of her motives when she mentions accident insurance. Throughout their interaction, Phyllis turns down his advances but leaves him with a slight hope that he has a chance with her. As Walter drives back to his office he is blissfully unaware of her deceitful ways; however, during the voice-over of his confession to Keyes, he states, "It was a hot afternoon, and I can still remember the smell of honeysuckle all along that street. How could I have known that murder can sometimes smell like honeysuckle?" (0:12:48). He equates the sweet, feminine smell of honeysuckle to murder, depicting femininity as murderous. Phyllis' sweet, feminine exterior was only a disguise for her dark, twisted interior.

As the film progresses, Phyllis becomes more confident in her deceitful, manipulative nature. Once their plan is in motion, Phyllis seems excited and eager. As Phyllis and Mr. Dietrichson drive onto a side street on the way to the train station, Phyllis has an almost crazed look in her eye as Walter appears from the backseat and kills Mr. Dietrichson. She is unbothered by this heinous act and seems to gain pleasure from it. As the plan progresses, Phyllis continues gaining confidence, talking back to Walter's abrasive comments and even leading the way at the train station. After the crime, Walter states, "I was afraid she might go to pieces a little, now that we had done it. But she was perfect. No nerves. Not a tear, not even a blink of the eyes" (0:58:26). She has been preparing for this and has no remorse for her actions. Any sense of guilt or shame is outweighed by her desire for control, freedom, and money. Phyllis and Walter's

relationship undergoes a shift as Walter is faced with hiding the truth as the insurance company investigates the case. He distances himself from Phyllis as she desperately holds onto whatever persuasive, sexual power she has left in order to assure his loyalty to her. Throughout the investigation, Phyllis remains strong and confident, even playing the role of the distraught widow in order to manipulate the insurance company into thinking she has no knowledge of the events that have taken place. Their crime has given her the reassurance that she is capable of achieving a life of independence and freedom through manipulation and deceitfulness. The case should be made that this image of a strong female capable of surviving independently refers back to American women as they thrived in the independence of wartime life in America.

The contrast between the ultimate fates of both Walter and Phyllis reinforces the traditional gender roles that are present in *Double Indemnity*. Walter seems to be the only one between the two who has any sense of morality left, even if it is just through the shame that he feels from lying to Keyes. Walter's confession is only directed towards Keyes, whom he feels deserves an explanation. According to Brian Gallagher, a professor at the City University of New York, "The deeper purpose of the confession, however, is to acknowledge Keyes' rightness." Gallagher continues, ". . . Walter has as his only confessional motive the desire to give Keyes the story straight and entire. In fact, Walter ruins his slim chance of escaping over the border to Mexico by spending several hours dictating this confession to Keyes" (238). By the end of the film, Walter is almost seen as a redeemable character. Despite his crimes, he seems to have a desire to make things right; however, Phyllis' final fate is much less forgiving. Before Walter and Phyllis' last meeting, the viewer sees Phyllis hide a gun under the cushion of her chair before sitting down and lighting a cigarette. From the moment Walter arrives, he and Phyllis engage in a struggle for power. It is apparent that only one person will be leaving the house alive, and it is up to them to

decide who. As Walter reveals Phyllis' deceitful ways, she makes another attempt to manipulate him saying they could still be together as she reveals her plan to eliminate her daughter in-law Lola. In response to this, Walter states, "For once, I believe you because it's just rotten enough" (1:38:40). Phyllis shoots Walter in the shoulder but is unable to shoot him again to kill him. Walter questions why she could not shoot again, hoping that it is not because she is in love with him. She responds, "No, I never loved you, Walter, not you or anybody else. I'm rotten to the heart. I used you, just as you said. That's all you ever meant to me. Until a minute ago . . ." (1:40:08). She makes one last attempt to sexually manipulate Walter before he shoots her twice as she holds onto him. Through murdering her, Walter reclaims his dominance and eliminates the "rottenness" of the corrupt femme fatale.

Perhaps men returning home from World War II needed to reclaim their own dominance as well. During the war, American women had proven that they were more than capable of stepping up into demanding roles and living independently. These women were crucial in maintaining life back home in the states and played an irreplaceable role in the war effort; however, as men returned home, these independent women became a threat to them. Instead of acknowledging their abilities and supporting women continuing in these roles, those returning home from war saw these women as a threat to the traditional gender ideology that Americans had held onto so tightly. This shift in gender role dynamics was not easily ignored. If film noir reflected the general societal sentiments of the time, it only makes sense that the femme fatale was created to represent the way men saw women. According to Deborah Walker-Morrison,

> The widely accepted sociological explanation for the emergence of this spider-woman fatale figure in American noir of the 1940s and early 50s sees her as a product of the accession of women to positions of greater economic

independence, even as ex-servicemen struggled to re-enter the family and the

workforce. Women had been forced out of the home and into the workforce

during the war years. On their return, American men, already emotionally scarred

by the direct experience of war, suddenly found themselves having to compete in

the workforce with those whose roles had previously been limited to those of

sweethearts, wives, and mothers. (26)

The creators of the femme fatale took the positive role that women had been playing during the

war years and twisted it into a role characterized by manipulation, sexuality, and negativity.

Through the portrayal of Phyllis as a "rotten" individual that ultimately meets her demise

by being shot by the dominant male, the portrayal of the femme fatale and gender roles in

Double Indemnity serves as a reinforcement of the American male's desperate attempt to reclaim

the male dominated narrative of prewar American culture. Although film noir became the staple

of the late 1940s in American cinema, it is fascinating to think of the repercussions that this

cinematic genre had on American culture and gender ideology. Films representing general

cultural sentiment are important, especially during such a tumultuous time as war. However, as

film noir became the overwhelming majority of films produced during this era, one could argue

that these films could have done more harm than good. A genre that was created to represent the

hopelessness and despair of postwar sentiments became a cover for male insecurity and gender

inequality. Instead of producing films that the American people could relate to and find healing

through from their wartime traumas, film noir seems to have been used as an excuse to wallow in

an overall sense of nihilistic, prejudiced self-pity.

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Poetry

Abigail Aho

Daisy Buchanan

Before the sun tickles the marble grey of my head-
board, I wake to a symphony of dissonance.
A rubber nipple quiets you in the thin light, until
your almond-shaped body breathes sweet in the pit of my shoulder.
Warm milk dotting the hinge of my elbow like confetti,
I dress you in pink chenille booties made with care
by a factory in Taiwan
and cook breakfast.
The wholeness of the egg is dashed in a frying pan and salted with a mother's love.

I scrape smashed pears off the soft pink of your lip;
your mouth is an unfillable hole.
Beloved, beloved,
I am no more to give.

You are the plum taken from the icebox before the noisy morning.
You push the silver spoon onto the floor where it lands
with the clatter of a tuneless clarinet.
My response is cacophonic silence.

Poetry

Abigail Aho

Fool's Spring

Suppose we could go back before a premature frost turned daffodils white and paper thin,
bending crowned heads towards the dormant earth to taste frozen dust,
before that one lonely pink line struck through our plans.

Suppose you recolored your roots to something less cruelly autumnal,
and we learned to swim instead of floating
listlessly like a leaf in the creek before it's warm enough.

Suppose you quit leaving the house before coffee,
and the white-scarred pomegranate, abandoned on the kitchen table,
wasn't too heavy to throw away.

Suppose my February pollen hadn't become mere decoration for
a grimy parking lot puddle, and instead
stuck in your delicate crocus womb.

Suppose rainbow season came back, and we allowed ourselves
to remember it's not spring until the crocuses bloom a second time.

Bradyn Debysingh

Ode for a Fed-Up Classicist

Quizzed to form most feverish vile
In present pressed to bear a smile
For Modernity—heralded high on Homer's
Fine-shapen grave run down with dandelion weeds
The Imp Liquified enthroned pants
And Mammon'd now its eyes do dance,
Nec Charon sed nunc aqualis umbra est:
"Not up we go but down, down, down
Split not three streams but one River reigns."
Folderol—junk-clogged viscosity
Stoic-not, but atomic-bombed,
Ev'ry day blinds brighter the Blind Poet—
Every new day-deus blots out his Name.

Jillian A. Fantin

Iphigenia

Argos' shag carpets, dyed cabernet,
  sobering up by my foreignly-rocked body.
    Descending from a winning warship into bathtub massacre,
dad lost the peace for mom's quiet. Mom's loud sex.
  I am Artemis' sacrificial doe. He chose
    the dearest price for soliciting a ten-year war:
a maiden. Dad's curved blade voyaged against my abdomen,
  strung-out, spurting small intestines.

    But as Orestes wrestles
      broad shouldered prophetical purity,
I perished worshipping pussy,
  venerating my mothers in the Huntress' tits.
    Plasma and marrow aid the orgasm.
Aegisthus assumes suckling Clytemnestra reaps Argan rule.
  I watch their marriage, greenstick fractured:
    an abortive fury shackling those balsa-wrapped revengers.
I—a bloodlusty relative absolutely stuck
  in falsified, motherly memory—
    hunt fawn-brown virgins forever in Hades.

Poetry

Jillian A. Fantin

"They're going to make you one of them."

(The title is borrowed from a line in the 1932 film *Freaks*.)

My peacock stretches cloud fingers,
       grasping drab wrinkles puckered from the Equator,
a ringmaster's whip.

       Stampedes threaten her
straw-laden perch.
       Haute couture trapezes black and white

against the dirty flurry of naked grey, carving
       Tahitian pearls in the throats of bearded ladies,
silking four footed-stockings up conjoined twins.

       Diamond-encrusted human cannonballs
careening, crashing into prêt-à-porter, colouring shadows,
       stitching half-buttoned blouses, blunting shaved jawlines.

Velour sleeves clothe freakshow decadence,
       three-ring centuries forming candy-striped tents,
runways carameling high fashion heels. *Goodbye,*

       Hercules—the foppish pheasant to strongman—*Goodbye,*
those goodbyes handsomely popcorning, fogging my 20/20 lenses.
       Caged, wings clipped, lavishly-clowned,

her assorted oddities vogue across the stage.

Adeline Lee Frierson

I Love You, My Sister

Rock me to sleep for *you* are my sister.
Hug me tight and chase away the cold.
Wiping my tears, "I love you," you whisper.

You tell fairytales, painting a picture
Of kingdoms afar, riches untold.
Rock me to sleep for *you* are my sister.

Late one night we can't contain our snicker
Quieting our noise with a tight hold.
Wiping my tears, "I love you," you whisper.

Spin me around, our dresses a-flutter
Until sweat covers our hair of gold.
Rock me to sleep for *you* are my sister.

Heartbroken by teenage strife, we shatter
I dissolve into sobs uncontrolled.
Wiping my tears, "I love you," you whisper.

Soon we'll be grown, our childhood a flicker
Ever-changing hearts as we grow old.
Rock me to sleep for *you* are my sister.
Wiping my tears, "I love you," you whisper.

Poetry

Abigail Hawkins

To Tiny, Sticky-Fingered Hands

Lend an ear to the right-angled
Barbie Dolls, how you force them to
sit in rows, confined to one
baseboard of the playroom.
What would their painted, white
teeth say when you leave their
home in shambles?

Lend an ear towards the Mommie Barbie,
towards her supposed six kids. Now eight. Now twelve.
She neither knows where they come from nor asks for them.
Spending hard cash on stale groceries becomes a tiresome
task, especially when the bubble gum pink
oven and fridge won't turn on.

Lend an ear towards her arranged marriage;
Ken: her husband one day, her brother the next.
Ken, who can't keep a job down, shifts from doctor
to life guard to flight attendant to celebrity.
You snotty-nosed youth, lend an ear to income and incest!

Why do you shove Barbie's rubber feet into microscopic
pumps and matt her hair with hairspray in an attempt to
"fix" it? Can you not see that she does not relish how you
Sharpie lipstick onto her cheeks, mutating her
into the Joker? If only you understood your withholding of
plastic human rights. If only you allowed her to sit
up straight, or to simply let her outside
pinky and thumb finally touch
the rest of her fingers.

Poetry

Abby Olive

The Crossover

PTSD. But it didn't happen to me. That's for those who have seen
the bloodshed, not people who meekly burrowed under study-abroad bedspreads.
Terrorism gnashed at Tourism, crossing over London Bridge into Borough Market,
and though my hands shake, and my hippocampus starts sprinting
down the road away from "what if," away from "we almost did,"
I'm already miles away where my professors and peers say, "We're safe."
The siren's call should be Help's anthem on its way, but it announces the hijack
of the bridge and of our class time in the parlor. Did that floorboard always cry

when someone crept there? Did the windows always clatter
when you locked the door? Were dial tones always so absent and silent?
We know we're safe down the road, but our minds can't help
but crossover that bridge. We cross from knowledge to fear,
and once we allow the crossover, we're isolated.
The guys try to tell jokes, but we hear cars from the night.
My professor looks at me on Gloucester Road, wondering where I am. In my head,
I'm back, telling truth which, at the time, felt like cold-hearted lies.

At the time, the word "safe" was the joke, and the word "fear"
was casually thrown around like the word "love" between two teenagers.
We made the crossover home, flying from fear, returning to fact,
but no one had words to exchange for our study-abroad experience.
Our memories churned like an untamed river, spitting out remains
of that night in flashback form. I strain to dam it up and hold it all back.
I've built it up with iron bars, iron bars, iron bars,
though I know they'll bend and break. My fair lady, I know they will.

Abby Olive

From the Kitchen Window

Mama said y'all migrate down South when it gets cold up there.
Mama said you fly in flocks, just like us, and just like her
mama, she'll prepare for your arrival. She'll open the windows
and sit at the kitchen table each morning until you get here.

Mama and I will chatter while you land, and we'll watch you
warble. She told me not to scare you away; I should make
you feel welcome to stay until early spring. My mama is known
for her hospitality. If you asked, she'd build you a house.

The neighbor's dog barks at our company sometimes. I
think it's funny that they want to meet our guests. I wish y'all could
stay through the summer. Mama will give me a hug and tell me you
must go. She says to be patient and that you'll come back next fall.

But I want one more day. I promise I won't cry; I'll be
tough as nails. Mama said pressure makes diamonds, and I want to
shine, but you move up in the TSA queue line, silhouetting the skyline.
"Please stay just one more day," I whisper as I watch you fly away.

I'll sit at the table until November when Mama
opens the kitchen window, and you'll troll up into the yard.
She'll call her mama to let her know you got here. I'll whistle back
to let everyone know our guest of honor flew in that morning.

Griffin Schou

Man in the Mountain

As I rode down a Kentucky mountain road
to Grandma's house on the state line,
I gazed out the window, my eyelids low,
at the trees bathed in the night

But as I rode on, my safety gone,
a blaspheme I was shown—
a deadly collage, a grinning visage
stood sentinel alone

My blood ran cold
My brain went hot

Man in the mountain, perched beneath the spotlight
Standing in the mountain, never leaving my sight
And a heavy feeling rode in the air
that this ebony shape was always there
Man in the mountain staring into my soul

I was entranced as my vision enhanced
so close yet so far away
with glowing eyes and a confident guise
not a single word it would say

I looked at my sister as she lay asleep
then looked again, what does he want with me?

Man in the mountain, perched beneath the spotlight
Standing in the mountain, never leaving my sight
And a heavy feeling rose my fear
that felt like it was coming near
Man in the mountain, staring into my soul

I couldn't tell, was it man or beast
this transforming entity staring from the east?
Then to my horror what would I see
his face—it looked like me

As we finally crossed the state line
it seemed the night would be over soon,
this chilling trip down the darkened road
clouds blocking the moon

But the grinning fiend wasn't finished yet,
though not a word did he say,
his smile said loud and clear, "I'll see you
one of these days"

Man in the mountain, perched beneath the spotlight
Standing in the mountain, never leaving my sight
Even though I reached the house unharmed
I never fled its malicious charm
Man in the mountain, still watching me

Will I ever see him again?
I don't know

If he ever comes for me
It'll be time to go.

Jordan Shoop

Affected

_____

1. influenced or touched by an external factor, by someone or something
2. artificial, pretentious, and designed to impress

Metallic fire, golden rings
I stand in front of the mirror
I am firstly,
sturdy, an unbroken shield,
yet vulnerable

> You unexpectedly turned with your gemmed brown eyes staring through,
> before you had been indifferent, a stranger. But I cowered, nothing new,
> except this: affected.

Altering plates, sparked wires
in the reflection, I am scarred
and modifying
maybe it's easier being robotic,
apathetic, strong, fixable

> You forge me into a magnet, as I catch your stares, your footsteps, your
> loud frustration, and I can't seem to forget you. We both know that you
> brought the hammer and forgot the needle and thread.

Casted steel, statue framed
I can see the wanting tears, wanting
but stopping and   not shedding,
in the reflection,   I am strong,
    a titanium heart

> You are walking towards me, that smile and your eyes still in a glimmer. I
> steady my hand in a wave, my lips on the verge of the truth, but I remember:
> I can't have you and your diamond mind.

Hardwired, pure metal and stone
in the reflection,   only
the   robotic stands,   re-carved
and broken   and affected   and
rust rust rust rust rust rust rust rust rust rust rus—

Jordan Shoop

Afterpiece

1.

I remember
when you said
you wanted
freedom.

We sat, so closely,
at the bar, alcohol
on the tips
of our lips,
the bar empty,
purgatory.

I do not remember
what prompted your words,
your eyes were just so empty,
the offbeat of your exhale,
your smile receding.

You had been locked to me,
facing me, your hand on my thigh.
Then you turned towards the bar mirror.
I followed your gaze, as we
stared at ourselves, strangers.
You slurred, "I don't . . . anymore."

But I chose ignorance
I chose to stay

You were drunk
I was very afraid

2.

I have fallen
into patterns
of rotations

The staircase
curls itself around,
spiraling in trepidations.
I follow its turns, myself
slighting in vertigos.

I wonder:
are you doing the same?

Noticing me from afar,
your body longing,
but desolation
is in your eyes. You continue
walking towards me,
a half-smile willfully
appears. Our
eyes are hooked, yet
we notice our stagnation.

You used to place your
hands across my shoulders
and wrap your
body next to mine.
Now
you just pat my back.

I still
reach for your embrace.

3.

Focusing
upon your stares,
we are in our
bedroom.

Actually,
we're in a motel.

The grey sheets are tinted,
wrestled from our
bodies. You move away
to the front of the bed,
exposed with your back to me,
your thigh still caught
in the sheets, your

hand against your temple.
I count your freckles
along your back, as you
stare into the opposite
of the room, distant.

You refuse to accept
us and I and we.
I refuse
the ending.

Cowards

Only a constant hum
of the neon sign:
vacant.

Lacey Spear

Trafficked.

I wince at the sound of their whistles –
each night – they call me.
They use me when they want me.
I am a prized possession, maybe.
Or an abhorred object, most likely.

These walls trap me, cutting off the
circulation inside my tormented veins,
begging me at any moment to cry out,
to give into the miserable mystic of death.

I am encaged; I am imprisoned.
But it is not death I fear –
no, I fear something much worse.

I fear them –
the feeling of their oily, revolting bodies
against mine. I fear the brush of a
hand in the black of the night,
pulling me into the district of dark deeds.

I do not want to go there.
I am not an animal.
I have neither tail nor fur.
But I have a collar.
And I have a leash.

One that they relentlessly yank on,
dragging me from city to city to fulfill
whatever they fancy.
Black, inhumane bruises populate the skin of my neck.

It is not my fault, I tell myself.
It has never been my fault.
But I wake up each morning
with sin-stained skin and a harrowed heart.
Is this the life I have been chosen to live?

Each night, at the sound of their footsteps –
at the pounding of their black, intruding boots –
I cry out in a weak,
unrecognizable voice (one that sounds like a stranger
to my own ears) "When will it ever end?"

Yet, I do not fear the dark. I do not fear death.
I welcome them both.

Prose Poetry

Joy Wilkoff

Hot Mess

The worn-out silk pumps, only used for waltzing, lying on the dining room table next to the plain white rice, heaped in a striped bowl left untouched for hours, that she always pairs with metallic black beans; the capless piss-soaked stick with one faint blue line stretching across the tiny white window, also on the dining room table – *what a bizarre place to announce the miraculous news* – a half-eaten hot dog nestled in a stale bun poking out of the overflowing trash can, microwaved and burnt – *I thought she said she was vegan, but I guess it takes two to do the horizontal tango* – the plates shoved in the dishwasher, the dirty contaminating the clean, unidentifiable ooze solidifying into a crust; the sweatpants and bras dotting the floor, like spilled glitter, becoming permanent fixtures of the dingy carpet – *I thought cleanliness was next to godliness* – the musty stench of shitty Hollister cologne radiating from her bed, permeating our two-bedroom apartment, seeping through my closed door, a constant reminder that more than two people really live here.

Flash Fiction

Lucy Martin

Frog Girl

That classroom will forever serve as a monument to my shame. I cannot escape the self-loathing that clandestinely creeps into every crevasse of my soul. No inch of my flesh remains untouched by the torment of Room 204.

It is important to preface that I have never been like the other girls. No, I'm serious. I know this phrase carries the same legitimacy as if someone says they don't have a crush on a guy because "he's like my brother." Right, he's like your brother if you always put your hand on your brother's shoulder and laugh or have weird maternal tendencies towards your brother that make everyone in a four-mile radius super uncomfortable.

But yeah, I am not like the other girls. I like frogs. I love frogs, actually. In third grade I spent all my time at recess catching frogs. I literally had no friends until I was fourteen because all the time I could have spent fostering relationships was committed to the hunt. Not impressive enough? Did I mention I *eat* frogs? Sometimes I put ketchup or parmesan cheese on top. Well I used to put parmesan cheese on top before I developed my lactose allergy. Now I just put ketchup on top of my frogs.

Alas, you caught me. I could never lie to you. I don't eat frogs. But I swear I'm not like the other girls and here's why: I have never worn perfume a day in my life.

My senior year of high school I had AP Psychology in Room 204. Three-fourths of the semester had passed. We had already talked about Zimbardo and REM sleep cycles and

attachment theories and all the things I vaguely remember studying for but forgot immediately after the exam—you know how school works.

We had moved on to the chapter centered around sexual attraction. My teacher was a middle-aged dad, so this was more painful than it needed to be. It was also more painful than it needed to be because I went to a private school in the Bible Belt. Sex was simply a three-letter word with one syllable. Here's another word with one syllable—HELP!

One day my teacher was referencing all the different things a person will do when they are infatuated with someone. I think it is connected to chemicals in your brain. As he was carrying on, he casually mentioned that girls perform tasks like putting on perfume and makeup to impress boys. I immediately sat up, scoffed, and glanced in indignation to the classmates around me. He looked at me expectantly because I had awoken from my boredom-induced coma that had lasted the past two months. "Girls don't actually wear perfume though," I responded.

In this moment, the earth began to unhinge. The girls around me looked back with stares pregnant with contempt. The sentence "No, I wear perfume every day" echoed in my ears. My throat closed up and palms wet with anxious sweat. Then came the glares. Had I hit their kitten with my car? No. Did they look at me like I had? Yes. Sometimes when I close my eyes at night, I still see the looks of disgust tattooed on the inside of my eyelids. My teacher sided with the hecklers. He threw a tomato at me. It was an heirloom tomato, and I still have a scar. How long had that tomato been in his desk?

Okay, fine! He didn't throw a tomato at me, but he did leave a scar. On my pride.

I had always known I was different. My family stuck out in supermarkets. My parents made us listen to books on tape on car rides instead of being allowed to watch movies. I knew I was different. What I didn't know was that I was shameful. Apparently girls wear perfume; no

one told me. And to answer your question, no, I still do not wear perfume. I bathe regularly and wear deodorant and still am capable of functioning.

I am a high school graduate, I am lactose intolerant, I am a woman, and I am not defined by Room 204.

Flash Fiction

Lucy Martin

Mary

***

She clumsily slid out of the Toyota Camry. Her polyester skirt rode up her bare thigh producing a skidding noise on the leather and creating a sound resembling passing gas. The Uber driver thought it was her gas; Mary looked like someone who would pass gas upon exiting a car. She knew he thought she had passed gas. Mary wished she could prove to him that she hadn't. Mary wished she could have shown him the montage of her flatulence that occurred as she got ready for the evening in her studio apartment minutes prior.

"Thanks again."

She slammed the passenger side door with one hand while trying to subtly rearrange her underwear to its intended placement on her behind with the other. The second she had collected herself, two cars whizzed past, pushing her skirt between her legs. The fabric formed a polka-dotted tornado weaving around her pale thighs.

 Mary crossed to the dimly lit Thai restaurant awaiting her on the other side of the street.

"But Houston is known for its Thai food," her mother lied.

This was the only comfort her mother could provide that afternoon as Mary lamented the restaurant Brian had selected for their first date.

Brian was a "friend of a friend;" this is how she flatly described him to her mother. His Facebook profile picture was him grinning and clutching a three-year-old girl with a party hat wedged on her round head. The caption read, "cousin luvin." This did not impress Mary. The

two had been set up to go on a date by their significantly happier and more attractive married friends.

Mary reached the ominous wooden door of the restaurant; the sign above the doorframe read *Songkran Thai Kitchen* in peeling dark green paint. She checked her wristwatch and read "8:55 pm."

"Great. 7:55," she thought.

It seemed like a waste to adjust her watch to account for Daylight Saving Time considering she had the mental capacity to subtract an hour in her head.

Mary was early, so she turned away from the door and walked down the street. It would read better for her to round the corner a couple minutes after Brian had arrived. Hopefully, the wind could hit her at a flattering angle this time around, maybe even blow her skirt or hair back to create the illusion of sensuality. As she proceeded down the street, Mary surveyed what sat behind each window: matte white mannequins modeling delicate boutique clothing. She nodded curtly through a window at a barista closing up for the evening. He mimicked her gesture while continuing to sweep the tile floors of the coffee shop, which served sour coffee. The sun was setting, caricaturing her shadow, enlarging it on the cracked grey sidewalk in front her.

As her eyes followed the jagged mosaic of the sidewalk, a frog hopped into view. It paused for a moment, hopped one pace away from her, and pressed its body against the glass of the storefront. Its pale, yellow vocal sac pulsed in effort. Shoulders slumping, Mary crouched down, her soft thighs and calves bearing the weight of her buttocks. The pair's eyes met, one dark and beady, the other pale blue.

Without hesitation, Mary corralled the frog into her hands. She peaked through her fingers at the passive captive. Examining the raised bumps on his back, his belly remained cool

on her sweaty palm. Mary felt his heart beating and wondered if hers was functioning at the same pace. Running her thumb along his back, she felt the ridges that reminded her of the bumps on the bottom of the soap bar sitting on the rim of her bathroom sink at home. Mary chuckled at the thought of using her new companion in lieu of a bar of soap.

Breaking from the amphibian mirage, Mary glanced up to see her most recent Facebook search approaching in the reflection of the storefront window.

"Mary?"

Brain was cornering Mary and her secret. She could not release her prize, but it could not remain in her hand.

Looking down at her cupped hands, Mary swiftly transferred the frog to her right hand, pressed her hand to mouth and shot her head back swallowing it in one gulp. There was no debate that her technique was perfect; Mary had been taking birth control since high school.

She shot up, making eye contact with Brian in the glass before turning around. Offering a halfhearted smile, like two tiny ants were tugging at the corners of her mouth, Mary wryly extended her hand.

"Yes! Nice to finally meet you."

They shook hands. Their palms met and clasped the same way Mary's hand and mouth had made contact seconds prior.

Songkran Thai Kitchen held no significance to Mary; she did not remember one thing about dinner. After he dropped her off, she spent no time wondering what Brian actually meant when he said she looked "rested." There was no contemplation over the possibility of another date or what their attractive married friends would say. Replaying in her head that night was the

feeling of the amphibian falling down her throat, its fingers momentarily gripping her esophagus before descending to her stomach.

Mary lay awake that night thinking of the next time she would eat a frog. When her eyes rolled back in sleep, she dreamed of the next time she would spy one on the sidewalk walking to work.

Lucy Martin

Spotify

He is not impressed that you both have the same musical taste. He does not spend the time you think he does, looking at your playlists, being pleasantly surprised that you both like the same "The 1975" album. In fact, he has never looked at your Spotify profile. Sure, he may have followed you back when you followed him three months ago, but it is because he recognized your name as the girl who sits a row in front of him in *Intro to Anatomy*. He did not notice when you changed your profile picture one month ago, either. You spent twenty-two valuable minutes editing that picture of yourself. It's a good picture. It just happens to be a picture he will never see or care about in any capacity.

It's not wrong to like the same music as the cute guy in your anatomy class. When you saw "The Band Camino" and "LANY" stickers on his laptop the first day of class, you immediately searched his Spotify profile, saw your aligned indie, folk, aesthetic, dark-roasted, mahogany-scented music taste and began naming your children. That's normal. You think about him when you drive, maybe you turn up the volume and roll down a window as you pass the coffee shop you know he traffics. He has not noticed and does not care. These songs will not be enough to shake him conscious from the numbing of alternative music and sour coffee to acknowledge your existence. The semester will end. The songs you once loved will now serve as bitter monuments to the mourning of your nonexistent relationship. He will never think of you, and you will pretend you never thought of him.

Flash Fiction

Abby Olive

The Climb Up

Flocking like bats to the campus chapel, we approach the only form of rebellion we know to be celebrated rather than condemned. These after-hours adventures serve as a rite of passage, a type of graduation, and a song of remembrance but not the kind the organ sings in the morning. It's tradition to make this climb up. Abruptly, the ladder meets the stairs in the balcony's sound booth, beckoning us into the iron heart strings of the steeple. Hold tight. Keep your eyes up.

His palms sweaty, her chatter won't subside, but someone needs to talk to the echoes that, like me, are bouncing off the walls as we climb. I push up to the first platform, absorbing the fingerprints of others who, like me, tried to leave their legacy behind. I don't know them, but we're friends now. I see their secrets—the words left behind, inscribed in sharpie, hieroglyphed for the future scholars and seekers who have stepped away from the library long enough to live a little. I see what they chose to say with no one around. Among some forgotten phone numbers craving a one-night fling and the names of once young (now old) lovers hoping for a ring by spring, I sign and date our initials in a heart on the chapel's guestbook wall to document our visit.

The moon shining through the glass stains my jean shorts and ripples off the walls to flash a route for the rest of our journey up. From here, it's single file, every woman and every man for themselves. I swing under and around the iron vines, my hands at her heels. The fear of falling never crosses my mind, but the fear of being found makes me sweat in the Alabama night. Words flash across each bar.

"Never

    Stop

Never

    Surrender."

I continue to magnetically attach my hands to each rung. The ladder stops with my heart. Voices mumble below. Friend or foe? Two platforms below, underclassmen stand in awe at the climb up. I don't feel all that far away, but I guess perspective makes the gap seem wider. The sound of my heart in my ears threatens to give us away as we continue up the last ladder. A peak out the small circle window at the top just barely shows a bleary image of campus. After looking up for so long, it's nice to look out at the terrifying progress we made.

Your feet to my hands, we climb down. Your hand finds my hand; we run out. Breathe in the freedom of the evening fog trapped over campus' grassy quad. Somewhere between looking up, down, and out, I find myself looking back at those first day of freshman year feels, the fear of messing it all up, the finding yourself while looking for your car in the parking deck, the dancing down the hall after midnight quiet hours, the frequent flyer miles accumulated in a professor's office, the good luck traditions, game day decisions, holy provision. These memories, along with the last four years, flickered by, but hindsight's gift of 2020 clarifies the path now traveled, allowing me to see the purpose in those moments of uncertainty. From the ground, we watch our friends' silhouettes dance upon the stained glass while our feet leave prints in the grass as little legacies saying farewell for us.

The group gathers on Centennial Walk. We stall and stare, as if we'll do it again.

Microfiction

Julie Steward, PhD

The Man in 24D

I could see his haphazard bald spot and the way his collar had begun to fray in little ragged lines. The man in the seat in front of me clearly had worn this gray button-down shirt several times before, and the polyester's light sheen reflected his dutiful, if not always precise, ironing. Even before the stewardesses came around to offer beverages, he turned to the stranger in 24E and broke the conversational ice: "My father died."

Our plane was tenth in line for take-off, and the air had already become as stale as breakroom coffee. The cabin smelled like sweat and impatience. The woman next to me in 25E wore a long, black mink coat and a gold barrette pushed precisely into her French twist. She was already asleep, her contoured cheek pressed against the window and her French manicured hands clutching a snakeskin Michael Kors purse. One day, I thought to myself, I must become this woman.

The two men in row 24 had begun to speak about God, and I wanted to reach my hand between their seats and pat the sad one on his arm, but it's hard enough to tell a stranger your story of loss without some woman's disembodied hand landing on your elbow with a pat pat pat and an "I couldn't help but overhear. . . . " It's hard enough to sit stuck on the tarmac like a fly caught on a yellow pest strip. The sad man whispered words like "Redeemer" and "Shepherd" as 24E listened carefully, never fidgeting to adjust his corduroy jacket or looking away when the teary-eyed stranger spoke of religion. Instead, he nodded and would whisper "yes" and "I know." The man in 24E had the softest brown eyes I had ever seen. They weren't so much grandfatherly as enduringly beautiful after many years.

When it came time to deplane, I lightly bumped into the sad man on purpose. I just wanted to make contact with him in some way. I wanted to look him in the eyes and say, "I'm sorry. I am so sorry."

Emily Youree

The Fête

(Based on Chapter 14 of *Villette* by Charlotte Brontë)

Cast of Characters (in order of appearance)

LUCY SNOWE: an Englishwoman and teacher at the school, in her mid-twenties, plain but with sharp eyes, her dark hair always in a neat bun; quiet, pragmatic, nondescript.

ZELIE ST. PIERRE: a teacher at the school, in her late twenties. She is controlling and a little vain.

MONSIUER PAUL EMMANUEL: a teacher at the school, early thirties, intense and loud, with a black moustache and little round glasses that always seem to slide down to the end of his nose. He always wears a smoking cap, and everyone is too scared of him to tell him it looks ridiculous.

GINEVRA FANSHAWE: a student at the school, in her late teens, beautiful, vivacious, fickle, and a little giddy. The star of the school play. She is particularly fond of Lucy.

DR. JOHN: an Englishman in his mid-twenties, handsome, with a thick red beard. He is the school's doctor and the object of every female student's (and teacher's) admiration; polite, confident.

COLONEL DE HAMAL: a soldier and dandy in his early twenties, handsome, but his soul is clearly in his appearance.

*NOTE: All dialogue, unless otherwise noted, is spoken in French. The lines written are the English subtitles.

FADE IN:

INT. DRAWING ROOM at Villette, a French-speaking boarding school for girls/1840s—MIDMORNING

Long shot of LUCY SNOWE, seated in an old, boxy armchair that dwarfs her. Behind the chair is a window; outside is a garden being prepared for a party, including the schoolgirls practicing for a play under the direction of M. PAUL. LUCY is wearing a simple grey dress and is focusing on darning a stocking; **she is perfectly centered on screen.**

The sound of voices enters the room off-screen—ZELIE ST. PIERRE and TEACHER 1 speaking in French (no subtitles, but they are discussing DR. JOHN, with the words "English doctor" and "Dr. John" heard multiple times).

The camera slowly closes in to a medium shot on LUCY, who makes no indication that she has noticed their presence. The women ignore her. ZELIE says something that merits a giggle from TEACHER 1, and LUCY's eyebrows twitch upward slightly.

A bustling is heard from outside—M. PAUL yelling in French, both about the girls' poor performance and some newly delivered bad news (no subtitles). LUCY glances up in reaction to the outburst.

CUT TO:

ZELIE and TEACHER 1, looking annoyed.

> **TEACHER 1**
> He's in such a bad humor today!

> **ZELIE**
> Well, his play isn't going as he wishes. Let's go before the tempest rages in here.

Wide Angle

CUT TO:

LUCY, unmoving at the commotion of M. PAUL, comes closer. At the sound of a slamming door, she jumps a little, her work falling out of her lap. Without looking up, she stands and bends to pick it up just as someone bursts through the door on the other side of the room off-screen.

Darning in hand, Lucy straightens, **the camera tilting to follow her**, to stand face to face with M. PAUL. He is taller than LUCY but not by much. Although he is dressed formally, his tie is undone and hanging precariously around his neck and he is out of breath. He is wearing a rosary. **Medium two-shot**—unstoppable force meets immovable object.

<div align="center">

M. PAUL
</div>

(in thickly accented English)
Miss, play you must. I am planted there.

He takes off his smoking cap, as if in supplication, but his expression remains defiant and demanding.

<div align="center">

LUCY
</div>

(calmly, in English)
What can I do for you, Monsieur Paul?

M. PAUL shoves his glasses back up to his eyes.

<div align="center">

M. PAUL
</div>

(in English)
Play you must. I will not have you shrink, or frown, or make the prude. I read your skull— (he waves a finger at her forehead). I see your *moyens*. Play you *can*; play you *must*.

LUCY turns to sit down and returns to her darning, **breaking the two-shot as the camera gives her a close up.**

<div align="center">

LUCY
</div>

(in English)
What do you mean?

<div align="center">

M. PAUL
</div>

(returning to French)

<div align="center">

Wide Angle
</div>

There is no time to be lost! Let us thrust to the wall all reluctance, all excuses, all minauderies. You must take a part in the vaudeville.

LUCY bends further over her darning, as if trying to shield herself from the request.

> **M. PAUL**
> Louise Vanderkelkov is ill, and the play is ruined without a Monsieur Fop. And so, I must apply to an *Englishwoman* to rescue me. What is her answer— yes? Or no?

CUT TO:

A sideview of LUCY as she thinks. She looks up at him.

CUT TO:

A sideview of him. His glasses are seated perfectly on his nose, but with a shaking hand, he shoves them up.

CUT TO:

A two-shot. LUCY sighs, her expression changing to one of resignation.

> **LUCY**
> Yes.

She sets down her darning and begins to rise from the chair, but M. PAUL grabs her hand and pulls her the rest of the way up.

> **M. PAUL**
> No time to waste! Hurry to work!

The camera pans with them as he pulls her along, and she has to scurry to keep up. The camera then pans back to the same shot from the opening—the chair centered in the window containing only the darning.

CUT TO:

INT. DUSTY ATTIC – A FEW MIMNUTES LATER

Wide Angle

The door to the attic rattles, and M. PAUL sweeps the door open for **LUCY** to enter. **M. PAUL** does not enter.

> **M. PAUL**
> Here you will be alone to learn.

Two-shot of them, the doorframe dividing them. He hands her a script.

> **M. PAUL (CONT'D)**
> Here is your role—practice!

He shuts the door; a little click sounds as he locks it. LUCY isn't surprised. She turns to the room.

Long shot of the attic - slanted roof, a covering of dust on everything; piles of trunks and old wood, some old, holey, and stained dresses hung on the wall. A rat scuttles out from under a rack of dresses.

Medium-long shot of LUCY, shuddering, beginning to step toward a pile of trunks, her skirts lifted up in one hand.

Long shot of LUCY, dwarfed by the clutter of the attic as she comes to a halt in the middle of the room, thinking, fanning herself with the script to ward off the stifling heat; she heaves a sigh.

<div align="right">

CUT TO:

</div>

A medium shot of LUCY boosting herself up to sit on a stack of trunks, over which she has draped her shawl. The room is a little brighter since she has opened a skylight. **She is symmetrically centered on the boxes and in the frame**. Opening the script, she reads in a dull, mechanical voice.

> **LUCY**
> "Woe is me. Cupid has pierced me with love for a coquette - she acts as if she favors me, then turns to favor another. She is so beautiful—a trap set by nature, a mortal danger to all men . . ."

She breaks off in silent frustration, closes her eyes, takes a breath and releases it.

CUT TO:

A close-up of LUCY's feet as she paces in a crooked path to dodge dead beetles and cockroaches.

> **LUCY**
> "How shall I approach her? *How* shall I approach her? How shall *I* approach *her*?"

CUT TO:

LUCY sitting on her makeshift chair, the book splayed open on her lap. Her eyes are closed, and she is making hand motions as she speaks, her voice more animated now.

> **LUCY**
> "You, who are so lovely and clever, must want a man equally beautiful and intelligent, filled with manly . . ."
> (she frowns)
> "manly self-respect."
> (She picks up the book and corrects herself)
> *Virtue*, filled with manly *virtue*. "You, who are . . ."

Her stomach growls. She sets her jaw and begins again.

> **LUCY (CONT'D)**
> "You who are so lovely and clever . . ."
> **(the sound fades)**

CUT TO:

The flame of an argand lamp, the little fire flickering and bending; **shift in focus to LUCY,** watching it dance as she holds the lamp.

CUT TO:

A long shot of LUCY in the halo of the lamp's light in the dusk of the room, setting the lamp on the ledge that the bigger trunk makes; the script is forgotten beside her. She begins again, putting on a comical voice—gone is the silent Lucy from the drawing room. She is bold, she is smiling, she is defiant in this room she's been locked in.

<div align="center">

LUCY
</div>

"Ah, woe is me! Cupid has pierced me with love for a coquette . . .''

<div align="right">

CROSSCUT TO:
</div>

EXT. THE DARK STAIRWELL

A medium shot of M. PAUL pressing his ear against the door.

<div align="right">

CUT TO:
</div>

INT. ATTIC

The flame flickering as LUCY finishes.

<div align="center">

LUCY
</div>

"Alas! I'll just find another girl prettier than you!"

She jumps as M. PAUL bursts into the room, remaining at the threshold, applauding.

<div align="center">

M. PAUL
</div>

Wonderful! Again!
(sternly, as she hesitates)
Again. No grimacing, no shyness.

LUCY begins to repeat the lines, not as well as she just did. M. PAUL cuts her off after the first few lines.

<div align="center">

M. PAUL
</div>

Well, you know them at least. It's good enough.
You have twenty more minutes to practice.

He turns to leave.

<div align="center">

LUCY
</div>

(hesitating before speaking)
Monsieur Paul?

<div align="center">

M. PAUL
</div>

(turning)
What?

<div align="center">

Wide Angle
</div>

<div align="center">LUCY</div>

I'm hungry.

<div align="center">M. PAUL</div>

Well what about lunch?

<div align="center">LUCY</div>

I was locked up here.

<div align="center">M. PAUL</div>

(exclaiming in sudden and apparently sincere
consternation)
So you were! I am a villain—a Bluebeard, locking
poor women in attics! Let's go, let's go—I'll have
Chef pour hot coffee for you, with buttered biscuits,
and apples, and those little puff pastries . . .

As M. PAUL starts down the stairs, LUCY rises to follow,
pauses, and picks up the argand lamp. She watches the
flame, as captivated as before, before turning down the
wick.

FADE TO BLACK AS THE LAMPLIGHT FADES.

EXT. LAWN – NIGHT

Long shot of the lawn. Lanterns are glowing everywhere,
ribbons are tied around trees and columns, mirrors are
placed around the colonnade, people are milling about the
white chairs set up for the audience.

<div align="right">CUT TO:</div>

A close-up of LUCY, peering out from a crack in the
curtain—the previous shot was from her perspective.

<div align="center">GINEVRA (O.S.)</div>

Lucy! Lucy!

<div align="right">CUT TO:</div>

INT.—BACKSTAGE

Clusters of schoolgirls in costumes mill about, giggling to
each other (no subtitles, but again, the words "English
doctor" and "Dr. John" are sprinkled throughout

<div align="center">*Wide Angle*</div>

conversations). M. PAUL paces in the background, ordering people around.

LUCY pulls away from the curtain and turns to face GINEVRA, who is radiant in a beautiful dress and clearly the leading role in the play.

> **GINEVRA**
> Are you really going to be M. Fop? Isabella says you are, but Isabella's a fibbing gossip so I came to ask you. Ooh, I'm so excited! Do you like this dress?
> (she gives a little twirl)

> **LUCY**
> (with a fond annoyance that suggests familiarity)
> It's insufferably extravagant.

> **GINEVRA**
> Well *you* would think that—but I'm sure my suitors will like it.
> (she leans in conspiratorially, grinning)
> They're *both here.*

> **LUCY**
> How thrilling.

> **M. PAUL**
> (**out of focus** in the background)
> Lucy—Lucy, get dressed for your part! Zelie, get her her costume . . .

ZELIE, in a party dress and wearing a rosary, approaches with a little pile of clothes, clearly amused.

> **ZELIE**
> Come, my friend—lovely Englishwoman—our hero must dress for the part!

She grabs LUCY's hand, and LUCY resists, shaking her head.

> **ZELIE (CONT'D)**
> Come now—you don't want to spoil the enjoyment of the company with your self-respect. M. Paul won't have it.

Wide Angle

LUCY manages to wrest her hand from ZELIE'S grasp.

LUCY
I will take some, but not all.

Before ZELIE can protest, Lucy takes the clothes and starts toward the little makeshift dressing room.

ZELIE
No, I will dress you myself—M. Paul! M. Paul, tell Lucy—

M. PAUL
(distracted, out of focus)
Lucy will do as she pleases.

CUT TO:

INT. DRESSING ROOM

A cramped room filled with little ribbons and broken jewelry and hose.

LUCY enters, shuts the door, and starts to pick through the clothes. She does not look in the mirror. She plucks out a vest, a cravat, and a paletot and puts them on, her breathing steadying and her movements becoming less frantic as she continues. Finally, she looks up at the mirror and puts on her cap. She pauses a moment, looking at herself.

CUT TO:

EXT. BACKSTAGE

Two girls wait for their cue, LUCY with them; the girls giggle and fidget and whisper to each other but LUCY stands apart, still as a statue. **The camera pans over the girls but stops and zooms into a medium shot of Lucy. An out of focus form materializes behind her—M. PAUL.**

M. PAUL
(quietly)
Courage, Monsieur Lucien! Imagine yourself in the attic, playing for the rats.

Wide Angle

His voice is almost disembodied as the **camera slowly zoom on her face for a close-up**. She turns her head, almost imperceptibly, to him, and the curtain goes up.

CUT TO:

EXT. AUDIENCE VIEW OF THE STAGE.

LUCY pauses to take in a breath—not long enough to be awkward, but long enough for the film viewer to be afraid it will.

> **LUCY**
> (mechanically)
> Woe is me.

CUT TO:

A medium shot of LUCY.

> **LUCY (CONT'D)**
> Cupid has pierced me with love for a coquette . . .

The audio slowly fades to silence, although Lucy is still speaking, as **the camera dollies around her back and over her shoulder**, showing the audience what LUCY is seeing: the garden filled with white chairs filled with people staring silently.

The camera pans over the audience—various faces, including those of TEACHER 1, ZELIE, and DR. JOHN— **before finally settling on the mirrors** lining the colonnade and LUCY'S reflection. LUCY sees herself reciting her lines dully on stage; she smiles a little at herself, begins to make hand motions to emphasize her words. She becomes confident. She is enjoying herself. **Her words can be heard again, faintly but increasing to normal volume as we cut back to the audience's view of LUCY.**

> **LUCY**
> She is so beautiful, a trap set by nature, a mortal danger to all men—and how does one conquer a lady like this? With flowers? Candies?

Wide Angle

Snickers and chuckles ripple through the audience at
LUCY's comical performance.

FADE, WITH OVERLAPPING AUDIO, TO:

The next scene in the play.

              GINEVRA
But why should I dance with you, Monsieur, when
Armond has asked me?

              LUCY
Because you, who are so lovely and clever, must
want a man equally beautiful and intelligent, filled
with manly virtue!

              CUT TO:

M. PAUL standing in the wings, watching. As those around
him laugh at Lucy's performance, he smiles - but not
wholeheartedly. He is enjoying the play, but something
tells him he shouldn't be—Lucy is a woman, she is a man,
she is nervous, she is bold, she is becoming herself, she is
putting on an act. He is seeing her clearly for the first time,
and yet nothing is clear about her.

              CUT TO:

The stage, the play's final scene.

              LUCY
Alas! I'll just find another girl prettier than you!

She flees offstage.

              CUT TO:

LUCY backstage.

              GINEVRA (O.S)
(a little faintly)
Goodbye and good riddance to fools!

Lucy takes a moment to breathe before methodically
shedding her male garments, folding them into a neat pile

Wide Angle

while, outside, the girls are bowing to the audience to cheering and applause.

CUT TO:

A long shot of the lawn cleared of chairs, filled with dancing.

CUT TO:

The colonnade, where Lucy is sitting on a bench, watching the dance.

We hear GINEVRA approaching before we see her—a little out of breath from dancing.

> GINEVRA
> Lucy Snowe! Lucy Snowe!

The camera remains on LUCY, who does not turn to look at GINEVRA until she stands in front of her.

> LUCY
> (wearily)
> What is the matter?

> GINEVRA
> How do I look—How do I look tonight?

> LUCY
> (in a deadpan, but unable to withhold a slight smile)
> Preposterously vain.

> GINEVRA
> (unbothered)
> Oh, you are always determined to be cruel to me, but *I* know I am beautiful—I can *feel* it. Here— come with me to the mirror.

The camera pans with them as she grabs LUCY's hand, and LUCY allows herself to be dragged to one of the mirrors in the colonnade, in which she watched herself during her performance. They stand before the mirror, two opposites. GINEVRA preens before the glass while Lucy watches her with a mixture of amusement and contempt;

Wide Angle

GINEVRA turns to see a side view and, when Lucy remains still, motions for LUCY to do the same. GINEVRA's gaze shifts in the mirror from herself to LUCY; she heaves a happy sigh and turns to face flesh-and-blood Lucy.

> **GINEVRA**
> I wouldn't be you for a kingdom.

> **LUCY**
> Very good.

> **GINEVRA**
> And what would *you* give to be *me*?

> **LUCY**
> Not sixpence.

LUCY begins to walk down the colonnade; GINEVRA follows; **the camera pans** to join them, with the party out of focus behind them.

> **GINEVRA**
> (frowning)
> You don't think so in your heart. Listen—just listen to how happy I am, and how miserable you are.

> **LUCY**
> I'm listening.

> **GINEVRA**
> I am the daughter of a gentleman of family; I am young, educated, accomplished, and beautiful. I've been breaking the hearts of two gentlemen just now—watching them turn red and pale and scowl at each other and wilt when I don't look at them. There is happy me. Now you, poor soul, are no one's daughter, far older than me, have no accomplishments, and no beauty. You hardly know what admirers are, and so much the better—your heart might break, but you can't break any other.

> **LUCY**
> Very true. You are good to speak honestly—Zelie will not. But still, I would not be you, admirers and all.

Wide Angle

GINEVRA has stopped paying attention and tugs at
LUCY's sleeve, leaning to whisper in LUCY's ear.

GINEVRA
Look, look, here comes one now.

GINEVRA nods a little toward an out-of-focus,
approaching male figure behind them.

**The camera shifts angles to face the interior colonnade
in a medium shot**, with GINEVRA partially in front of
LUCY.

GINEVRA
(turning away to hide a giggle)
His beard is so horribly *red*!

LUCY turns to look past the camera at the absent presence
of the approaching man; GINEVRA is a barrier between
her and him; surprise and something like pain flash across
her face, and she bends to hiss in GINEVRA's ear.

LUCY
(her tone suddenly tense)
Dr. John? You are toying with Dr. John?

GINEVRA
Let me go, let me go—he's going to tell me I
shouldn't be without a shawl in the night air—

The camera shifts angles, facing outward toward the party
and DR. JOHN.

GINEVRA breaks away from Lucy and hurries, giggling,
off-screen. LUCY watches her go.

DR. JOHN
(**coming into focus** behind LUCY) (in English)
There's a draught. She should be wearing a shawl.

LUCY
(still watching GINEVRA) (in English) She likes
her own way too well to submit readily to control.

Wide Angle

She turns to face DR. JOHN**. Two-shot of them from the side**, LUCY looking down.

> #### DR. JOHN
> (in English)
> You know Miss Fanshawe? I've often wanted to ask if you knew her.

> #### LUCY
> (in English)
> I know her as well as I wish to.

DR. JOHN hesitates before continuing.

> #### DR. JOHN
> (in English)
> Will you walk with me?

LUCY bows her head in acquiescence, and **the camera follows them** as they walk down the colonnade.

> #### DR. JOHN
> (in English)
> I have known Miss Fanshawe for months now, but I am . . . uncertain as to how I stand with her.

Shot/reverse-shot of DR. JOHN and LUCY glancing toward the dancing, where GINEVRA is twirling with COLONEL DE HAMAL.

> #### LUCY
> (in English)
> Oh, she varies. She's as changeable as the wind. She does not know or feel who is worthy of her; she merits the sharp lesson of experience.

> #### DR. JOHN
> (in English)
> Are you not a little severe?

> #### LUCY
> (in English)
> I am excessively severe—more severe than I choose to show you.

DR. JOHN
(smiling as if she has made a joke) (in English)
She is so lovely, such a simple, innocent, girlish
fairy—one cannot but be loving toward her. You—
every woman older than her—must feel a sort of
motherly or elder-sisterly fondness. Graceful angel!

They reach the end of the colonnade; LUCY turns to walk
back, while DR. JOHN pauses a moment to watch
GINEVRA dancing before following suit.

LUCY
(in English)
Excuse me, Dr. John, if may I change the subject
for one instant—What a god-like person is that de
Hamal!

She flicks a hand toward the dance and DE HAMAL. Her
bearing has changed; her voice is louder and more
confident—she is acting.

LUCY
(in English)
His nose could not be more perfect if it were
modeled from clay—and such classic lips and
chin—and his bearing is sublime—

DR. JOHN
(not sure how to react) (in English) He is an
unutterable puppy.

LUCY
(in English)
You, and every man of a less refined mold than he
must feel a sort of admiring affection for him, such
as Mars and the coarser deities must have borne the
young, graceful Apollo.

DR. JOHN
(in English)
An unprincipled, gambling, little jackanapes – I
could lift him by the waistband with one hand.

LUCY
(in English)
Dr. John, are you not a little severe?

Wide Angle

They come to a halt; LUCY looks up at him for the first time since her speech; DR. JOHN is frowning, not sure if she is joking with him or honestly criticizing him. She looks down, once again becoming silent and grave. He decides that she was joking and laughs, a little condescendingly. The **camera cuts to a close-up** of Dr. John as he turns to walk away.

<div align="center">

DR. JOHN
</div>

(in French)
Goodnight, Lucy.

<div align="right">

CUT TO:
</div>

LUCY watching him leave. She takes courage again and calls after him.

<div align="center">

LUCY
</div>

(in French)
Be hopeful, Dr. John. If you cannot hope, no one can.

The camera remains on LUCY's face. From her expression we know he has made no reply.

<div align="right">

CUT TO:
</div>

EXT. LAWN

A long shot of the party, with the sound of slowly approaching footsteps. The **camera slowly zooms out** to reveal that we are looking in the mirror, and that LUCY has come to halt in front of it. **The camera stops at a medium close-up of LUCY** in the mirror, staring at herself, at the audience. She is looking for something but isn't finding it. As **the party blurs behind her and its sounds become quiet**, her lips begin to move, mouthing the words she spoke so boldly on stage, but she does not make a sound. **After a moment all sound is gone**; she stops mouthing the words midsentence, her expression unreadable.

FADE TO:

The drawing room from the opening scene. LUCY is in a different dress but sits in the same chair as before, darning the same sock; **the long shot is identical to the opening shot**. She does not look up at the audience. **The camera remains on her** long enough for the audience to expect something to happen. Nothing does.

FADE TO BLACK.

Brice Boyer

Digital Humanities: Reviving Classical Storytelling as Seen in *Life is Strange*

Digital humanities places fear into the hearts of the most traditional English scholars. A practice which used to be solely pen and paper, literary engagement now includes computer programs that do linguistic analysis or add narrative-enhancing devices like music or moving pictures. As people of the modern era, we find ourselves at the behest of incredible technological advancements and, as acolytes of the humanities, we cannot help but wonder: What next? Are our jobs of literary analysis and creative writing in jeopardy? No, says the modern humanities scholar. In fact, the digital humanities allow the literary community both to study texts through technologies that allow deep, in-depth criticism and to tell stories in more multidimensional ways.

Before the advent of written prose and type text, stories were performed. Poets and bards would stand up amongst a gathering of their peers and recite grand tales passed on from their mentors. Often these recitations came with the tune of musical accompaniment and audience involvement. As a hero died, soft mournful twangs of a harp would reflect the scene, and in more jovial stories, the performers would slightly alter their characters to reflect the audience members as a means of interacting with them. As history progressed, however, these practices changed with the ease of access of written word and rising literacy rates. Oral tradition became written down and began to be circulated en masse. While this practice resulted in a wider audience for the stories of the old bards and poets, it, nevertheless, lost the added experiences of music and personal engagement with a storyteller.

Thus, the multidimensionality of oral storytelling declined, and unidimensional written storytelling began to rise. Though oral storytelling never truly left, as seen in theatre, plays, and songs, written storytelling became the main vehicle of texts. However, through the growing technological fields of the digital humanities, multidimensional storytelling has returned as a major expression of texts as seen in television, cinema, and, most recently, in the video game industry. Through engaging the old extra-textual techniques of direct audience involvement and musical accompaniment, choice-driven video games like *Life Is Strange* embody the digital humanities by creating an effective narrative and recalling the first practices of human storytelling.

In the choice-driven narrative of *Life is Strange,* protagonist Maxine (Max) Caulfield, a high school senior, studies photography at an elite boarding school. As she daydreams in class one day, she begins to have visions of a massive cyclone enveloping her hometown of Arcadia Bay. Trying to pull herself together, she runs to the school bathroom in which she witnesses a woman get shot by another student at the school. Reflexively, she reaches out her hand in an attempt to stop the shooting and finds that she can suddenly freeze and rewind time. Utilizing this newfound gift, she rewinds time, averts the shooting, and realizes that the woman is her long-lost childhood friend from grade school, Chloe Price. The two reconnect, and Chloe reveals her motive for coming back to Arcadia Bay: to find her friend, Rachel Amber. The two join forces, and through Max's power (through the player's discretion), they investigate the disappearance of Rachel Amber and attempt to avert Max's prophetic vision of a massive storm destroying Arcadia Bay.

In following this story, the player interacts with the game through a variety of prompts and choices which affect the ultimate outcome of the story. Rather than passively consume the

narrative, the player must actively make choices in the narrative through on-screen prompts.

Fig. 1 Player given two narrative options to choose between. Life is Strange, Dontnod Entertainment, 2015. PC.

Sometimes the consequences are insignificant, such as when Max chooses a breakfast order between eggs or ham. However, sometimes the consequences can affect the entire narrative, whereas Max must say the correct things to talk one of her friends down from suicide (see fig. 1). These choices serve not only as barriers for the player to overcome, but also as narrative cruxes, which allow the player, in a sense, to help write the narrative. For example, in following Rachel Amber's footsteps, Max and Chloe find themselves at an RV. Depending on choices made previously, Chloe can either have or not have a gun on her person, and a dog can either be present or not present. If Chloe has a gun and the angry dog is present, Chloe shoots and kills the dog. If Chloe does not have a gun and the dog is not present, then the conversation with the RV owner ends amicably.
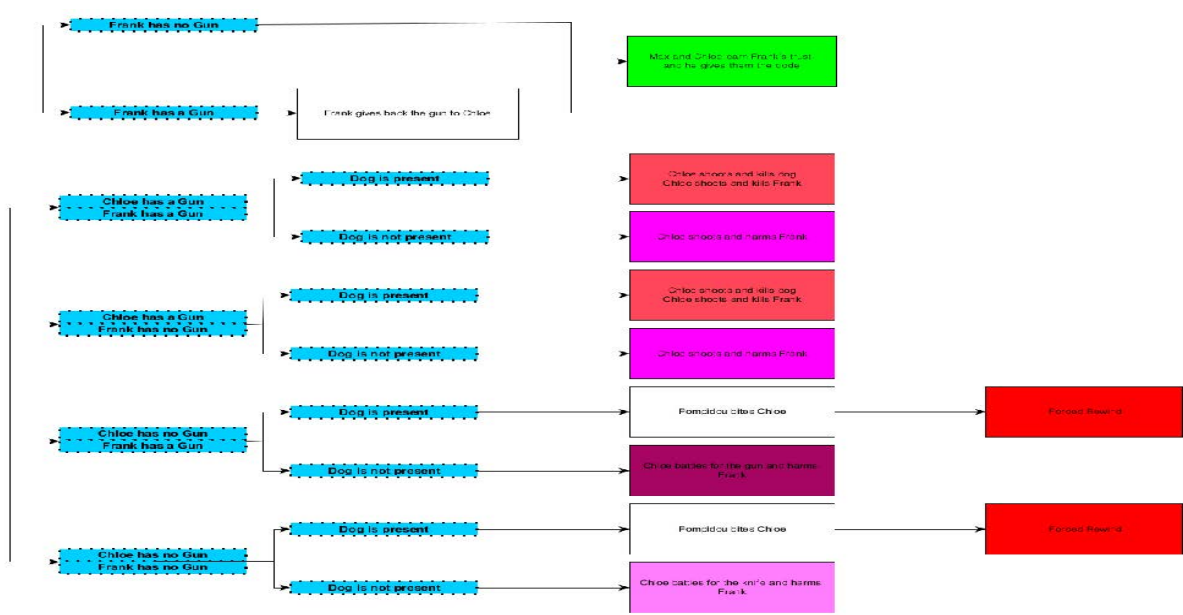

Wide Angle

Fig. 2 A decision tree highlighting possible outcomes of the interaction between Chloe and the dog. Patrick Klepek, See Every Possible Decision From A Life Is Strange Conversation, Kotaku Australia, 2015. Web.

This exchange can be further analyzed in what decision-based game developers call a decision tree (see fig. 2). As seen in the decision tree above, each choice directly affects the consequences of an action. Granted, these choices are somewhat limited by preconceived paths written by the developers. Because of this, these games do not truly capture the fully interactive, improvisational method of early epic performance, but they do recall some of the opportunity for audience influence over the narrative. Through allowing important events to be regularly decided by the player, the game immerses its audience by making them, in essence, the main character.

The game further allows this active storytelling through its mechanic of rewinding time as well. Whenever faced with a decision (except in a few key points), the player can always use Max's power to rewind time and choose a different path. The game prompts this action through displaying a swirl icon in the top left corner (see fig. 3). Every action in the game ultimately comes down to the whim of the player. While, upon occasion, the game requires the player to rewind time for the sake of the narrative, most of the time, the decision to rewind defers to the player. Does the player want to stick with the choice they made, or do they rewind time and reverse

Fig. 3 Max using her power to rewind time. Life is Strange, Dontnod Entertainment, 2015. Xbox One.

their decision? Through this player agency, "a player in an interactive drama becomes a kind of author, and . . . contributes both materially to the plot and formally to elements at the level of character on down" (Mateas and Stern 663). The agency of the player becomes the agency of the

character in the story. Suddenly, the game unifies "the player and designer as collaborators in the game experience" (K. and T.J. Tanenbaum 8). As with any well-told story, the reader sees themselves in the narrative.

By involving the player in this forum, decision-based video games show a reversal of the idea of narrative authorship. Whereas novels like *Frankenstein* simply have one author and one unchangeable story, *Life is Strange* has multiple possibilities that are solely shaped by the intervention of the player. Through releasing the game into the populace and allowing each player to choose their path, the developers somewhat give up authorial rights to players, and the narrative of *Life is Strange* becomes the communal property of the player base. The story begins to be affected by the individuals. This group-storytelling effort calls back to pre-printing press oral tradition where "[t]he 'objectivity' which Homer and other oral performers do have is that enforced by formulaic expression: the individual's reaction is not expressed as simply individual or 'subjective' but rather as encased in the communal reaction, the communal 'soul'" (Ong 46). As this video game adds participatory voices, it allows more group involvement than written books.

Players of *Life is Strange* also interact with the story as a community rather than simply as individuals. A generic Google search of "*Life is Strange*" leads to a bombardment of fan art, fan discussion, and gaming-journalism articles. Upon researching for this paper, I found myself lost in the sea of discourse between fans. These topics range from what happened after the close of the game, how did Max get her powers, etc. Through a continuing fan base, *Life is Strange* serves as a fluid text, constantly being debated and engaged by millions of participants. Rather than have a set story to be reinterpreted after multiple reads, *Life is Strange* literally changes to the audience's whims.

Life is Strange also utilizes its soundtrack as effectively immersing its audience. As with any good story, critics of video games tend to judge a game on its extent of immersion. How enticing is the narrative? How involved is the audience? Where epic poets of old would immerse their audience through musical accompaniment, video games follow suit with a background score. As a game, *Life is Strange* moves through its story

Fig. 4 Life is Strange title screen depicting the natural beauty of Arcadia Bay. Life is Strange, Dontnod Entertainment, 2015. Xbox One.

casually with a few sudden bursts of emotionally tense action. The music reflects the emotional level of the story by being particularly slow and acoustic. The **"Menu Theme"** uses a light melody composed of a piano and an acoustic guitar. Utilizing a single note melody in the piano, a repetitive alternating fifth in the acoustic guitar, and an 82 beats-per-minute tempo, the opening theme sets the tone for the rest of the game. Each of these musical concepts instills a relaxing atmosphere. By using a single-note melody, the song allows for easy, non-intensive listening. The alternating fifth lures the listener into a peaceful state, almost sounding like rocking back and forth. Lastly, the 82 beats-per-minute tempo instills an average speed comparable to an average heart rate. Paired with a naturalistic title screen (see fig. 4), the theme simultaneously soothes the player while also subconsciously urging the player onward.

Each of the songs also seem to come out in moments of contemplation as well. In a particular moment, where Max sits in her room getting ready for the day, the player has the option to pick up Max's guitar and play a song (Dontnod Entertainment). Should the player

choose to pick up the guitar, Max begins to play the song **"Crosses" by José González.** This song, much like the title theme, consists solely of acoustic guitar and provides a moment of peace for the player in the midst of the story and another evidence of player choice. Once Max picks up the guitar, the game shows the insignificance of the choice through changing camera angles as the song plays. Even though playing the guitar is not critical to the plot, it serves to add to the atmospheric nature of a decision-based video game, further drawing in the player.

This atmospheric nature of the music in *Life is Strange* shows a harkening back to when oral performances were accompanied with music. While music as a narrative device never truly left, as seen in opera, musicals, and cinema, the combination of music and audience involvement in a digital forum makes games like *Life is Strange* the modern imitator of oral storytelling. The most well-known example of music-accompanied, oral storytelling, the *Iliad,* utilized improvised music to further enhance the dramatic action of the play. As the bard stood up, he would pull out an instrument (most likely a lyre) and begin reciting over the improvised four-note melodies (Danek and Hegel). In his work, Frank Ong explains the purpose of this by stating, "Sight isolates, sound incorporates. Whereas sight situates the observer outside what he views, at a distance, sound pours into the hearer" (72). In the same way, *Life is Strange* adds music to an already solid narrative in order to further affect its audience. In fact, social psychologists Jiulin Zhang and Xiaoqing Fu state that "[g]ames are becoming more reliant on music since they have an important role to play in supporting the user interaction with the game environment. In short, music has not been a peripheral part of games, but is, rather, an integral part of the overall experience" (1). Music, in some ways, is equal in importance to the narrative. Without the music in the earlier stated examples, the narrative becomes little more than pressing buttons to see more of the story. By adding the music, "The overall soundscape contributes to a sense of presence or

even immersion in a game by creating an illusion of the game world as an actual space" (Fu and Zhang 2). Virtual mediums always struggle to root themselves in concrete reality, but through the musical score, human brains tend to meld reality with imagination easier.

Video games seem to swing the historical pendulum backwards, towards the art of oral literature performance. Despite the cognitive changes of living in a text-based culture, moving forward into the digital humanities has allowed us to look backwards at bygone eras of different literary greatness. Even though we now have new ways to tell stories through technology, the old ways still find themselves in the practice of storytelling. Through continuing the practice of audience participation in the narrative and musical enhancement, stories become greater than simple narrative. They become intricate interactions between different mediums, which culminate in a narrative greater than the sum of its parts.

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Commentary

Parker Gilley

"Westward, Westward": The Western Journey of Epic Literature

The literary heritage of the West is indivisible from the epic. Indeed, the epic form is as old as literature itself, and all other forms of literature, fictional or otherwise, develop first as reactions to the hegemony of the epic. The perpetuity of the epic form is astounding. Catherine Bates makes note of this in the preface of *The Cambridge Companion to the Epic*, writing "The endurance of the epic tradition is an extraordinary literary phenomenon: a form of writing that has recognizably survived . . . from *Gilgamesh*, which dates back to the second millennium BC, to *Omeros*, which won its author the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1992" (Bates ix). The persistence of the epic form makes an intuitive sort of sense, though. Literature is in itself the gathering of communal consciousnesses which throughout human history function as a sort of *lingua franca* for conversing across epochs and areas about the evolution of the human condition. A cursory glance at the epic tradition suffices to reveal that the function of literature as such finds root in the earliest epic poems, which are themselves reflections upon cultural mores incarnated in exemplary figures. Nearly each culture's national literature begins with an epic, and most epics cluster their content around certain tropes derived from preceding epics. As will be seen in what follows, the evolution of civilization in the West from Mesopotamia to America, including the advent of immensely impactful schools of thought, technologies, and shifts in national precedence, is often coterminous with the appearance of a vernacular epic.

All this goes to say that literature abhors a vacuum. The forensics of modern literary studies, typified in those Frankensteinian amalgamations of transnational, trans-age, dissected works called "anthologies," often runs the risk of de-valuing texts in the process of compiling them together. A book which conglomerates 1000 years of literature into the same number of pages functions less as a convenient topographical survey than as an attempt to photograph a speeding bullet reflected in a shattered mirror. It almost goes without saying that it is difficult to study the context of a book through more books. To free yourself from the circuitous tyranny of words, you must seek another medium. Herein lies the virtue of integrating digital tools into the humanistic disciplines. Rather than tell you "Plato lived in Athens, Greece," a digital model can *show* you Athens and its environs. But it can also show you which philosophers preceded Plato, where they came from, and by what routes. In brief, technology can help animate the corpse of history through interactive, spatio-temporal models.

Under the aegis of such a need for historical models, I produced a digital story map, with ArcGIS software, of the chronological trajectory of the epic form in the West, beginning with the earliest known example, *Gilgamesh,* and ending with the most potent, recent expression in Derek Walcott's *Omeros*. In order to sift through hundreds of works across multiple mediums vying for consideration, I had to develop a method of selection to choose only those works which exerted the most determinate influence upon Western conceptions of national and individual identity. First, I limited myself strictly to literature, which excluded film and the tactile arts. I then restricted myself to the Western literary tradition, and texts which, by the cruel winnowing-fork of time, are considered "classics" of the Western canon. Other than *Omeros*, all the texts I considered were one hundred years old or more, and I seriously doubt any of them will fade from glory any time soon. Besides a few defensible and important exceptions, I also limited the

purview of my project to the strain of those epics appearing in a poetic verse form. That being said, not just any long-form poem qualifies. Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*, while a brilliant and lengthy poem of philosophical didacticism, did not make the cut, but a poem half as short, the Anglo-Saxon *Beowulf*, did. Furthermore, I sought a certain tropological unity among the epics, wherein distinct references could be found to the text's literary predecessors. The élan vital of the epic form is a journey made by a hero or heroine, in whom are incarnated cultural virtues or vices which are tested in the crucible of combat with physical, mental, and spiritual assailants. I took such a structure, roughly, as the determining outline of the texts in question. Finally, I had to consider my own temporal, technological, and intellectual limitations, and thus consulted *The Cambridge Companion to the Epic* (CCE) for suggestions and excellent scholarly material in contextualizing the development of the epic. Most of the historical content reflected in the story map is derived from the CCE, as will be seen. The list which such a method yielded is as follows, in chronological order: *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, *The Iliad*, *The Odyssey*, *The Aeneid*, *Chanson de Roland*, *Beowulf*, *Nibelungenlied*, *the Divine Comedy*, *Orlando Furioso*, *The Lusiads, The Faerie Queene*, *Don Quixote*, *Paradise Lost*, *Don Juan*, *The Song of Hiawatha*, *Ulysses*, and *Omeros*. The link to the final product is embedded [here](#).

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Commentary

Andre'A Roper

Displacement of Black Identity Caused by the Dissolution of Home in *Beloved*

Toni Morrison's novels often dichotomize the difficulties that African Americans face with social enculturation and maintaining racial identity in predominantly white institutions. As her characters navigate post-antebellum America, they struggle to escape the lingering pain of slavery's exploitative efforts, whilst trying to transform the land they and their ancestors died for into a "home." As Xu Ying describes the dilemma in the *Canadian Social Science* journal, "blacks contribute their toil and blood to [the] pastoral 'beauty' of the American southern land . . . they settled on this alien land and partly regarded it as their homeland . . . but they were still treated as the exiled" (54). Before and after slavery's abolition, blacks sensed their ostracization in America while wielding simultaneous feelings of pride and loyalty for their country. For instance, in Morrison's novel *Beloved,* readers witness runaway slave Sethe struggle to ground her identity in a stable geographic location. As an institution, slavery not only physically displaced families, but created a deeper, emotional displacement of identity. By conducting a structural analysis of *Beloved* with the online tool Voyant, I discovered that Morrison uses the term "home" to symbolize an unattainable ideal for blacks ensnared in white institutions.

Voyant reveals that the first seventy-one instances of the word "home" almost always appear in reference to the plantation Sethe is enslaved at, Sweet Home. Despite the plantation's

undeniable beauty, "it wasn't sweet and it sure wasn't home" (Morrison 6). The story makes a clear distinction within Sweet Home's history, showing slavery from the perspective of "nice" and "cruel" masters. Mr. Garner's "'enlightened' slavery possesses the individuals, extracts their labor, constrains their movements, but doesn't savage or starve them" (Jesser 327). Contrastingly, when Garner dies and Schoolteacher and his nephews take ownership of the plantation, the slaves face brutal beatings, lynching, rape, and having one's mind and spirit irreparably broken by cruelty. To better note the seeming disparities between the two, one might utilize a software like Voyant's "correlations" tool to see the words most closely related to "sweet" (refer to Figure 1). Among the highest correlation are words like "glittering," "amazing," and "girlish" contrasted against "savage," "headstones," and "nastiness." Morrison creates this juxtaposition to reveal slavery's hypocrisy as an institution, and that "the quasi-utopian plantation where Sethe is a slave offers one critique of the (im)possibility of 'home' within the institution of chattel slavery" (Jesser 327, author's parentheses). Although Garner and Schoolteacher manage Sweet Home with two different approaches, both deny the slaves autonomy over their own personhood, stripping them of their right to an identity.

Figure 1 - Correlations

			word	correlation
glittering			sweet	0.8311506
hazelnut			sweet	0.8311506
pin			sweet	0.8311506
savage			sweet	0.8311506
suggested			sweet	0.8311506
flour			sweet	0.83089375
sad			sweet	0.830447
pouch			sweet	0.8278605
punched			sweet	0.8278605
redmen's			sweet	0.8278605
absent			sweet	0.8278605
amazing			sweet	0.8278605
bark			sweet	0.8278605
biscuits			sweet	0.8278605
calf			sweet	0.8278605
checkers			sweet	0.8278605
deserted			sweet	0.8278605
driver			sweet	0.8278605
girlish			sweet	0.8278605
headstones			sweet	0.8278605
hooks			sweet	0.8278605
husk			sweet	0.8278605
judging			sweet	0.8278605
myrtle			sweet	0.8278605
nastiness			sweet	0.8278605

Because Sethe is dehumanized and disgraced, she must find grim solace within her community of fellow slaves. The instability, alongside the insufferable institution itself, force Sethe to seek refuge and a new homeland elsewhere. After an arduous escape, pregnant Sethe makes it to freedom: 124 Bluestone Road. The novel's three parts open with lines describing Sethe's house, none of which depict an endearing, comforting abode: "124 was spiteful" (3), "124 was loud" (199), and "124 was quiet" (281). Marked as a runaway slave, Sethe knows that so long as slavery remains legal, she cannot find complete respite at 124. However, it should still offer some sense of solace because she is united with her family, away from Sweet Home, and able to focus on her identity as a mother. By creating a line and stacked bar graph to show the relative frequencies or "trends" of words in *Beloved,* Voyant displays the discordant relationship between the terms "home" and "124," and the inevitability that an ideal home, even apart from the plantation, will never be realized (refer to Figure 2). Every time the words "sweet" or "home" increase in the text, the use of "124" decreases, and vice versa.

**Figure 2 -
Trends**
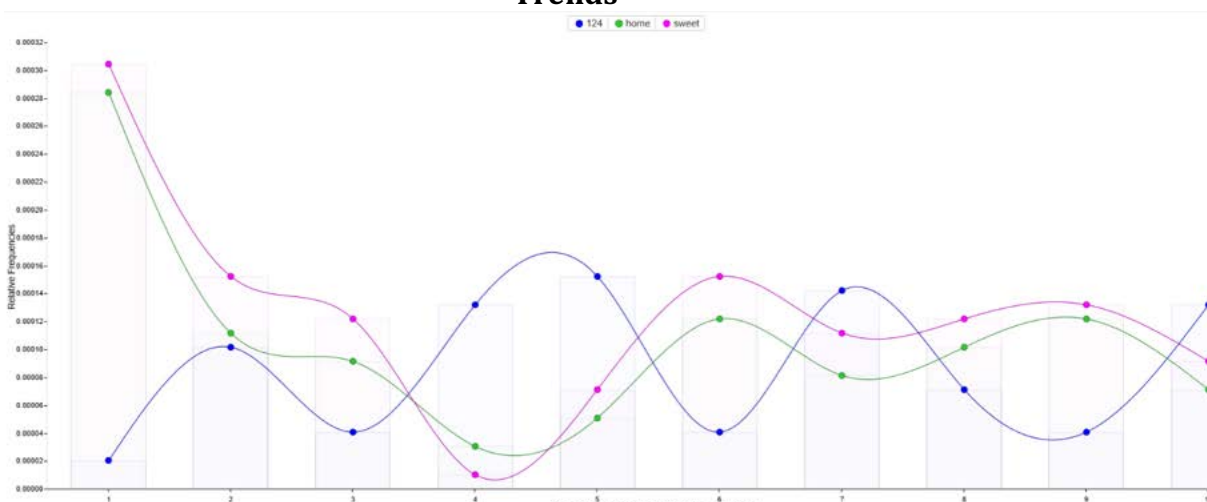
The incompatibility partly arises from the novel's structure, a narrative that shifts between Sethe's past at Sweet Home and her present in 124. However, from the story's

beginning, Morrison communicates that Sethe's residence should not be viewed as a home and uses the subsequent pages to explain why. Demonstrating slavery's inescapable grasp, "the invasion of 124 by the white people of Sweet Home, who are trying to re-cast Sethe and her children into their role as slaves, results in a paroxysm of violence" (Jesser 336). Desperate, Sethe herds her four children into the shed behind 124, intending to deliver them all, but only succeeds in killing her third child and first daughter Beloved. Because of this infanticide, "horrible upheavals of the natural occur, and Sethe sets out to destroy history as white people have written it" (Jesser 337). From then on, Sethe mars her identity as a mother, and the house becomes haunted by the infant's spirit as she resides in an unsettling purgatory between Sethe's world and the afterlife. Old enough to remember the horrific scene, Sethe's eldest children Howard and Buglar run away after years of trying to bear the fear of living with a murderer.

Numerous characters, such as Sethe's mother-in-law Baby Suggs and her old friend from Sweet Home, Paul D, question the justice behind Sethe's decision, but "the ultimate culprit is not the individual who committed infanticide, but the system that created the conditions for it, the 'peculiar institution'" (Bonnet 41). Thus, final blame falls not upon Sethe, but on Schoolteacher, his nephews, Mr. Garner, and Sweet Home—Morrison's personifications of institutional slavery—for forcing Sethe to prefer death over subjecting her family to working on the horrific plantation again. It isn't until Beloved escapes her purgatory and returns from the dead that Sethe begins to see 124's potential as a home. Using Voyant's "contexts" tool—a software that analyzes a word's frequency within the text and provides surrounding narrative—I noticed that of the 105 appearances that the word "home" makes in *Beloved*, it takes 71 prior uses for Sethe to finally call 124 home (refer to Figure 3): "if her daughter could come back home from the timeless place—certainly her sons could, and would, come back from wherever they had gone

to" (Morrison 90). Thus, Sethe's reinstatement of inward identity as a mother coincides with the establishment of outward identity in calling 124 home. Sethe continues to refer to the residence as home three more times throughout the novel.

Figure 3 - Contexts

68	The prickly, mean-eyed Sweet	home	girl he knew as Halle's
69	work?" "They ain't at Sweet	home	. Schoolteacher ain't got em." "Maybe
70	Too angry to walk her	home	and listen to more, he
71	the weeds. On the way	home	, he stopped, short of breath
72	**her daughter could come back**	**home**	**from the timeless place—certainly**
73	she would take her dinner	home	. But matches, sometimes a bit
74	the guns from the Sweet	home	men and, deprived of game
75	skip over the long walk	home	and be there. When Sawyer
76	hunched forward, as she started	home	her mind was busy with
77	extra but here at Sweet	home	." "Is he going to pay

However, Sethe's newfound joy, embodied by Beloved, lasts for a fleeting time. Rather than encouraging Sethe to explore her interiority through her own autonomy and desires, Beloved confines Sethe to 124 where her sole purpose is to fulfill her duties as Beloved's mother. Similar to Mr. Garner and Schoolteacher, Beloved claims possession over Sethe, defining her mother's identity in relation to herself. Through Voyant's "links" tool, I noticed that the strongest connection between "sweet" and "home" to "124" is Beloved—who exerts ownership over Sethe's identity and forces her to believe she can make a home for herself amidst the oppression (refer to Figure 4). Thus, Beloved's relationship with Sethe becomes a microcosm for the relationship between slave and master in the antebellum south; Morrison illustrates the pervasiveness of human desire to exert authority over others for personal gain. However, viewing the word bubbles connected to 124, there is nothing separating Sethe's attachment to it besides herself. Thus, to create a home and new identity, Sethe must sever all ties with those controlling her, including memories of Sweet Home and Beloved.

Figure 4 - Links
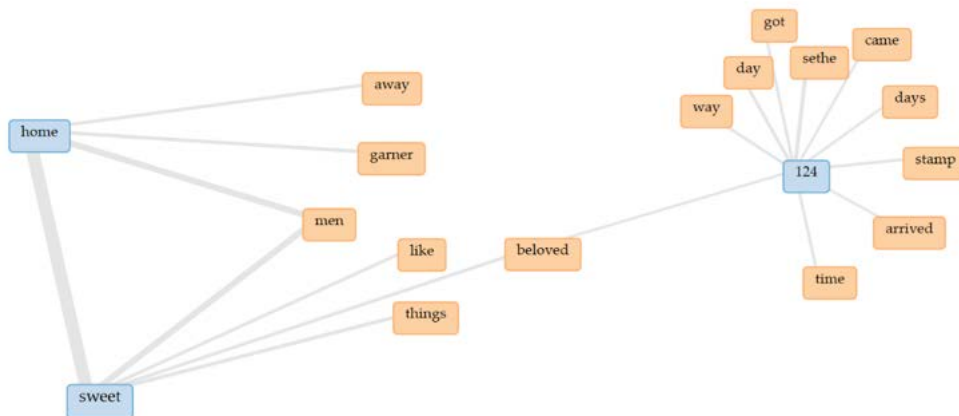
Sethe's inability to find a home and establish an identity either on the plantation or at 124 results from the terrors she endured while enslaved. Through Sethe, Morrison shows that "as long as white people [or those with ill-intent within the black community] set the limits, African American attempts to transform their houses, their communities, and their minds into safe, open safes remain subject to a reassertion of the narrative of slavery" (Jesser 338). If not for the entire institution Sweet Home sustains itself on, Sethe could determine whom she married, when she started a family, and the life she lived. Likewise, if not for the horrific memories slavery instilled within Sethe, she would not have killed Beloved and lost control of her identity and autonomy as a mother. The novel "narrates a gothic story of Beloved, the incarnation of Sethe's murdered daughter, to frame the former slaves' arduous struggle in the post-bellum period with their traumatic past" (Ying 54).

Morrison carefully chooses her diction throughout the novel to display how institutional slavery not only displaced and stripped numerous individuals of identity but caused severe trauma and lasting socioeconomic disparities for African Americans. Thus, although Sethe tries to reestablish her identity as a mother, in reality she kills Beloved, scares off her two sons, and

becomes her youngest daughter Denver's dependent. Morrison shows readers that whether free or enslaved, there are aspects to African American identity that blacks have no control over due to the dominance of white institutions, and leaves readers to ponder how contemporary society might work to resolve that narrative.

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Ethan Sanders

A Brief History of Film Narrative and Technology: From Advent to Sound

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We began learning about the Digital Humanities in our *Wide Angle* Practicum at roughly the same time our Film History class covered the early development of film. One overlap between the two classes was evident: technological hurdles held back the creative aspects of both studies. In the *Wide Angle* Practicum, we read about the massive undertaking of digitizing humanities with early computers. The imagination of those digitizing the humanities outpaced the technology they had on hand, and thus, they required creative solutions for technological improvements. In the same way, the early history of film presented technological problems to storytellers. Storytelling certainly faced hurdles in traditional mediums, but the transition of storytelling from traditional mediums to film presented an abundance of new technical issues. The solution to these problems, in turn, created new problems. This cycle of problem to solution to problem continues today. Though film and photography originated in spectacle, the advancements in film technology have interwoven spectacle with narrative and perpetuated the cycle of technological advancements in a desire for better storytelling. Thus, film narrative and technology have been interdependent from nearly the beginning.

However, to say that one solution simply created more problems is not entirely true. One invention built upon the next. These inventions and innovations did not stand alone, and so, a timeline was chosen to showcase their progression. Messter's Maltese cross needed Marey's celluloid film, as paper roll film was not strong enough. The increased length of film from

Eugène and Lauste's Latham loop enabled Porter to develop the concept of continuity editing. The advent of film as we know it today was not one, grand, sweeping invention of a film camera and microphone, but a steady progression of technological advances.

In an attempt to better understand the digital humanities and this progression of early film history, this project will partake in the digital humanities by recording the early history of film through a website builder, wix.com, to create a timeline: "Film Narrative and Technology, A Brief History: From Advent to Sound." The website is formatted as a three-part timeline, recording both new technology and historical moments in film with their effect on narrative. However, technology is not the sole influence on narrative in film. To this end, inventions in technology as well as innovations in cinematic techniques will be analyzed alongside the progression of narrative film. The length of film's history, while relatively short in relation to other disciplines, is quite extensive on its own. Therefore, this project will only analyze film history from the advent of motion pictures to the introduction of sound in cinema. The history for this timeline was drawn from the fifth edition of David A. Cook's *A History of Narrative Film*. All parenthetical references on the website are in reference to page numbers within his book. All images and excerpts from films are a part of the public domain. Most media content is courtesy of the Library of Congress.

The portion of the project concerned with technology solely documents new inventions by filmmakers that contributed to filmmakers' ability to tell stories, while the portion of the project concerned with history solely documents innovations by filmmakers that had a particular impact on the way films told stories. Neither are concerned with every invention and innovation in film. Moreover, the portion of the project concerned with narrative does not seek to define narrative but to show the narrative potential presented by the inventions and innovations.

Clearly, the narrative section does not reflect all of the actual films made during the time with which it is aligned. Often, the year listed marks the first use of a particular invention or innovation, while other filmmakers did not begin using it for some time afterwards. However, images and excerpts from films are occasionally provided. These films do reflect the invention or innovation made in that year. They are the film that first featured the new invention or innovation with the exception of the "May Irwin Kiss" from the Thomas Edison film catalog, which is simply one of many short films by Edison Laboratories.

A definition of narrative potential is given with each new invention or innovation. New terms are added onto the existing definition of narrative potential, so that it begins quite simply as "subjective image in subjective motion" with Joseph Plateau's Phenakistoscope and ends with a definition that is absurdly long and a bit complicated at the entrance of sound into cinema. However, this length and convolution will hopefully capture just how semiotically complex film is as a narrative medium. Sound was chosen as the final entry in the timeline, as it is the last of the two major semiotic components of film to be invented (the first, of course, being the moving image). However, to sum up the many ways film communicates to the audience as simply sound and motion would fall terribly short of film as a narrative medium. The filmmaker communicates to the audience in many brilliant, if often unnoticed, ways. Through the development of technology, we can see how cinema "grew up" into the semiotically complex narrative medium it is today. That is what the timeline hopes to capture.

Link to "Film Narrative and Technology, A Brief History: From Advent to Sound":

https://esander1.wixsite.com/filmtechnology

Table of timeline from "Film Narrative and Technology, A Brief History:

From Advent to Sound":

TECHNOLOGY	HISTORY	NARRATIVE
Peter Mark Roget scientifically defines the *persistency of vision* as the brain's ability to retain images for 1/12 to 1/5 second (3).	1824	N/A
Joseph Plateau's *Phenakistoscope* creates the illusion of motion with drawings (4).	1832	*Subjective image in subjective motion*
Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre invents the *daguerreotype* (4).	1839	*Objective* image
Joseph Plateau uses individually posed daguerreotypes for *"phase photographs"* in Phenakistoscopes (4).	1849	Objective image *in subjective motion*
The movement from collodion wet plates to *gelatin dry plates* reduces the required exposure time for capturing images (5).	1876	"
Eadweard Muybridge invents *multi-camera series photography* with twelve cameras and captures a galloping horse and jockey (5).	1877	Objective image in *objective* motion
Étienne-Jules Marey records single-camera series photography with his *chronophotographic gun* and captures a heron in flight (6).	1882	"
Étienne-Jules Marey moves from plates to *paper roll film* (6).	1883	"
Hannibal Goodwin uses *celluloid roll film* (6).	1887	"

Edison Laboratories invents the **Kinetograph** and the **Kinetoscope** to capture and individually project moving images to accompany the phonograph (8).	1889	***Individually exhibitable*** objective image in objective motion
Filmmakers use multiple one-shot films in a single narrative (13).	1890's Exhibitors also provided narration and sound effects, but sound has not yet been standardized with the film being exhibited (13). In Japan, *benshi* narrate dialogue and exposition (566).	Individually exhibitable objective image in objective motion in ***subjective order with theatrical sound***
Oskar Messter invents the Maltese-cross system for intermittent motion in projection (10).	1895	
The Skladanowshy brothers invent the **Bioskop** to project moving images (10).	1895	***Mass*** exhibitable objective image in objective motion in subjective order with theatrical sound
The Lumières brothers invent the **Cinématographe** to record, project, and print moving images (10).	1895	" ***Documentary*** content
Enoch Rector and Eugène Augustin Lauste invent the **Latham loop** to relieve stress on film during projection (12).	1895	***Extended*** mass exhibitable objective image in objective motion in subjective order with theatrical sound
	1896 Georges Méliès begins to manipulate real time and space with editing (14). Méliès adapts narrative techniques through editing (i.e. fade-in/out, overlaying, dissolve, and stop-motion) (14).	Extended mass exhibitable objective image in objective motion in subjective order ***in subjective time and space*** with theatrical sound
Léon Gaumont invents the **Chronophone**. L. A. Berthon,	1900	Extended mass exhibitable objective image in objective

C. F. Dussaud, and G. F. Jaubert invent the **Phonorama**. Clément-Maurice Gratioulet and Henri Lioret invent the **Phono-Cinéma Théâtre** (151).		motion in subjective order in subjective time and space with theatrical sound **and short synchronized sound**
	1903 Edwin S. Porter develops the concept of continuity editing (17).	"
	1902 Georges Méliès creates films roughly one reel long (14).	"
	1903 Edwin S. Porter develops the concept of continuity editing in *The Great Train Robbery* (20) and possibly invents **intertitles** in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (21).	Extended mass exhibitable objective image in objective motion in subjective order in subjective time and space with theatrical sound and short synchronized sound **with written exposition and dialogue**
Eugène Augustin Lauste records sound on film (153).	1910	Extended mass exhibitable objective image in objective motion in subjective order in subjective time and space with theatrical sound and **extended unsynchronized** sound with written exposition and dialogue
	1913 Stellan Rye breaks from stage conventions with *The Student of Prague* (72).	Extended mass exhibitable objective image in objective motion in subjective order in subjective **and expressive** time and space with theatrical sound and extended unsynchronized sound with written exposition and dialogue
	1915 D. W. Griffith innovates **interframe narrative** and adapts techniques from 1800's fiction (47).	"

Josef Engl, Joseph Massole, and Hans Vogt invented the **Tri-Ergon process** (153).	1919	Extended mass exhibitable objective image in objective motion in subjective order in subjective and expressive time and space with theatrical sound and extended **synchronized** sound with written exposition and dialogue
Dr. Lee de Forest invents the Audion 3-Electrode Amplifier (154).	1923	Extended mass exhibitable objective image in objective motion in subjective order in subjective and expressive time and space with theatrical sound and extended synchronized **mass exhibitable** sound with written exposition and dialogue
	1924 Carl Mayer and Karl Freund innovate the "**unchained camera**" in Friedrich Wilhelm's *The Last Laugh* (79).	"
	1925 G. W. Pabst innovates **"invisible editing"** or **continuity editing** in *The Joyless Street* (83).	"
	1927 Al Johnson **ad-libs** the line, "Wait a minute… Wait a minute… You ain't heard nothin' yet!" in Alan Crosland's *The Jazz Singer* (157).	Extended mass exhibitable objective image in objective motion in subjective order in subjective and expressive time and space with theatrical sound and extended synchronized mass exhibitable sound with **spoken and** written exposition and dialogue

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Emily Thorington

Turbulent Emotions, Turbulent Places: Charting Correlations between Cathy

and Landscapes in *Wuthering Heights*

Emily Brontë's novel *Wuthering Heights* explores the intersection of places and violent emotions. Published in 1847 and set in late eighteenth-century England, *Wuthering Heights* chronicles the story of Catherine, "Cathy," Earnshaw and her adopted brother Heathcliff from their childhood to adulthood. The novel takes place in two key locations: the Earnshaw house Wuthering Heights and the Linton house Thrushcross Grange. This issue of *Wide Angle* features a call for papers on Theories of Psychology in Literature, and *Wuthering Heights* is a perfect example of a novel that explores the complexity of the mind, the connection between places and relationships, and the sometimes painful results of human action, especially in cases of Cathy and Heathcliff's tumultuous relationship that take their emotions to extreme ends.

In the novel, natural landscapes play a significant role in outwardly reflecting the internal state of the characters. Concerning the intersection of place and familial relationships, Franco Moretti analyzes the importance of place and relationships in European novels in his book *Atlas of the European Novel*. An observation he makes about Jane Austen's novels also connects to a reading of *Wuthering Heights*. Moretti states, "[Austen's] plots take the painful reality of territorial uprooting—when her stories open, the family abode is usually on the verge of being lost—and rewrite it as a seductive journey: prompted by desire, and crowned by happiness" (Moretti 18). *Wuthering Heights* deals with each of these descriptions, specifically with the

theme of loss and inheritance of households, characters continually propelled by their emotions with their happiness in question, and the happiness of characters at the end of the novel marked by the "benign sky" (Brontë 266). His observation of the problem of the drama that ensues around homestead inheritance particularly corresponds with the novel with the Earnshaw and Linton families. The atmosphere around Wuthering Heights, where the Earnshaw family lives, is up on a hill and the turbulent wind gushes across the landscape of the moors. In a drastic contrast, the natural landscape around Thrushcross Grange, where the Linton family lives, is serene with trees and gardens. The violent natural landscape around Wuthering Heights reflects the conflict between the Earnshaw family members, whereas the elegant trees and gardens around Thrushcross Grange reflect the relatively calm interactions of the Lintons.

Something that strikes me about *Wuthering Heights* is the distinct separation of the two locations in the novel in terms of the descriptions of the landscapes and how the atmosphere of the people within the houses reflects the surrounding landscapes. Nelly, the housekeeper at Wuthering Heights and one of the narrators, specifically describes the differences in the locations. Sitting at Thrushcross Grange, Nelly says, "beyond the garden trees and the wild green park, the valley of Gimmerton, with a long line of mist winding nearly to its top. . . . Wuthering Heights rose above this silvery vapor; but our old house was invisible—it rather dips down on the other side" (83). The Wuthering Heights house sits on high land to the north to where turbid wind blows the wild moors, whereas Thrushcross Grange stands to the southwest (94) with "garden trees," "the wild green park," and "the glen" (83). Before this digital humanities project, I saw a connection between places and characters' emotions. As a result of this curiosity in place and Cathy's language, I decided to use the online program Voyant to visually map different words from the novel. After entering the Project Guttenberg PDF of *Wuthering Heights* into

Voyant, the resulting data visually tracked patterns between places and people. The most common words in the novel are "Heathcliff," "said," "Linton," "Catherine," and "Mr." with Heathcliff appearing 422 times, Linton 348 times, and Catherine 339 times (Voyant). I chose to analyze the correlation between Cathy's name, the two settings of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, and the word "moor," cited eighteen times, which describes the natural landscape around Wuthering Heights. Despite the mention of character names more than places, the locations are vital in the reflection of the feelings of the characters, specifically Cathy and how she interacts with the people around her.

To begin my analysis, I tracked the times Thrushcross Grange and Wuthering Heights appear throughout the novel in a line graph. Figure 1 visually documents the changes between the frequency with which the novel mentions Thrushcross Grange and Wuthering Heights, as well as provides information about settings for characters. The line graph model divides the novel into ten segments, so in the paragraph below, I provided a quick summary of roughly each of the chapters represented by segment. In brief, I listed the section number and abbreviations of the primary locations for each segment with TG for Thrushcross Grange and WH for Wuthering Heights. **Figure 1:**

1 TG and WH, 2 TG, 3 WH, 4 TG, 5 TG, 6 TG, 7 TG, 8 TG and WH, 9 WH, 10 WH
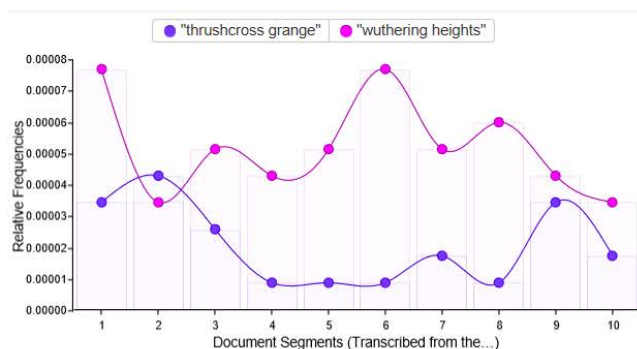
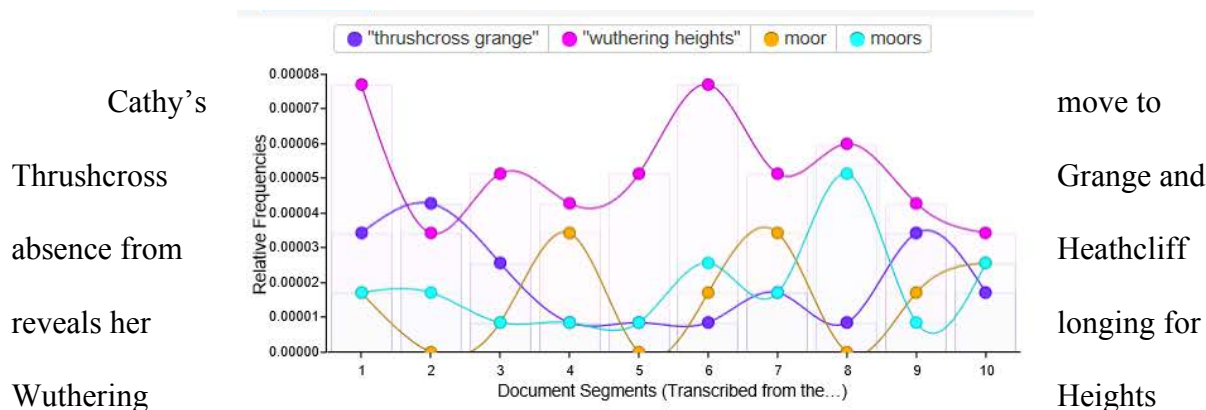The only case where Thrushcross Grange is higher on the graph than Wuthering Heights is in segment 2 when Cathy recovers at Thrushcross Grange after an accident. This chart reflects the key location of Wuthering Heights in the novel. When

layered with data of other key words from the novel, the Voyant graphs visually provide valuable data about the relationship between characters and places.

Wuthering Heights first presents difficulty when looking at the graphs because of the multiple narrators, characters with the same names, and switching between the two houses of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. However, an overarching view of the data presents valuable information for the correlation between place and names. The complicated narrative begins with Nelly, also called Ellen, one of the primary narrators of the story, as well as the visitor Mr. Lockwood who, like the reader, learns the intertwined family stories. Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff grow up at the home in Wuthering Heights with the housekeeper Nelly, and Edgar Linton grows up at the home in Thrushcross Grange. Linton is both the surname of the family at Thrushcross Grange, Cathy's surname when she marries Edgar, and also the name of a character at Wuthering Heights in the second half of the book. To make the plotline even more challenging to follow, both in the novel and through Voyant, halfway through the novel Cathy dies at Thrushcross Grange after giving birth to her daughter Catherine, who carries on her name and discovers life at Wuthering Heights. Despite the difficulty in tracking the different Catherines, because the mother dies at the end of one chapter and the daughter's story continues in the next, sections 1-5 on the Voyant charts follow the mother Cathy and sections 6-10 follow her daughter Catherine. Another parallel between names, places, and relationships includes Cathy and Heathcliff, who visit Thrushcross Grange as children, and Cathy's daughter visits Wuthering Heights in her youth. The ten sections of the graph visually demonstrate the shifting importance of names and places and as well as visually track the parallel storylines in the novel.

This research primarily covers the first half of the novel, specifically segments 4-5 when Cathy moves to Thrushcross Grange, so I will provide a brief overview of the story up until those

sections. In segment 1, the narrator Mr. Lockwood begins the novel at Thrushcross Grange and visits Wuthering Heights to meet the landlord of both houses. After learning stories and experiencing the hostile atmosphere inside the house, he "took an opportunity of escaping into the free air" (Brontë 35) and returns back to Thrushcross Grange (ch. I-III). Segment 2 begins the narration of the family stories and covers Cathy's extended stay at Thrushcross Grange after getting bit by the Linton's dog (ch. IV- VII). Cathy returns to Wuthering Heights in segment 3 and states she will marry Edgar Linton, yet she declares her love for Heathcliff to the housekeeper. Cathy proclaims, "Nelly, I *am* Heathcliff—he's always, always in my mind . . . so don't talk of our separation again—it is impracticable" (Brontë 74) (ch. VIII – IX). Cathy and Heathcliff's struggle in separation persists throughout the novel and reflects in her emotions at Thrushcross Grange. **Figure 2:**

Cathy's Thrushcross absence from reveals her Wuthering move to Grange and Heathcliff longing for Heights situated among the wild and free moors. Segment 4 (ch. X – XI) begins Catherine's time at Thrushcross Grange after her marriage to Edgar Linton. Cathy moves to Thrushcross Grange and the housekeeper Nelly goes with her as well. Talking to Mr. Lockwood, Nelly states, "to my agreeable disappointment, she behaved infinitely better than I dared to expect" (81). Despite the initial positive transition, Nelly discusses concerns about Cathy's health. She says, "Catherine had seasons of gloom and silence on and then: they were respected with sympathizing silence by

her husband, who ascribed them to an alteration in her constitution" (Brontë 81). Throughout segments 4 and 5, Cathy begins to look out the window for Heathcliff, mourn his absence, and increase her reference of Wuthering Heights.

Wuthering Heights and its physical landscape reflect Cathy's emotional landscape of obsession for Heathcliff. Rather than speak of the moors, Wuthering Heights becomes an objective correlative for Cathy's longing to be with Heathcliff. The *Oxford English Dictionary* describes the objective correlative as "the physical equivalent or manifestation of an immaterial thing or abstract idea; *spec.* (and usually, following T. S. Eliot) the technique in art of representing or evoking a particular emotion by means of symbols, which become associated with and indicative of that emotion" ("Objective"). In segment 4, Cathy has not seen Heathcliff for a few years, but he makes multiple visits to Thrushcross Grange. Nelly states, "Heathcliff . . . used the liberty of visiting at Thrushcross Grange cautiously, at first: he seemed estimating how far its owner would bear his intrusion" (Brontë 88). Edgar Linton did not want Heathcliff to keep coming back to see his wife Cathy. In response, Cathy says to herself, "Well, if I cannot keep Heathcliff for my friend, if Edgar will be mean and jealous, I'll try to break their hearts by breaking my own" (101). Cathy then takes fatal turns in her health. Figure 2 visually confirms Cathy's anguish in separation of her past life with the drastic increase of "Wuthering Heights." When Cathy nears death, the mention of Wuthering Heights also increases.

Cathy's dramatic actions at Thrushcross Grange continue until her death. Segment 5 follows chapters XIII through XVI beginning when Cathy decides to starve herself after Heathcliff's absence. During this portion of the novel, she frequently looks out of the open window in the "frosty air" towards the moors (Brontë 103). Concerning Cathy's reoccurring visits to the window, Nelly remarks, "those [lights] at Wuthering Heights were never visible—

still she asserted she caught their shining" (108). Cathy constantly longs for Wuthering Heights and Heathcliff. One day Cathy says to Edgar, "I thought I was at home . . . lying in my chamber at Wuthering Heights" (106). Cathy's mentioning of "home" reveals her heart is still away from Thrushcross Grange. Connecting her thoughts to the landscape of Wuthering Heights, Cathy points out flowers in bloom that remind her of Wuthering Heights (11). Cathy cannot escape from Thrushcross Grange and return to the landscape that reflects her violent actions until her burial at Wuthering Height. She expresses this sentiment early on in her slow death as she declares to Edgar, "I shall never be there but once more" (114). Cathy's linking of Wuthering Heights and Heathcliff continues in a frenzy of declarations. About Thrushcross Grange she states, "I'm tired of being enclosed here," and about Heathcliff, "I *wonder* he won't be near me!" (134). Cathy's health continues to take a serious decline in Heathcliff's absence. He visits Cathy as she gives birth to her daughter Catherine, and then she dies (136). Her death with Heathcliff present in the room satisfies her desire to be back at Wuthering Heights, even before her body physically rests in the ground near her childhood home.

Originally, I was curious how much "moor" and "moors," such a significant image of the landscape around Wuthering Heights, are mentioned in the novel by Catherine when she is at Thrushcross Grange. I added "moor" and "moors" into Figure 2 because I was curious to see if Catherine speaks about the landscape as a reflection of her longing for Heathcliff, whom she associates with her home. The results I found surprised me because I thought she would talk about the moors. In the chapters represented by segment 4 in the chart, Isabella mentions "moor" when recalling a time walking with Cathy (Brontë 89). However, Voyant shows that the words "moor" and "moors" drastically decrease to zero times in Segment 5 after Catherine's move to Thurshcross Grange. In a hardcopy book, I scanned the chapters represented by segment 5 and

did find "moor" or "moors" mentioned one time by Cathy which confirmed the data on Voyant. However, searching "moor" and "moors" in Voyant and in a hardcopy book in the segments where Cathy is at Thrushcross Grange, gave me valuable insight into how the description furnished my expectations. Even though Catherine constantly opens the window and looks out to Heathcliff and Wuthering Heights, I associated the moors with those actions. Rather than specifically talk about the natural landscape, Catherine talks about Wuthering Heights and Heathcliff. **Figure 3:**
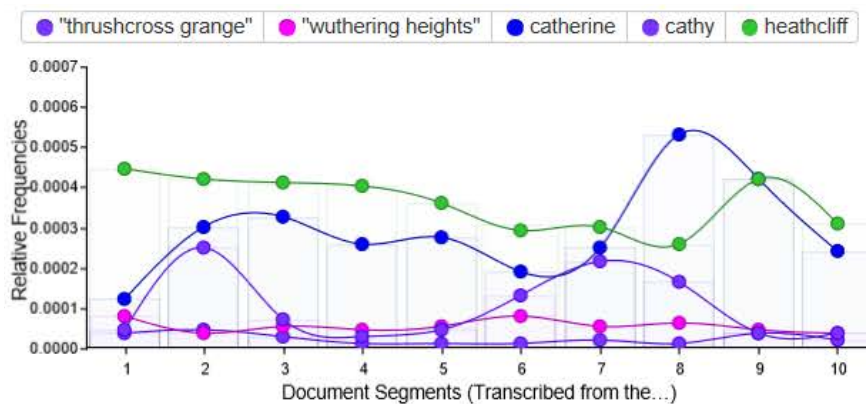

Figure 3 shows how following Catherine, "Cathy's," name through *Wuthering Heights* and Voyant is complicated. After Cathy's death, the novel follows the daughter Catherine's upbringing at Thrushcross Grange, discovery of relatives at Wuthering Heights, and Heathcliff's torment by thoughts of Catherine. Segment 6 covers the daughter Catherine at Thrushcross Grange (ch. XVII – XIII). Segment 7 covers the daughter Catherine at Thrushcross Grange out in the countryside between the houses (ch. XIX- XXII). Segment 8 covers the daughter Catherine confessing to Nelly she's been at Wuthering Heights often. Catherine states, "I've been to Wuthering Heights, Ellen, and I've never missed going a day since you fell ill; except trice before, and trice after you left your room" (Brontë 198) (ch. XXIII – XXVI). For example, in Segment 8 when daughter Catherine comes to Wuthering Heights, there is a dramatic increase in

the mention of her name in comparison to the rest of the chart. At the same time, Heathcliff's name reaches its lowest point on the graph and this is when Catherine discovers life at Wuthering Heights and has a positive experience. As Catherine discovers the moors her mother loved, segment 8 reflects the increase in "moors" and "Wuthering Heights." There are rough times for the characters at Wuthering Heights for the remaining two segments of the novel. Segment 9 covers at Wuthering Heights, and from here on out, there are continued rough times for the people who enter the house. Segment 10 ends at Wuthering Heights (ch. XXVII – XXXI and XXXII – XXXIV).

Even with this data, I found that distinguishing between which character speaks each of the words, such as the narrator Mr. Lockwood, the narrator Nelly, and Cathy was difficult with Voyant. It is difficult to determine where chapters begin and end within the segments on Voyant, which made it difficult for me to find quotes within section 4 that include "moor" despite the data on the graph. Nonetheless, Voyant is still helpful because it tracks the rise in the usage of those words that connect to Cathy's fixation on the landscape of her childhood home Wuthering Heights as an extension of Heathcliff, whom she loves despite her marriage to Edgar. Voyant also has limits because the program cannot calculate the different times the novel switches between the Catherines.

While not being able to sort through the language of specific characters, Voyant was helpful in visually tracking the main words of the novel. With my research through the chapters of the novel, I was able to find which chapters reflected the sections on the chart and in turn which sections reflected the scenes occurring predominately at Thrushcross Grange or Wuthering Heights. Nonetheless, Emily Brontë's descriptions of the houses, landscapes, and characters that reflect or reject the atmospheres of the houses make it is possible to study how

Catherine's language while at the physical location Thrushcross Grange reflects changes in her emotional and mental location. Despite the limits of Voyant in distinguishing between the characters with the same names, the program is a valuable tool in visually tracking observations in language in the novel, and its application to other novels could be very profitable in analysis of the relationship between language and the characters' imagined and physical locations.

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Contributors

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Brice Boyer is a junior University Fellow and a Psychology and English double-major with a concentration in Creative Writing. When he is not serving as Creative Writing Editor on *Wide Angle*, Brice enjoys reading, writing, playing piano, and spending time with his friends. He looks forward to this year's issue of *Wide Angle* and the end of the coronavirus era.

Will Carlisle is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in English and Creative Writing at Samford University. A native of Birmingham, Will spends much of his time writing, as well as composing and producing music alongside other artists and friends.

Claire Davis is a Samford alumna studying English literature for her MA/PhD at the University of Arizona. Her focus is currently classical reception within medieval texts, though she also enjoys studying film, Modern poetry, and the hummingbird nesting outside her window.

Bradyn Debysingh is a junior University Fellow from Oregon studying Musical Theatre and Classics at Samford. When not tap dancing or speaking Latin, he enjoys walking with friends, traveling in books or planes, and consuming vast quantities of tea. Soli Deo Gloria.

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Adeline Lee Frierson is a sophomore from Athens, Georgia, studying English. She hopes to pursue the publication field and become an editor.

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Julianne Smith is a senior from Anniston, AL, studying Journalism & Mass Communication with a concentration in Public Relations and a minor in Film Production. She is passionate about film and photography and hopes to combine these interests with her studies in communication.

Lacey Spear is a sophomore from Lowndesboro, AL, studying English, Creative Writing, and Spanish. She also plays on the Samford softball team. Lacey plans to pursue a career as a Spanish literature professor.

Dr. Julie Steward is Professor of English and Director of Creative Writing at Samford University. This story was inspired by a prompt her students used in a fiction writing class.

Emily Thorington is the Managing Editor of *Wide Angle* and a senior double-majoring in English and History. Along with working on the journal and her senior theses, she enjoys spring in Birmingham, Sigma Tau Delta's Teatime on Thursday, and laughing with fellow English majors. Her favorite trees on campus include the one west of the library where the sidewalk forks to Ben Brown, and the new tree on the Quad in front of Russell Hall that she helped plant as part of the Samford SHADE initiative.

Emily Youree is a 2019 Samford alumna currently studying Middle English literature in the PhD program at UNC Chapel Hill. When not sequestered in the library with Chaucer, she enjoys visiting new coffee shops and herb gardening.

Sarah Joy Wilkoff recently finished pursuing a BA in English with a Creative Writing concentration as well as a minor in German, and hopes to find a job as soon as companies start hiring again after COVID-19 subsides. She enjoys embroidery, painting, and (much like the main characters in Oscar Wilde's *The Importance is Being Earnest*) is often busy bunburying.