
Calliope

California State University, Bakersfield
Department of English

Calliope

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Contributions in all areas of literary criticism are warmly welcomed. Essays must have the recommendation of a professor. Submission of a paper to this journal will be taken to imply that it represents original work. Essays should conform to the current MLA or APA documentation styles. The editors reserve the right to edit submissions as needed for publication.

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Introduction

We are thrilled to present issue #17 of *Calliope*, the student-run journal of the Department of English at California State University, Bakersfield, that showcases work in literary history and criticism by graduates and undergraduates. Since its launching in spring 1993, *Calliope* has annually published essays on poetry, drama, fiction, non-fiction, and film produced by students.

This issue contains sixteen original essays on a wide variety of subjects representing a diversity of theoretical approaches. One of these essays, written by Mary Kileen Peña, won the Dean's Outstanding Graduate Paper Award. Six students took total charge of the production of this issue. They designed and posted a call for submissions; they created a system of blind peer review in Box; they collaborated on meticulous editing, designed an original cover, set the manuscript to Adobe InDesign, and saw it go to press.

They worked with dedication and professionalism. Leo Bahena put upon himself to learn InDesign and commit the final layout of the journal, while Taylor Brown created the cover, coming up with her original rendition of the timeless Muse Calliope who inspires eloquence. Ben Lempinen, Sarah Mendez-Jimenez, Casandra Schafer, Ariana Zavala, Leo Bahena, and Taylor Brown all served as judicious readers of each submission, which they read many times over. All six stayed connected through a platform called Discord, consulting with each other well after school hours.

Finally, veteran digital design consultant Brooke Grimes volunteered to be part of the experience of producing *Calliope* again this year, generously lending her expertise at almost every stage of editing and production.

We want to thank James Rodriguez, Bob Frakes, Alicia Rodriguez, and Emerson Case for providing the source of funding that allowed us to afford the hard copies of this glossy issue. We thank others who helped along the way: Analía Rodriguez, Duncan Hanon, and the Print Shop staff.

Mónica G. Ayuso
Faculty Editor

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Graduate Essays

The Limitations of Nationalism: Irish Traditional Music in *The Heather Blazing*

Mary Killeen Peña

Although the title of Colm Tóibín's second novel, *The Heather Blazing* (1992), is taken from the lyrics of a popular Irish ballad, critics have not yet made note of the role that music plays in the text.[1] The protagonist, Eamon Redmond, recalls a childhood memory at the end of Part Two of the novel in which various family members sing Irish ballads at a Christmas gathering. Eamon's Uncle Tom offers to sing "Boolavogue," a traditional Irish ballad about the Irish Rebellion of 1798 that contains the line "A rebel hand set the heather blazing," to which the title of the novel refers. The inclusion of Irish traditional music in this text demonstrates one of the most effective ways Irish national identity is constructed and explores the limitations of that national identity in modern Ireland.

In *The Heather Blazing*, Tóibín's protagonist, Eamon, is born in Ireland at a time when Irish traditional music became more homogenized and popularized via recordings done on the gramophone (Smith "Origin"132). In his flashbacks, Eamon is a young boy in Ireland in the 1940s, so his grandparents' and father's generation would have experienced the shift from an oral music tradition to a written and recorded one. This is evidenced by the scene at his grandmother's house on Christmas in one of his flashbacks. The men of the family are sent to Benediction at the local church and stop at the pub on the way home. When the men return, the family takes turns singing beloved folk songs without instrumentation. This type of singing in Irish traditional music is called sean-nós ("in the old style") and is considered the "most authentic" expression of traditional singing.[2] The experience of singing these songs together brings Eamon's grandmother to tears and this is one of the only times in the novel

1 Martin Dowling in *Traditional Music and Irish Society: Historical Perspectives* (2014) examines traditional music and Irish modernity, specifically looking at traditional music's position in the Irish literary revival via the life and work of James Joyce.

2 See "Melodic Ornamentation in the Connemara Sean-nós Singing of Joe Heaney" by Sean Williams for more description of the genre. Williams writes that "Sean-nós songs are traditionally sung around a turf fire by a small group of neighbors who gather to spend a quiet evening together. In an evening of sean-nós singing, the progression of singers moves counterclockwise" (126). The first recordings of Sean-nós singing are available to the public on the Irish Tradition Music Archive (ITMA) website (https://www.itma.ie/features/playlists/itma-henebry-cylinder-recordings-1905).

when any character in his family expresses sadness or vulnerability. This old style of singing also gives insight into Ireland's collective historical memory. Sean-nós singing is the oral transmission of history through poetic verse, where the voice is the instrument. This singing style of "Boolavogue" demonstrates a cultural shift in Irish nationalism in the second half of the twentieth century; the nation state of Ireland and its citizens were creating the cultural identity of a post-civil war republic. The scene Tóibín creates for readers is that of an Irish family singing political songs in the ancient, Celtic style on Christmas night instead of religious songs, indicating that central to Irish national identity at this point in history is the struggle for independent statehood, even after it has been achieved.

Ethnomusicologists who study Irish traditional music note that it has ancient roots - many traditional songs in the canon that were popularized with English lyrics were first Irish tunes with Irish lyrics. Edward Bunting[3] is responsible for the collection and notation of much of the Irish traditional music known today, gathering works in the latter half of the eighteenth century during a wave of Gaelic revival (Smith "Traditional Music" 114). Another cultural push to preserve Irish music occurred in the wake of The Famine in the 1840s, "on the assumption that much of Ireland's rich musical heritage was being lost" due to the large number of Irish citizens dying, and with them, the Irish culture and heritage of their memories (Smith "Traditional Music" 114). Converting this oral tradition to a written one served a political purpose as well as a cultural one: it was important to the Irish musicians who wanted traditional songs notated to preserve an art form that was uniquely "Irish," and therefore a justification for Irish nationalism. After the Great Famine and during a wave of mass emigration, Irish traditional music gained popularity alongside Romanticism in the nineteenth century, as Romantic sensibilities favored "music of the common people." Irish traditional music gained popularity at home as a tool of resistance to English colonization. It was an art form that consolidated Irish identity because, "for a people experiencing political unrest or revolution," it became "a rallying point around which different factions can meet and agree" (Smith "Origin" 135). The Romantics saw a connection between landscape and political and social memory that manifested in traditional music; they used the beloved ancient songs and stories to unite all Irish people at a time in Ireland's history when sovereignty and independent statehood were the main political concerns. Alongside these political concerns, Irish people were displaced within Ireland and abroad due to a depressed economy in the first half of the twentieth

3 Edward Bunting's *A General Collection of the Ancient Irish Music* of 1797 is an important text in the history of Irish traditional music. Bunting was an Irish organist and pianist who received a commission from the organizers of the Belfast Harp Festival of 1792 to preserve the instrumental and vocal music of the Irish harpers (*Irish Traditional Music Archive*).

century. Folk music was an art form that united the Irish diaspora: "if landscape and its allegorical interpretation is crucial to the national image of a secure and landed population, the geography of 'home' may also have tremendous significance to a people bereft of country, displaced from family and familiarity, and struggling to create identity in a new land" (Smith "Origin" 140). Thus, folk music became a way to distill Irish history and culture, and then reproduce it as a commodity in the modern age.

The sean-nós style of singing in Tóibín's novel is indicative of the conflation of place, memory, and history within Irish traditional music. The third song performed at the Christmas gathering is "Boolavgoue," which Uncle Tom sings with "feeling" (71). The narrator describes the emotional performance, saying that everyone in the living room was "listening intently to the story of the song as though they had never heard it before" (72). The description of Tom's musical performance emphasizes the oral storytelling and mythologizing mechanism of Irish culture and history during this era of Irish nationalism; the orator is a family member that retells the heroic "story" of a real historical event in poetic verse and in a familiar "Irish" tune. Singing this song in the old style – without instruments and with the lilting of the vocal cords – invokes an ancient and uniquely "Irish" cultural tradition and artifact. The story in "Boolavogue" tells of Father Murphy, a Wexford priest who helped lead a battle against British forces in Enniscorthy during the 1798 Rebellion (Appendix A). At first a pacifist, Murphy was moved to take violent action against British troops after they burned down the houses of parishioners suspected to be rebels. Father Murphy and other leaders were eventually defeated and hanged. Instead of singing religious songs around the fire on Christmas, Eamon's family sings secular songs that are distinctly "Irish" in sound and that have lyrics that refer to their physical location and the political events that occurred there; this rhetorical situation constructs an Irish historical narrative that is overtly Republican. In doing so, the text seems to say that in this era of Irish nationalism, colonial rebellion is as important a facet of "Irishness" as Catholicism.

This musical tradition connects modern Irish people to a Celtic past and to the Irish landscape. Enniscorthy, Eamon's hometown, is a physical site of rebellion and resistance - a site where Irish culture and history is crystallized, mythologized, and reproduced. For Eamon, his "natal landscape is littered with republican totems, from the pikeheads rusting in remote farmhouses to the Father Murphy monument in the town square" (Harte 57-8). There are physical markers of the 1798 rebellion on the landscape, but the story of "Boolavogue" and its performances by Eamon's family are a living monument. These performances (re)create the dominant narrative of Irish history, valorizing the suffering of Irish "heroes" who fought for the freedom of the nation-state.

In “The Origin of Style: The Famine and Irish Traditional Music,” Sally Sommers Smith claims that “Irish traditional music is a fine case study of what ethnomusicologist Daniel Neuman calls ‘immanent music history.’” This is the third of Neuman’s historical paradigms that he describes in the “Epilogue” of *Ethnomusicology and Modern Music History.* In this paradigm, he writes, “History here is ‘the subject of music: music is the medium—the crucible in which time and its memories are collected, reconstituted, and preserved—and history, its message’” (Neuman 269). The retelling of an oral history through song enables older generations of Irish people to gather in community and participate in and recreate “Irishness” for survival and resistance under colonial rule. The performance of these songs in group settings creates a history – a coherent, linear narrative – that forms a collective, national identity. Although Eamon’s family bonds over their love of Irish traditional music, and therefore a shared Irish history and identity, the text seems to make ambiguous conclusions about the usefulness of this national identity in the modern world.

The radical political beliefs that defined Eamon’s individual and collective identity in childhood manifested as a politically conservative ideology in the twentieth century. Eamon’s Irish nationalism, inherited from his father, was formed in a specific sociohistorical moment. Eamon was born in the Irish Free State, but watched the nation-state become a republic in 1949 and join the United Nations in 1955 (Dorr 42). The Republicanism and Irish nationalism that formed Eamon’s identity, including his morals, values, and ethics, became repressive in a nation-state no longer under colonial rule. Liam Harte argues that “The chapters that recreate Eamon’s upbringing not only establish the centrality of Irish republican history in the formation of his identity, but also the ways in which that history has been memorialized and mythologized into a fixed narrative of cultural meaning” (57). For Eamon in the 1990s, the presence of traditional music in his childhood in the flashback chapters evokes positive emotional memories, as participating in these living monuments formed his sense of place and self and connected him to a shared identity with his community. In a modern Ireland, without a colonial power to resist, Eamon struggles to find a repository for his Republican ideals. Irish traditional music is one of the “cultural planes” described by Frantz Fanon in “On National Culture,” in which the “new-found tensions” of colonialism are expressed (1362). As Fanon asserts, “A national culture under colonial domination is a contested culture whose destruction is sought in systematic fashion” (1362), which in Ireland occurred under Tudor rule: Henry VIII ordered the destruction of Irish harps, and Elizabeth I decreed the execution of Irish harpers (O’Shea 7). Helen O’Shea in “The Making of Irish Traditional Music” argues that these restrictions “suggest both the perceived power of Irish music to pollute

English culture and its associations with anti-colonial resistance" (7). During the waves of Gaelic revival in the nineteenth century, however, the social construction of Irish national identity through the lyrics of some of the popular "Irish" ballads "express[ed] a colonial view of Irishness to which the Anglo-Irish ruling class were sympathetic" (O'Shea 13).[4] Thus, Irish national identity became commodified during these cultural revivals through the printing of Irish song books, which became popular among the English middle class and the Anglo-Irish ascendancy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The commodification of Irish traditional music also meant that its "authenticity," and that of Irish national identity, was up for debate among the Irish intelligentsia. In the second half of the twentieth century, this cultural artifact and art form began to arrest the development of Irish identity. The Republicanism of earlier generations, with a primary objective of Irish sovereignty, was formed in a particular sociohistorical moment. When the political status of Ireland changed in 1949, the Republic had no outside power to rebel against it, and instead, Republican ideology resulted in intranational violence in Northern Ireland. In *The Heather Blazing*, the performance of "Boolavogue" serves as cultural resistance. However, when the novel fast forwards in time to the chapters in which the narrator describes Eamon's present life, that of a High Court judge in the 1990s, his connection to the song is part of what underpins his conservative judgements.

The Heather Blazing depicts a protagonist unwilling to calibrate his political views to his sociohistorical moment, demonstrating the limitations of the usefulness of Irish nationalism in a postmodern world. This novel was written shortly before the start of the Celtic Tiger and at a time in Ireland's history when the dominant cultural values of the nation were moving away from those inherited from Catholicism to more secular and liberal ones.[5] Many of the scenes in Eamon's present life describe a man resistant to change, technology, and human communication and intimacy. It is evident that Eamon's politically

4 Fanon's theory of national culture resonates here: first, according to Fanon, national culture is repressed by the colonizing power; second, "a century or two of exploitation [passes and] there comes about a veritable emaciation of the stock of national culture"; third, "colonial exploitation, poverty, and endemic famine drive the native more and more to open, organized revolt"; fourth, the native creates an "overproduction" of art, first in a "tragic and poetic style" and then one of "indictment" (1362-3).

5 In "Colm Tóibín and Post-Nationalist Ireland: Redefining Family Through Alterity," José Carregal-Romero argues that the 1990s in Ireland was a "period in which the Republic underwent drastic changes as regards its economic and socio-cultural profile. The Ireland of the 1990s [was] that of the Church scandals, as well as that of the Celtic Tiger or the Ireland of profound legal changes, when homosexuality was decriminalized and the ban on divorce was finally removed. Unsurprisingly, these rapid transformations have had a remarkable impact on Ireland's cultural life, with the emergence of what has been labeled as 'post-nationalist' Irish literature."

saturated upbringing and his traumatic experiences in an economically depressed and postcolonial Ireland gave rise to an identity and way of being that is fixed in time. In the beginning of Part Two, Eamon reflects on a High Court judgment he must make regarding a pregnant, unwedded teacher's firing at a local school – he sides with the moral views of the state, influenced by the Catholic Church, that condemn the pregnant teacher. Soon after this appearance in court, he drives to pick up his daughter and his new grandson on the way to the coast for the weekend. Eamon's daughter, Niamh, is also an unwedded mother, and the narrator describes Eamon's moral and ethical conflict regarding their relationship; his worldview is so heavily influenced by his allegiance to the nation-state and the myth of Irish national culture that he creates emotional and physical distance from his family. When the baby makes "gurgling sounds" in the back seat of the car during the drive, Eamon says, "You should teach him 'The Croppy Boy,'" referring to a popular Irish rebellion ballad (94). The song is about a boy killed by a British soldier during the 1798 rebellion and is written to an old Irish tune (Appendix A). It seems that Eamon, feeling guilt for his legal judgment and inability to connect with his daughter, mentions the name of an Irish traditional ballad to invoke a sense of shared Irish national identity, using Irish traditional music as a means to build a relationship with his daughter and his grandson. However, this moment reflects the limitations of the uniting power of national identity at the end of the twentieth century; with Ireland now an independent republic and on the edge of an economic boom, modern Irish generations no longer identify with the stories of Ireland's colonial resistance. The text demonstrates how Irish nationalism once played a vital role in cultural, physical, and social connection and survival, but this mythologized, Romantic national identity is no longer useful in a nation-state trying to negotiate increasing social plurality and violent in-fighting in Northern Ireland.

The inclusion of positive, emotional scenes in which Irish traditional music is the means for familial bonding and cultural identification contrasted with scenes in which it creates distance between family members in later generations seems to be the ambiguous conclusion Tóibín was aiming for. In his 1993 essay, "New Ways of Killing Your Father," he reflects on Irish revisionist history and its cultural impact, concluding that "ambiguity is what is needed in Ireland now" (Tóibín). This novel concludes that a contemporary Irish national identity must be constructed by a wider breadth of stories about the past – beyond the ones that define a state-endorsed national identity - as well as about the present, for "Irishness" to be an identity worth claiming.

Appendix A

The Croppy Boy
Soodlums Irish Ballad Book

Good men and true in this house
who dwell,
To a stranger buachaill I pray you
tell,
Is the priest at home or may he be
seen,
I would speak a word with Father
Green.
'The priest's at home, boy, and may
be seen,
'Tis easy speaking with Father
Green,
But you must wait 'till I go and see
If the holy Father alone may be'.
The youth has entered an empty hall
Where a lonely sound has his light
footfall,
And the gloomy chamber's cold
and bare,
With a vested priest in a lonely chair.
The youth has knelt to tell his sins,
'Nomine Dei' the youth begins,
At 'mea culpa' he beats his breast,
Then in broken murmurs he speaks
the rest.
'At the siege of Ross did my father
fall,
And at Gorey my loving brothers all;
I alone am left of my name and race,
I will go to Wexford to take their
place.
I cursed three times since last Easter
Day,
And at Mass-time, once I went to
play,
I passed the churchyard one day in

haste,
And forgot to pray for my mother's
rest.'
'I bear no hate against living thing,
But I love my country above my king,
Now Father, bless me and let me go,
To die, if God has ordained it so'.
The priest said naught, but a rustling
noise
Made the youth look up in a wild
surprise,
The robes were off, and in scarlet
there,
Sat a Yeoman captain with fiery glare.
With fiery glare and with fury hoarse,
Instead of a blessing he breathed a curse.
'Twas a good thought, boy, to come
here and shrive,
For one short hour is your time to live.
Upon yon river three tenders float,
The priest's on one-if he isn't shot,
We hold this house for our lord and king,
And amen say I, may all traitors swing!.
At Geneva Barracks that young man died,
And at Passage they have his body laid,
Good people who live in peace and joy,
Breathe a prayer, shed a tear, for the
Croppy Boy

Boolavogue
genius.com/The-irish-tenors-boolavogue-lyrics

At Boolavogue, as the sun was setting
O'er the bright May meadows of Shelmalier
A rebel hand set the heather blazing
And brought the neighbours from far and near
Then Father Murphy, from old Kilcormack
Spurred up the rock with a warning cry:
"Arm! Arm!" he cried, "for I've come to lead you
For Ireland's freedom we'll fight or die"

He led us on 'gainst the coming soldiers
And the cowardly Yeomen we put to flight
'Twas at the Harrow the boys of Wexford
Showed Bookey's Regiment how men could fight
Look out for hirelings, King George of England
Search ev'ry kingdom, where breathes a slave
For Father Murphy from the County Wexford
Sweeps o'er the land like a mighty wave

At Vinegar Hill, o'er the pleasant Slaney
Our heroes bravely stood back-to-back
And the Yeos at Tullow took Father Murphy
And burned his body upon the rack
God grant you glory, brave Father Murphy
And open Heaven to all your men
For the cause that called you may call tomorrow
In another fight for the Green again

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Disturbing, Deviant, and Optical Illusional: Social Satire and Symbolism in Anna Burns' *Milkman*

Kayla Rogers

When Anna Burns' novel, *Milkman*, won the 2018 Man Booker Prize, people had a lot to say. While the vast majority of reviews were favorable, calling the novel "charmingly wry" (*The New Yorker*)[1] and "brutally intelligent" (NPR)[2], many also labeled the novel as "experimental," "not for everyone," and "likely to divide readers" (*Washington Independent*)[3]. Much of this heated debate centered around Burns' particular literary style, "that inimitable mixed economy of outré-absurdist storytelling; garrulous essayism lubricated with psychobabble, sociologese and bureaucratese" (Downes 231). The most discussed feature of the novel was how Burns avoids the use of proper names, relying instead upon ambiguous monikers like Middle Sister, Maybe Boyfriend, Tablets Girl, and Nuclear Boy. While this is certainly a significant feature of the novel, critics have so far failed to connect this lack of naming to a larger thematic role within the novel. Furthermore, little has been said about the novel's function as a social satire, which is interesting, considering the same stylistic elements of the novel, specifically its linguistic ambiguity, act as defining characteristics of the novel's satirical purpose. Viewed from this perspective, *Milkman* serves as a social satire exposing the absurdity underneath socio-political power structures, mass conformity, and cultural groupthink. It also reveals how society itself acts as a social panopticon, controlling how people act, talk, and think within the social system. Middle Sister's habit of reading while walking can therefore be interpreted as a symbol of social resistance and as an act of rebellious normalcy within social chaos. This kind of modern social satire exposes the inherent, deeply rooted social problems, not only in Northern Ireland, but in any socially closed-off society.

1 Miller, Laura. "A Novel About Coming of Age Amid the Troubles." *The New Yorker*, (Dec. 3, 2018).

2 Quinn, Annalisa. "Brutally Intelligent 'Milkman' Depicts Lives Cramped By Fear." NPR, (Dec. 4, 2018)

3 Papinchak, Robert Allen. "Milkman: A Novel." *Washington Independent Review of Books*, (Dec. 4, 2018)

Ireland has always had a penchant for dark humor. This is no wonder, considering Ireland's long and tumultuous history. Irish writers have therefore struggled to articulate the pain and trauma that has become a part of its national fabric. Within her novel, *Milkman,* Anna Burns balances stark depictions of violence and trauma with a tone and language that is comedically blunt and unflinching. Academic Ian David Clark argues "that the linguistic structure of *Milkman* tacitly rejects the notion that trauma must resist narrative representation" (106). While the narrator, Middle Sister, has an inclination for divergent and rambling narratives, she does not shy away from truthfully describing the brutality and violence that she witnesses daily in her community. The juxtaposition of humor and horror is a defining feature within the novel that highlights the numbing effects of living in a "hair-trigger society" (Burns 6). In the late 1970s Northern Ireland, the protagonist, Middle Sister, argues that this humor is not indicative of social "schizophrenia," but rather that "This was underneath the trauma and the darkness a normality trying to happen" (Burns 112). In such a closed-off community, the paramilitaries rule with veracity, and Middle Sister's calm and detached tone switches back and forth describing scenes of brutal violence, "which included bombs and guns and death and maiming" (Burns 21), with a bluntness that is uncomfortably amusing. The exaggerated antics of the paramilitary groups within the novel are hilarious until the reader remembers that they are depictions of the actual disorganized and overblown violence experienced by these communities. This juxtaposition of tone and content puts into relief the seriousness of trauma and control within Middle Sister's psyche. It is symptomatic of the social conditioning that has desensitized Middle Sister to the political violence that surrounds her.

What makes *Milkman* truly unique, however, is the novel's linguistic ambiguity, specifically the lack of naming within the novel. The subject of naming is addressed early on as Middle Sister explains how names carry with them a meaning and power that goes beyond simple identification. Within Northern Ireland, names become a symbol of one's national identity: "The names not allowed were not allowed for the reason they were too much of the country 'over the water', with it no matter that some of those names hadn't originated in that country but instead had been appropriated and put to use by the people of that land" (Burns 23). The ambiguity of naming in *Milkman* has caused much discussion among critics and readers. David Ian Clark maintains that this "intense obsession" with naming is reflective of the "cultural rules of identification" that is the result of living within a "rigidly segregated space" (97). For critics such as Clark, the practice of not naming signifies the larger collective memory of Irish communities living within a "complex political, cultural, and spatial network founded on division" (97). For other critics,

such as Daragh Downes, the overall vagueness inherent in the novel allows for a wider connection to be made between *Milkman* and any other closed-off sectarian society. Burns' use of linguistic ambiguity within the novel is twofold: not only does it allow the reader to experience the disorienting effects of language within such a politically divisive atmosphere, but it also acts as the defining satirical feature exposing the absurdity of such language restrictions. When readers remark upon the difficulty and disorientation resulting from Burn's resistance to naming, it is because that difficulty is precisely the point. It is meant to be confusing because that reflects the reality of living within such a divisive socio-political system.

While *Milkman* certainly reflects the political turbulence of Northern Ireland, at its core, it tells a story of a young woman being harassed by a man in power. The tragic irony of the novel centers around Middle Sister's conundrum of having to articulate a threat which is implied. After all, how do you describe something which didn't explicitly happen? Middle Sister explains that such harassment is "hard to define" and "piecemeal," and this is precisely what makes it so distressing because there is essentially no way to prevent or guard against it: "It was constant hints, symbolisms, representations, metaphors. He could have meant what I thought he meant, but, equally, he might not have meant anything" (Burns 181). Yet, regardless of its actuality, Milkman's presence within the novel represents a very real threat to Middle Sister's well-being. She begins to lose interest in her hobbies; she no longer runs, goes walking, and her paranoia regarding the safety of her family and her Maybe Boyfriend begins to wear her down to the point where she begins to believe that even her house is watching her: "It was banging and retorting and causing discordance—all to berate me, to warn me, to call attention to the threat I already knew was surrounding me" (Burns 184). And while the image of Maybe Sister being thrown out of bed in the middle of the night, then nonchalantly calling to her mother: "'It's the house. The spirits of the house. I'm sleeping too'" (Burns 184), is certainly funny, it nonetheless represents Middle Sister's deepening mental anguish.

Irony is a persuasive and powerful tool which Burns harnesses to expose the illusionary façade of the power structures at play within the novel. Again, the pervasive obsession with naming is exposed, and the novel repeatedly defies expectations. Nowhere is this better reflected than in the final revelation of Milkman. After his violent death, it is soon revealed that "…Milkman's name really was Milkman. This was shocking" (Burns 304). In a supreme stroke of comedic irony, Milkman's image as a top level paramilitary assassin instantly vanishes to reveal an ordinary middle-aged, married man whose power comes only from the rumor and assumptions of the community that created him. The

power of the Milkman ultimately proves to be immaterial:

> When considered a pseudonym, some codename, 'the milkman' had possessed mystique, intrigue, theatrical possibility. Once out of symbolism, however, once into the everyday, the banal, into any old Tome, Dick, and Harryness, any respect it had garnered as the cognomen of a high-cadre paramilitary activist was undercut immediately and, just as immediately, fell away. (Burns 305)

Milkman is thus proven to be only as powerful as people believe him to be. Such symbolic representation brings to mind *Dorothy and The Wizard of Oz*, when the wizard is discovered to be nothing more than an old man behind a curtain. In the case of *Milkman,* this curtain is one comprised of social perception. Society is the real threat against Middle Sister and, ironically, they themselves perpetuate the violence of paramilitaries who threaten the peace and stability of their own community: "Before Milkman, they had shot a binman, two bus drivers, a road sweeper, a real milkman who was our milkman, then another person who didn't have any blue-collar or service-industry connections—all in mistake for Milkman. Then they shot Milkman" (Burns 303).

Society and community play a large role within the *Milkman.* The members of Middle Sister's neighborhood form an interconnected web or hive mind which feeds upon each other's fears and perceptions. The concept of groupthink features prominently within the novel, so much so that the community acts as a single character within the novel and proves to be an even larger threat against Middle Sister. Even before her encounter with the Milkman, the community had been quietly stalking her for years. Her every move is scrutinized and any deviation from the social norm labels her as "beyond the pale." Throughout the novel the community acts as a single entity, thinking alike, acting alike, and passing judgment against anyone who falls outside the strict social norm. Every aspect of life is policed by the community, from political affiliation to social interactions, even the types of movies that can be viewed are heavily influenced by the opinion of the group. In a society where one's choice of tea or butter is scrutinized; control is not only enforced but conditioned in the minds of the people. Marisol Morales-Ladrón, a journalist with *The Irish Times* observes that, "Before the reader can fully grasp what lies beyond the apparent harassment of the protagonist by a paramilitary stalker known as Milkman, the weight that gossip and hearsay have in this tribal community gives an idea of how control is exerted on the minds of the people." So ingrained are the standards and taboos constructed by society that individuals take it upon themselves to watch and enforce each other. In this way, society becomes what Morales-Ladrón refers to as a "social panopticon" (Irish Times). Drawing upon Michel Foucault's theories regarding power and

control, Morales-Ladrón examines how the community acts as a literal prison, and "The result is that, not knowing when one is really being observed or not, people are always on guard, involved in their own vigilance and (self)regulating their behavior so as to conform to the norms and avoid the consequences of transgression." This kind of self-surveillance is prominently at play in *Milkman,* where after only two encounters, rumors regarding Milkman and Middle Sister are already raging, where camera clicks emanate from bushes and men in vans can pull over and confiscate one's reading material without warning. Middle Sister soon finds herself under unrelenting scrutiny: "I realized things had reached the point where I was now checking to see if the community was concealing itself in those tucked away places too" (Burns 178). Such citizen spying is, in fact, already in play even before the Milkman comes onto the scene. Just as Middle Sister's longest friend explains, "there was bound to be a file on me anyway" (Burns 206). In this kind of socio-political atmosphere, "The community is a suspect community" (Burns 206) and as such, everyone is watching (and listening) to everyone else.

In a space where her every word and move are scrutinized, Middle Sister's only recourse is to give nothing away. She instead retreats into herself, and into the literature of the 18th and 19th century: "I did not like the 20th century" (Burns 5), and she tries to ignore the political and social turmoil she finds herself in: "Purposely not wanting to know therefore, was exactly what my reading-while-walking was about. It was vigilance not to be vigilant, and my return to exercising with brother-in-law, that too, was part of my vigilance" (Burns 65). However, the more she attempts to ignore the world around her, the more she calls attention to herself: "Too late I realized that all the time I'd been an active player, a contributing element, a major componential in the downfall of myself" (Burns 178). For the social panopticon to be effective, there must be complete social conformity. In *Milkman*, the community is marked by extreme hyper-vigilance, where any deviation from the social norm is perceived as a threat against the community as a whole. Longest Friend explains that such behavior "calls attention to itself and why—with enemies at the door, with the community under siege, with all of us all having to pull together—would anyone want to call attention to themselves here?" (Burns 200). As a result, the community pronounces its "diagnosis" upon Middle Sister labeling her as "beyond the pale" (Burns 200). Yet, despite the ostracism she receives from those around her, Middle Sister persists in her habit of giving nothing away: "This was my one power in this disempowering world" (Burns 205). Middle Sister's actions, specifically reading while walking, therefore constitute an act of social rebellion, and by refusing to feed into the community's rumors and gossip, she is effectively rejecting their society, at the cost of her own social

well-being. The act of reading in a repressive environment symbolizes "the counter-culture power of fiction to offer relief to the lonely psyche wounded from having to live in a 'hair-trigger society' in which politics has totalistically and micrologically invaded every action, gesture, word and even thought" (Downes 232). Yet, despite her attempt at rejecting the social structure, it is impossible for Middle Sister to remain completely neutral, and as if by the process of "osmosis," the political problems of the world begin to seep into her impenetrable exterior.

The function of social satire is to expose the flaws inherent in society. The sexual harassment that Middle Sister experiences is ignored by the community, which instead focuses upon Middle Sister's "lack of awareness" when it come to social rituals and taboos. The gendered roles of the community are prominently displayed with an attitude of "'*it is okay for him and it's not okay for you'"* that leaves Middle Sister with nowhere to go and no one to turn to (Burns 201). This gendered thinking is even conditioned into Middle Sister as she questions whether it is normal for men to like sunsets or cooking. It's not only gendered thinking that infects the community but an overall insensitivity to violence and death. As Middle Sister explains, the constant killings were "usual" and "not to be belabored" because they are "so numerous that rapidly there became no time for them" (Burns 113). This violence is perpetuated in a community that believes in the power and symbolism of their political idealism. The community paramilitary groups are mythologized and like "toy soldiers," they are shown to be merely a creation of social fanaticism. In such a socially isolated and divisive environment, even the smallest act of disobedience can have a ripple effect. In this case, Middle Sister's reading while walking becomes the unlikely catalyst that unsettles the community. It is precisely her unconventionality which attracts the Milkman and eventually leads to his unlikely death and the revelation of his true identity. This small act of social rebellion is therefore symbolic of the resistance to conformity.

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Swing Time and the Descendants of the African Diaspora

Destinee Sims

As the literary canon continues to grow and demand more stories aimed at the ever-growing population of black readers, authors like Zadie Smith have taken the world by storm. While waves of iconic authors continue to join the global conversation and share stories that reflect their own experiences as descendants of the African diaspora, Smith's *Swing Time* (2016) undoubtedly captures readers' attention through her unnamed narrator's journey of self-discovery and destruction. While the concept of a black woman seeking to learn about her roots is far from a new idea, *Swing Time* includes a protagonist that most diaspora descendants can actually relate to and cheer for. In *Swing Time*, Smith addresses the struggles descendants of the African diaspora face as they try to figure out who they are.

Identity and Childhood Friendship

Smith's unnamed narrator spends her childhood struggling to find herself and develop her identity as a biracial female in a primarily white English town. The narrator is noted to be the daughter of a black mother of Jamaican descent and a white English father; similarly, Tracey, the only other biracial girl mentioned throughout the narrator's childhood, is the daughter of an absent Jamaican father and a white English mother. While the narrator had both parents present for the entirety of her life to teach her about the stigmas associated with her biracial identity, Tracey notably is primarily raised by her white mother who is frequently away at work; Tracey's Jamaican father is implied to be a career criminal, as he is frequently in jail, and rarely visits Tracey or teaches her anything about her black heritage. Both girls were raised in neighboring lower-income apartment complexes in 1980s Northern London, and this ultimately led to both girls signing up for the same free dance classes at the war-scarred neighborhood church (Smith 13). It is notably the similarity in economic status, biracial identities, and love of dance that creates the initial bond between the narrator and Tracey.

Upon entering the neighborhood dance class for the first time, readers are unsurprisingly met with the narrator's childlike comparison between herself and the other girls in attendance. The narrator describes noticing Tracey, the

only other girl she can identify as black or biracial, due to the similarity in the shade of their skin. The narrator recalls, "Our shade of brown was exactly the same– as if one piece of tan material had been cut to make us both– our freckles gathered in the same areas, we were of the same height" (Smith 9). Without further discussion, the two girls stick together despite having nothing in common besides their economic status and the color of their skin (Smith 16). The girls' decision to stick together based on their shared skin color indicates that they recognize that they both hold a unique position within post-diasporic society as biracial females; the girls are neither exclusively white nor black, so they are now left to figure out where they belong within a dominantly homogenous society.

The differences in how both mothers' ethnicities and sense of identity affect their parenting are often not addressed directly by Smith, but instead beautifully thematized. Although Tracey's mother shows little concern for her daughter's sense of identity as a biracial female in a primarily white area, the narrator's mother appears to be very aware of the struggles that the descendants of the African diaspora face. Critic Kaitlyn Greenidge of the *Virginia Quarterly Review* writes, "The narrator's parents are genteelly poor, and her mother, in particular, is ambitious: She reads postcolonial theory and takes courses on Marxism, ruthlessly forging her identity as a poor, black woman in Britain into a professional activist and self-conscious, self-appointed voice of the people" (Greenidge 197). The actions of the narrator's mother seem to echo the long-held perspective that people of color can escape poverty and overcome racial barriers if they work hard, get an education, and become advocates for future generations. Where Tracey's childhood is filled with her mother spoiling her with material items and intrusive white English media, the narrator's childhood is filled with her mother educating her on powerful black leaders and lessons of African folklore to strengthen her identity as a black female (Smith 30, 100). However, these lessons periodically seem to add to the narrator's feeling of isolation; one of these instances includes when the narrator is forced to use the "pale pink, piggy leather" slippers her father provides due to her mother's refusal to buy the same stereotypical pink satin pointe shoes that the white mothers– including Tracey's– purchased, in her efforts to discourage the practices of white capitalism (Smith 14). While the narrator's mother can try to help her develop an understanding of her own experiences as a black female, her mother's experience as a diaspora descendant is not the same; the younger descendants now face the reality of ascribing to more than one ethnicity, as well as facing higher expectations to obtain an advanced education and career that would allow them to move beyond the economic and social class of their parents.

The narrator's lack of identity and sense of belonging quickly shifts after her first interactions with Tracey, as this is when their friendship essentially becomes the narrator's identity. While Tracey is repeatedly described throughout the novel as creative, a natural dancer, and full of attitude, Smith's narrator is infrequently given any qualities herself. While this could be due to the first-person narration offered by the narrator, this appears to be an intentional choice on Smith's part to reinforce the sense of weakened identity among descendants of the African diaspora. Upon further review of the text, almost every description of the narrator during childhood ties back to Tracey; the narrator spends her free time with her, practices the same unassigned dance moves as her at home, and plays almost exclusively the same schoolyard games as her. The narrator's willingness to copy and comply with Tracey's personality and choices had seemingly little limit, and in turn, this meant that her identity became a reflection of Tracey's. This leads many critics to argue that the narrator is Tracey's shadow or mirror. For example, Natania Rosenfeld (2017) observed, "[...] the narrator is Tracey's shadow (or, as her mother would say, "shade") [...]" (Rosenfeld 22). Similarly, Malou Kürpick (2018) argues the narrator's unconscious decision to shape her identity around Tracey's takes away from her ability to develop her own identity; this means that she is missing her opportunity to embrace her position as an educated biracial female and the power that can come with it. Kürpick argues, "The narrator, thus, functions as a mirror-image of Tracey: her socio-economic agency is built at the expense of cultural-political agency" (Kürpick 338). The narrator continues to follow Tracey's lead in various ways until they begin attending separate schools several years later.

The Awakening of Identity in Young Adulthood

The narrator complies with her parents' expectations that she will attend university after a traditional public high school education, and it is during her time at university that the narrator begins to explore who she is without Tracey. As a young woman, the narrator embraces her natural hair, darns a necklace with a pendant in the shape of the African continent, takes classes focused on black bodies, and studies modern black musicians while looking up to the Black Panther Party (Smith 286-287). While the narrator's childhood friendship with Tracey probes various aspects of her whiteness, the narrator's college friendships push her to embrace the history associated with her African ancestors. Most importantly, it is her exposure to a larger group of educated black individuals that prompts her to begin reflecting upon the political and social effects of the art she loved as a child.

Although the narrator begins to become aware of the potential implications of the media at the center of many childhood memories, she does

not lose all of her naivete at once. The portions of *Swing Time* set during the 1980s frequently reference the narrator's favorite films and musicians, such as Fred Astaire's *Swing Time*; many of these are either explicitly harmful (i.e. featuring blackface) or are more discreetly damaging (i.e. racial stereotypes) without her conscious awareness. The microaggressions encountered in these films may go unnoticed by the narrator because the films are most often watched when her mother is not around to explain their implications; appropriate responses to racism are typically taught by one generation of diaspora descendants to another as a form of preservation, so the narrator may not have learned about the film's negative impact from other adults in her life. The narrator's casual consumption of racially loaded content does not go unnoticed by critics; for instance, Greenidge addresses it in her review "Shaken Out of Time" (2017). She observes, "The images are, for her as a viewer, without context, without history, purely the form of the dance, the line of the body. The great authorial irony, of course, that Smith is able to pull off, is that the scenes she has the narrator describe remain hauntingly poignant and unsettling—imagining a young, mixed girl, face wide open to a television screen, watching black actors contorted into racial stereotypes without flinching" (Greenidge 198). While this idea may be "unsettling" for readers, it leads to critical reflection for the narrator in adulthood.

While attending university, the narrator has secondary characters, like Rakim, who are much quicker to point out the racism unnoticed during childhood. For example, the narrator finds herself ashamed after explaining that her love for tap relates to its originating with "the Irish crew and the African slaves, beating out time with their feet on the wooden decks of those ships, exchanging steps, creating a hybrid form [...]" (Smith 290). It becomes abundantly clear to readers that the narrator had never consciously realized that her favorite dance essentially stemmed from slaves performing and entertaining the very people who would soon be selling them like cattle just to increase their chances of survival; her appreciation for the unity of the sound and dance among them all. The blindness the narrator shows towards the racial undertones of the origin of tap can arguably be tied back to the fact that she did not truly consider what it means to be an African diaspora descendant until these conversations began; as a result of the interaction, the narrator notably shifts from just beginning to embrace her identity as a black woman to questioning what it means to be a descendant of the diaspora.

Midlife Acceptance of an Identity Never Found

After the narrator enters what can be approximated to be her mid-thirties, her decade-long job as a personal assistant to Aimee, an Australian pop star, challenges her perceived identity until it ultimately unravels. The

narrator's time working for Aimee takes place across three separate continents and continuously provides the narrator with new experiences that push her to question her understanding of what it means to be both white *and* an African diaspora descendant.

Before starting as one of Aimee's assistants, the narrator initially begins her post-collegiate life with a much-loved job with the media outlet *YTV News*. Despite having a coveted editorial job within the entertainment industry, the narrator jumps at the opportunity to give up her position to become Aimee's assistant instead (Smith 128). While readers can assume that the narrator took the job for the perks that would come with it (i.e. frequent travel and high pay), her previous struggles with identity make it impossible to ignore that she lets all aspects of her life revolve around Aimee just as it had revolved around her relationship with Tracey. The narrator allows Aimee to determine whether she continues seeing potential romantic partners, she gives up on having a residence of her own, and Aimee even decides what food the narrator eats (Smith 155, 431). This begs the question: at what point is the narrator's life no longer her own? Identity has historically been shaped by where a person lives, their cultural practices, the clothes they wear, who they associate with, and so much more; the narrator still repeatedly chooses the path that allows her to avoid making any of these decisions of identity herself. In "Tribal Dress" (2017), critic Wynn Wheldon addresses the narrator's chameleon-like changes in personality based on those around her. Wheldon asserts that "[...] She is in a sense without identity, and perhaps this justifies her anonymity. She has been the shadow of those with whom she has shared serious relationships: her childhood friend Tracy, her employer Aimee, a Gambian friend named Hawa, and her mother" (Wheldon 53). However, it is when the narrator complies with Aimee's decision to build a school in an unnamed African village and sent her to check on the project's progress that her lack of identity dawns on her.

For diaspora descendants, the opportunity to make the pilgrimage to their family's historical region of origin is typically seen as a chance to reflect and potentially heal. Since many African diaspora descendants do not have records indicating where their ancestors may have been taken from during times of the Middle Passage, a visit to any location within the African continent is often seen as beneficial. The narrator notably stops at an old barracks site for a "minute's quiet to contemplate where I was and what, if anything, it meant" (Smith 315). During her stay, the narrator visits slave trading ports, former military bases, and more; each of the historical sites she visits plays a critical role in the African diaspora, and because of this, they are assumed to offer black individuals critical insights into their history and identity. As the narrator admits that the *Zong*, a famous slave transport ship, haunted her nightmares during

childhood (Smith 112), her trip to the slave ports would also serve as a means for the narrator to confront the fears created by the same atrocities that led to the diaspora. Critic Justine Baille examines the narrator's visits to Africa, however, and finds that they do not necessarily have the impact that the narrator may have anticipated. Baille argues, "Smith's narrator visits a former slave port where she fails to achieve any epiphany of identity. Repurposed as a tourist site, the slave port is now a tawdry commercial attraction for African Americans, Australians, and Europeans, rather than any source of spiritual awakening" (Baillie 300). When the narrator recognizes her inability to use the historical site to reconcile her identity with her ancestors' past experiences, she turns to her experiences with the villagers to shed light on her identity instead.

Although the villagers treat the narrator kindly, she is notably confronted with her "otherness" before she even reaches the village itself. While on the ferry ride to the village, the narrator witnesses her first display of organic group dancing. She is entranced by the sounds of the drums, the movements of the dancers' bodies, and the total submission to the rhythm that occurs simultaneously among people from different villages; as they dance, the narrator becomes aware of her "otherness" in Africa for the first time, but she finds the "joy [she's] been looking for all [her] life" (Smith 164-165). It is as the narrator embraces the uninhibited joy expressed by those around her that she begins to recognize that the unraveling of her false identity has begun. When the narrator finally reaches the village with her guide, a Senegalese man named Lamin, she is immediately treated differently by both Lamin and the other village women. During her time in the village, the narrator shares a hut with Hawa, a young local woman, but she is not expected to help collect water or prepare meals; the locals even display shock that the narrator dances "like she is black" when she is "white" (Smith 177, 417). While it is clear to readers that the locals do not exclude the narrator from their daily chores out of malice, or purposefully seek to reject the narrator's blackness by referring to her only as white, it is a reminder that they see her as an outsider. Although the narrator's self-image does not explicitly change as a result of the villagers' behavior towards her, she does seem to reflect upon her ability to thrive in a nation that is less wealthy than the one she was raised in due to the diaspora.

It is not until the very end of the narrator's employment as Aimee's assistant that the final seam of her false identity is ripped away. It is no surprise that the narrator grows to respect the culture of the unnamed villagers after spending weeks at a time for several years living among them. When Aimee decides to plan an entire tour around the fashion, dance, and music of the village, the narrator voices the concern of cultural appropriation and is ignored (Smith 365-366). It is as the narrator observes the appropriation being

committed by Aimee that she also recognizes the appropriation that occurred in many of the films she adored as a child. Baillie expands upon this idea, writing that "[a]t the end of the novel, however, she recognizes that the history of such dance forms is also one of western appropriation and commodification" (Baillie 295). Before the narrator has had a chance to move past the offenses performed by Aimee, she takes her appropriation one step further– she adopts an infant girl from the village in secret (Smith 418-419). Upon discovery of what Aimee has done, she is forced to face the reality that her employer has essentially purchased an African child and brought her to another nation because it suited her needs; this undeniably draws parallels between the narrator's present and that of her ancestors', ultimately highlighting the very source of her lack of identity. In "Zadie Smith's Dance of Ambivalence," Dayna Tortorici observes that these very conflicts allow the narrator to make critical discoveries about "identity, dance, women's work, and cultural appropriation, and about two themes that have long been central to Smith's work: blackness, and the fantasy of pure and discernible roots" (Tortorici 33).

It is potentially Aimee's symbolic recreation of the diaspora for the infant that triggers the narrator's decision to begin having sex with Lamin– who is engaged to Aimee at this point– and her general acceptance of her lack of identity and sense of belonging at this stage. Predictably, Aimee finds out about the affair and fires the narrator; upon her firing, the narrator then chooses to anonymously reveal online that Aimee's new child was essentially purchased rather than the heart-felt adoption portrayed in the media (Smith 430, 434). Not only does the narrator metaphorically take something of Aimee's (Lamin), but she unconsciously pushes Aimee to fire her. After being fired, the narrator now has no excuse for Aimee to choose her romantic partners, where she sleeps, or even what she eats. Through sex with Lamin and revealing the purchase of the child online, the narrator rejects the false identity that she developed upon being hired as Aimee's assistant and has carried throughout much of her adulthood.

Conclusion

Smith's *Swing Time* repeatedly demonstrates the ups and downs faced by descendants of the African diaspora as they try to figure out who they are in the modern age. While Smith's narrator ultimately ends the story with no idea of who she is or what she will do next, it is her acceptance of her current lack of individual identity that allows her to move away from the false identities she had adopted in an attempt to find her place in the world. Readers can ultimately conclude that, were they unsure about their own sense of identity like the narrator, they still have the opportunity to discover who they are.

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Theory Without Flesh: Considering Han Kang's *The Vegetarian* in the Context of Several Critical Scholars

Perrin Swanmoore

The following essay applies the work of a series of scholars—David Hume, Edward Said, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Louis Althusser, and Judith Butler—to *The Vegetarian* (2007), by Han Kang.[1] In the first portion of this paper, I lean on these scholars to consider whether I (a student distanced from Han by continents and language) should attempt to critically assess *The Vegetarian* at all, ultimately concluding that such engagement is both acceptable and (in regards to its English translation) intended. In the second portion of the paper, I consider the performative avenues of transformation and the superstructural modes of system reproduction present in *The Vegetarian*. In doing so, I hope to highlight the ways in which Han shows that resistance, difficult and violent as it may be, still provides the possibility for change.

Part I: Criticism in the Context of Audience, Orientalism, and Globalism

Arguments for analytic caution can be found in one oft-valorized wellspring of Western thought, the philosophers of the Enlightenment—herein narrowly considered through one of its contributors, the Scottish empiricist and skeptic David Hume. In the *Norton Anthology*'s selection from his essay, "Of the Standard of Taste," Hume argues "that every work of art, in order to produce its due effect on the mind, must be surveyed in a certain point of view, and cannot be fully relished by persons, whose situation, real or imaginary, is not conformable to that which is required by the performance" (418). This point of view is necessitated because, according to Hume, "An orator addresses himself to a particular audience" (418), molding his work to the particular qualities of that audience in order to affect them effectively. Because that particular audience exists only in a particular time and place, a foreign critic "must have all these circumstances in his eye, and must place himself in the same situation as the audience, in order to form a true judgment of the oration"

1 Throughout this paper, in-text citations with the attribution "Han" come from *The Vegetarian*. All other citations refer to the *Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*.

(418). The critic who fails to align himself with the text's particular audience, Hume argues, "rashly condemns what seemed admirable in the eyes of those for whom alone the discourse was calculated" (419). Within the framework provided by Hume, it is certainly reasonable to observe that Han Kang—having been born, raised, and educated in South Korea, having written *The Vegetarian* in Korean, and having published *The Vegetarian* originally in South Korea—likely produced *The Vegetarian* addressing herself to a South Korean audience. Within the framework provided by Hume, such an observation could lead to the conclusion that a critic of *The Vegetarian* must understand the circumstances of Han's South Korean audience and place themselves in the same situation in order to shape a true analysis of the text. Within the framework provided by Hume, failure to do so might result in an analysis which "departs from the true standard, and of consequence loses all credit and authority" (419). What is clear to me through the framework of Hume, is that the non-Korean critic must approach analysis of *The Vegetarian* with care and mindfulness. At the same time, I would like to push further on two points of Hume's prescription: first, the analysis of historic texts, and second, the question of Han's intended audience for *The Vegetarian*.

Later in his essay, Hume elaborates on his prescription against prejudice in criticism, more boldly binding the challenges of criticism across borders to criticism across time. Hume argues that "comedy is not easily transferred from one age or nation to another" (422), using the case of the relatively contemporary work of Machiavelli alongside the ancient work of Terence to display how both time and distance can alienate a new audience from a text. In this context, Hume argues, "a common audience can never divest themselves so far of their usual ideas and sentiments, as to relish pictures which no wise resemble them" (422), while "A man of learning and reflection can make allowance for these peculiarities of manners" (422). Even so, Hume argues, "It is not without some effort, that we reconcile ourselves to the simplicity of ancient manners, and behold princesses carrying water from the spring, and kings and heroes dressing their own victuals" (422). Whatever Hume's conception of *men of learning and reflection* may have been, I would posit that those of us engaged in the Humanities in modern American universities, at the very least, aspire to become persons of learning and reflection. The entwined nature of alienation across space and time in Hume's framework demands, in my view, that we consider the question of analyzing *The Vegetarian* in the context of our analysis of historic English literature.

Modern American participants in the discipline of English literary criticism are born in contexts deeply alien to those of the intended audiences of our historic canon. Our lived experiences are deeply different from the

lived experiences of Shakespeare's audiences or Chaucer's, to say nothing of the original audiences for the likes of *Beowulf*. Even the authors of modernist literature wrote for audiences increasingly alien to us, as generation after generation grows more and more separate from the context of the Great War. Yet our discipline encourages us to produce criticism of the likes of Shakespeare, often mandates such works as the subjects of some of the earliest analytical essays we write. In many ways, the act of textual analysis itself becomes an essential method through which we strive toward the unprejudiced criticism prescribed by Hume. If, as Hume suggests, the alienation of time is equivalent to the alienation of space, it seems to follow that we should apply similar approaches to achieving *true judgment* in both cases. Still lingering is the question of Han's intended audience—for now, I will put that aside and turn instead to a second theoretical framework, introduced in the work of one Edward Said.

The *Norton Anthology*'s selection from Said's *Orientalism*, with its analysis and critique of Occidental depictions of the East, presents another theoretical framework of caution. In discussing the presence of politics in the scholarship of the humanities, Said asserts the following:

> No one has ever devised a method for detaching the scholar from the circumstances of life, from the fact of his involvement (conscious or unconscious) with a class, a set of beliefs, a social position, or from the mere activity of being a member of a society. These continue to bear on what he does professionally, even though naturally enough his research and its fruits do attempt to reach a level of relative freedom from the inhibitions and restrictions of brute, everyday reality. (1790-1)

Should we accept this observation as accurate (I certainly find it quite compelling), it provides in isolation an additional layer to Hume's theoretical framework—namely, that Hume's prescription for criticism free of prejudice is impossible, given the inseparability of scholar and circumstance. In the larger context of *Orientalism*, Said utilizes this observation for a more specific assessment within the context of his own theory, arguing that accepting his prior assertion indicates that "it must also be true that for a European or American studying the Orient there can be no disclaiming the main circumstances of *his* actuality: that he comes up against the Orient as a European or American first, as an individual second" (1792). Such an actuality is unavoidable in the translation work of a British academic like Deborah Smith and in the analytical work of an American student like myself. If critical analysis is to continue forward, the American critic must do so with the knowledge "that one belongs to a power with definite interests in the Orient, and more important, that one belongs to a part of the earth with a definite history of involvement in the Orient

almost since the time of Homer" (1792). In Said's theoretical framework, it is again clear that analysis of *The Vegetarian* must be conducted cautiously and mindfully. At the same time, it would be a mistake to conclude from Said's framework that analysis of *The Vegetarian* ought to be avoided entirely.

However good the intentions may be, however humble the motivation, the decision to exclude the likes of *The Vegetarian* from our analytical practice would be, in itself, an act of Orientalist thought. In building his definition of Orientalism, Said describes the term as "a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident'" (1785). Such a style of thought would certainly be embodied in a discipline in which the principles of Hume are upheld in the exclusion of modern East Asian texts, while at the same time denying the principles of Hume for the analysis of early modern English texts. Such a discipline would have accepted *de facto* "the basic distinction between East and West" (1785) as the starting point for its own theoretical tradition, literary canon, and sociopolitical conception. Perhaps this style of thought has been prominent in the English discipline, but we should view its persistence skeptically if we take Said's criticism seriously—as we should if we accept the theoretical frameworks of two historical materialists, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.

In the *Norton Anthology*'s selection from Marx and Engels' "*Bourgeois and Proletarians*", the pair of socialists argue that the development of the bourgeoisie into a global class produced a parallel development in the arts.[2] According to the pair, the "need of a constantly expanding market" (663) necessitates that the bourgeois "must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connexions everywhere" (663). The result of this nestling, settling, and connection is the supplantation of "old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency" (664) by "intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations" (664). In this globalized context, Hume's model of particular spatial audiences is destabilized, as Marx and Engels assert that "National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature" (664). In the capitalist age, the arts and markets alike have experienced an unprecedented cultural commingling—a commingling that consideration shows to be at work in *The Vegetarian* as well.

Considering the context around Han Kang's novel clearly positions it within world literature. Originally written in Korean and published in South Korea, Deborah Smith's English translation and its publication by

2 My interpretation of the Marxist history of global literature, presented here, is adapted from my thought paper on the *Communist Manifesto*, "Considering Communism and Criticism".

Penguin Random House and Portobello Books (in New York and London, respectively) comprise an active business partnership with Han, a still-living writer who continues to work with Smith as a translator beyond *The Vegetarian* (see for example *Human Acts*, excerpted at the end of the 2018 edition of *The Vegetarian*). The 2018 English edition is heavily marked by its international context; Han's biography notes her participation in the Iowa Writers' Workshop alongside her work in Korea (Han 200), the novel's cover matter highlights its performance in *The New York Times* 2016 Book Review, and its back-cover blurb describes the novel as a "Kafkaesque tale", connecting Han to a legacy of internationally translated literature. In this context, the hesitation derived from Hume is further destabilized, as Han's participation in the effort to translate and publish her novel for international English-speaking markets suggests, in fact, that we too are a part of *The Vegetarian*'s particular audience. It is in that context, alongside two additional critical frameworks, that I will now turn to an analysis of the text of *The Vegetarian* itself.

Part II: Upholding and Resisting Ideology in *The Vegetarian*

In bringing to bear Marxist theory as grounds for analyzing *The Vegetarian*, it becomes necessary to bring to bear Marxist theory as a tool of that analysis—for if we understand *The Vegetarian* to exist in a world literature produced by the bourgeois drive to globalize, we must also understand that *The Vegetarian* has been written in a society defined by class struggle, in the dominant era of the capitalist class. In this light, I here read *The Vegetarian* for its representation of struggle, focusing primarily on struggle at the superstructural level, which Engels described as exercising its "influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their *form*" (679). In conducting this reading of Han's text, I will be partially reliant on the expanded superstructural discourse provided by Louis Althusser in the *Norton Anthology*'s selection from "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses".

In its depiction of Yeong-hye's relationship to and struggle with various members of her family, *The Vegetarian* provides an exploration of an ideological state apparatus left underdeveloped by Althusser—the family ideological apparatus—, thus exemplifying core components of Althusser's ISA model. In building out his superstructural model, Althusser notes "that the reproduction of labour power requires…a reproduction of its submission to the rules of the established order" (1287). With a focus on the educational ideological apparatus, Althusser notes how this reproduction appears in the school system, describing how students "learn the 'rules of good behaviour,

i.e. the attitude that should be observed by every agent in the division of labour, according to the job he is 'destined' for…rules of respect for the socio-technical division of labour and ultimately the rules of order established by class domination" (1287). In *The Vegetarian*, Han depicts the family unit as similarly responsible for the reproduction of submission. In describing his wife's historic character, Mr. Cheong links Yeong-hye's status as a "completely ordinary wife" (Han 10) who consistently provided domestic labor with her adolescence, in which "she'd contributed to her family's income through the odd bit of part-time work" (Han 10). Her pre-vegetarian love for meat, characterized among other things by a "signature dish" of "wafer-thin slices of beef…dipped in bubbling shabu-shabu broth" (Han 20) is also strongly linked to her upbringing in a family which Mr. Cheong links sensorily to "the smell of sizzling meat" (Han 24). Diet is so heavily tied to familial values, that Yeong-hye's vegetarian divergence causes her mother to ask, "How can that child be so defiant?" (Han 32). When the subject diverges from the rules of order, Althusser states that "the Ideological State Apparatuses function massively and predominantly by *ideology*" (1292) in their efforts to correct that divergence. Such functioning occurs early in *The Vegetarian*, after Cheong informs Yeong-hye's mother and sister, In-hye, of Yeong-hye's dietary shift. Initially, the family's corrective efforts are primarily rhetorical and ideological, with Yeong-hye's father first making pleas to normative expectations of adult behavior and patriarchal norms of wifely submission (Han 34). Later, a family gathering serves as a focal point for familial pressure to correct Yeong-hye's divergence, as her sister's softer appeals to eat flesh (Han 43) are paired with a paternal demand to "Listen to what your father's telling you and eat" (Han 44) and a maternal appeal "you'd ignore your own mother's [wish]?" (Han 52). Notably, Althusser characterizes the ISAs as "a *plurality*" (1291), stating, "presupposing that it exists, the unity that constitutes this plurality of ISAs as a body is not immediately visible" (1291). Within *The Vegetarian*'s family unit, we see that facile disunity in the behavior of individual members of Yeong-hye's family.

As Yeong-hye's parents' efforts to correct her escalate, Cheong describes "In-hye's anxiously raised eyebrows; her husband's affected attitude of being no more than a casual bystander; the passive but seemingly displeased expressions of Yeong-ho and his wife" (Han 42). In posture, Yeong-hye's family is emotionally divided regarding the effort to correct her. Yet, Althusser argues that the plurality present in ISAs is unified by their ideological nature, "insofar as the ideology by which they function is always in fact unified, despite its diversity and its contradictions, *beneath the ruling ideology*, which is the ideology of 'the ruling class'" (1292). In *The Vegetarian*, despite facile disunity, no portion of the family unit attempts to subvert the effort to correct Yeong-hye's divergence

from the rules of order. As Yeong-hye's father shifts to attempted force-feeding, Cheong describes her brother "apparently wanting to dissuade him, though he himself didn't release his grip on my wife" (Han 45). In-hye's husband "had sat through the whole thing as an idle spectator" (Han 46) until Yeong-hye's father had completed his effort and Yeong-hye slit her wrists. Even In-hye herself, who most prominently represented the appearance of disunity with her exclamation, "Father, I beg you, stop this" (Han 45), goes on to mitigate her father's actions by shifting the blame to Yeong-hye, stating "Yeong-hye refused to say a single word to him, so he was bound to get upset, you know—I mean, she is his daughter…" (Han 49). Where the ISAs are inadequate to correct a subject's divergence from the rules of order, Althusser notes that their partner in the superstructural system, the State apparatus, "intervenes directly as a supplementary repressive force in the last instance" (1289). Such interventions are depicted multiple times in *The Vegetarian*. The repressive State apparatus first appears at the end of Part 1, as Yeong-hye's diverging behavior spills out of her family unit into a public space, and Cheong notes the approach of "a male nurse and a middle-aged guard" (Han 57). In Part 2, this event is revealed to have resulted in Yeong-hye spending time in a psychiatric hospital "where she'd spent several months" (Han 74) confined to "a closed ward" (Han 89). In the next appearance of the repressive State apparatus, In-hye calls emergency services after discovering her husband and In-hye have slept with one another (Han 122-3), a decision which ultimately builds to the violent force-feeding depicted in Part 3 (Han 176-9). In this reading, I have discussed extensively the ways in which Han's text exemplifies the theoretical framework presented by Althusser. Critically, *The Vegetarian* also provides important complications to the superstructural model as Althusser conceives it.

In Han's depiction of the family ideological apparatus, *The Vegetarian* complicates Althusser's superstructural division by highlighting the role of repressive power and violence within the context of the family unit. While Althusser recognizes that "There is no such thing as a purely ideological apparatus" (1292), he nevertheless emphasizes that repression is secondary, and characterizes repressive force in the ISAs as "very attenuated and concealed, even symbolic" (1292). Yet in *The Vegetarian*, the family unit's use of repressive, violent force in the effort to correct Yeong-hye's divergence from the rules of order (as well as in the original reproduction of submission) is repeated and dramatic. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, Yeong-hye's father shifts to repressive violence when his rhetorical pleas are ineffective, and Cheong narrates that Yeong-hye's father struck her (Han 44) before he "mashed the pork to a pulp on my wife's lips as she struggled in agony" (Han 45), a violent act he commits with the assistance of Yeong-hye's brother, who "seized her and sat her

down" (Han 45) to facilitate his father's actions. Violent repression is depicted as a regular tool of Yeong-hye's familial upbringing, as Cheong first notes being told that Yeong-hye's father "had whipped her over her calves until she was eighteen years old" (Han 35), and later portions of the novel confirm, "As small children, [Yeong-hye and In-hye's] young cheeks were frequently left throbbing by their heavy-handed father" (Han 133). This complication of Althusser's model need not nullify his analysis. Even as the lines between ideological and repressive methodology are blurred, key distinctive traits remain: the ISAs continue to function as reproducers of submission, continue to be characterized by plurality—and essentially, continue to "be not only the *stake*, but also the *site* of class struggle, and often bitter forms of class struggle" (1293). The fact that violence might take a substantive role in those bitter forms does not change the reality that "the resistance of the exploited classes is able to find means and occasions to express itself there, either by the utilization of their contradictions, or by conquering combat positions in them in struggle" (1293). Han's blurring of the lines between ideological and repressive forces provide an uncomfortable, but necessary understanding of the potential risks of struggle. We ought to grapple with those risks, even as we consider the possibilities presented in Yeong-hye's personal struggle.

As violent and repressive as Yeong-hye's story might be, her narrative also provides a model of individuality and individual struggle reminiscent of theoretical frameworks established in the *Norton Anthology*'s selection from Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*. In building their conception of performative identity, Butler asserts that "The soul is precisely what the body lacks; hence, the body presents itself as a signifying lack. That lack which *is* the body signifies the soul as that which cannot show" (2383). Considering *The Vegetarian* in light of Butler, it becomes impossible to avoid the lack of depicted interiority in Yeong-hye—Yeong-hye never definitively narrates her story.[3] Other characters repeatedly describe a sense of interior absence in Yeong-hye, with descriptors like her "blank glaze" (Han 49), her "empty eyes" (Han 94), and her "impassive features" (Han 85) used throughout the novel. Keyed into Butler's argument for the absence of interiority, *The Vegetarian* further evokes the *Gender Trouble* through Yeong-hye's interactions with her brother-in-law, where "the effect of an internal core or substance" (2384) is literally "manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs" (2384) when her demeanor is transformed by the painted flowers of In-hye's husband (Han 90, 111-2, 119-20).

3 Several dream sequences in the novel could be attributed to Yeong-hye, but this is never made explicit.

If one accepts the Butlerian evocations in *The Vegetarian*, her building consumptive abstinence can be interpreted as a form of individual resistance to intolerable forms of subjectification. Having established identity as performative, Butler argues that such performances must be repeated, in forms that are "at once a reenactment and reexperiencing of a set of meanings already socially established" (2387). Because performance must be repeated to maintain coherence, Butler argues that there is transformative potential present "in the possibility of failure to repeat, a de-formity…that exposes the phantasmic effect of abiding identity as a politically tenuous construction" (2388). In breaking with her familial love of meat, Yeong-hye also breaks her own performance of submission, going from a woman who "was always so submissive" (Han 75) to a woman engaged in "nothing but sheer obstinacy" (Han 20) in a *de-formation* so transformative it is eventually described as "trying to shuck off the human" (Han 182). I have already discussed the violent risks of such transformative acts in relation to the Althusserian superstructural model—*The Vegetarian* in no way underplays the violent risks of performative disruption. But Han's novel also suggests the possibility of something constructive in the violence of transformative performance—in the final part of *The Vegetarian*, In-hye is shown to share in some of Yeong-hye's dreams (Han 131, 152, 185) and to share Yeong-hye's chest pain (Han 168). Reflecting on Yeong-hye's deterioration and her husband's infidelity, the narration states, "If her husband and Yeong-hye hadn't smashed through all the boundaries, if everything hadn't splintered apart, then perhaps she was the one who would have broken down" (Han 184). In the final moments of the novel, driving toward blazing trees, Han does not provide any conclusive thesis—only lingering questions, and lingering possibilities.

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Undergraduate Essays

Time of Transition

Lisa Acosta-Alvarado

In Leslie Silko's novel *Ceremony* (1977), trauma is addressed through stories, addictions, and the ceremonies themselves. The character of Tayo, a war veteran and Native American mixed race with white, struggles to face the horrors of death that have been haunting him. From the loss of his mother as a young child to the mass killing of men in battle, Tayo is reminded of the pain by sounds, even smells, that cause physical reactions of rejection to the hurt. As a female writer Silko weaves the women in Tayo's life through memories and draws connections to his own development through their stories. Trauma is linked to alcohol addictions that not only drown the pain of the people but work against any real healing. It is through the ceremony that Tayo makes his transition and comes home. The novel begins with a story of the "immemorial time" and follows with a warning, "You don't have anything if you don't have the stories" (2). Through the stories Tayo can come to a place of peace and understanding of connection and love.

Tayo is growing up in a time of transition, the mixing of people and land as well as the revolution of industry in commerce and in warfare. Education in schools that rely on reason are erasing the traditions linked to the stories of the land. Tayo is aware of the environment and its reliance on every creature as he recalls creation stories taught at home through his Old Grandma and Uncle Josiah. The stories stay with him and while he struggles to accept them as truths because of what he is being taught in school, he still holds on to the feeling he is gripped with on hearing the stories. He connects a feeling of faith to these stories of the immemorial, and it is because of this he sees the web of connection to the world as a whole living entity. The killing of people across the world would become no different than the killing of his own loved ones at home. It is through the stories that he hangs on to the feeling of love, first from his mother and eventually his lover, to move away from the murder of his friends and family members amid their betrayal and the killing of himself as he struggles with depression in the form of PTSD leading to the abuse of alcohol and slow death of the body and mind.

Tayo recalls his introduction to alcohol as a kid, the secrecy of hidden bottles that his childhood friends pass to each other from an old man's buried

stash, possibly during a time of Prohibition. Fast forward to his return home from the Battle of Bataan (Death March), now a strip of bars borders the entrance to the reservation, a watering hole for despair where the vets and those in the community escape their plight. Here people become lost from the pain of the past and the hopeless reckoning of the future. Tayo becomes violent in the bar by the rattling of teeth in a jar a fellow veteran Emo has brought home as a trophy of his time in battle. This sound links Tayo back to the violence, and he begins to recognize the disconnect of the destroyer of life. Greater than the substance abuse is the addiction to power that falls over everyone in their witchery and in the white man, as territory is sectioned off and blown apart by the testing of nuclear weapons nearby. The raping of the planet for resources mirrors the pain in the story of his own mother, of which he is the product. Tayo physically rejects this trauma in the form of vomit and continues to follow the storyline of the ceremony in order to set his world back into a place of peace, for the time being.

Through the work of a medicine man, he undergoes what would these days be a counseling session. Here he can explain what he has been feeling and be assigned work to complete his transition back home. It is through the stories of the time immemorial that the medicine man can help Tayo out of the mindset of "everyman for himself" or "white man as the enemy" to an understanding that there will always be thieves and destroyers; it is up to the individual not to fall to their trickery and deception as Emo has, trying to derive power by their taking. Tayo sees killing as a type of fool's gold, and he stops himself from continuing the bloodshed by refusing to kill Emo when he has the chance and feels the threat. In the end, he comes full circle to see that what goes around comes around and so long as he can come from a place of love, love for life, even one's own enemy brings him to change and eventually recovery. This transition is met with the recognition of life as fragile and interconnected as well as infinite among the universe, full of grand and miraculous happenings.

The trauma of a childhood beginning with the loss of his mother builds Tayo's connections to what memories he has left. The rattling of a tin roof or the smell of bleach connects him to the memory of her and to the pain of loss. Tayo is not only given a separate storyline within the story, but there is a divide in his home between those who still believe in the ceremonies and storytelling of the land and their people versus those like Auntie and Rocky, who have let go and given in to scientific reason. In what seems to be new modern times, the new spirituality of religion as Catholicism also carves its place within the community. Stories are replaced with facts and studies while traditions are fading in the rituals of religion. Ironically, the teachings of God's people to save oneself allows those within the church to judge those on the outside. These

people become disconnected with respect for the natural world as well as for the people, and therefore themselves. Tayo recognizes that these new ways and ideas cause others to view the world as a dead thing they can conquer, use, and destroy to their liking and therefore believe they have control over. Whether it is in the women they use or the land they wrap in metal wires, these destroyers cannot see either their own destruction or the destruction of their survival in the process.

Holding on to the stories Tayo tries to reconnect to the rituals of the past that pay respect to the living creatures and life all around him. This feeling of connection to "time immemorial" is what brings him to the other side, outside of the darkness and into the light of the "Sunrise": the voice of a new day and a new beginning with the infinite power of the universe that requires evolution and change. The medicine man Tayo sees for healing explains how this change is inevitable and therefore requires the changing of the ceremonies. Resisting change by only seeing things in black and white furthers the disconnection from the ever-evolving natural world and the people. The character of Rocky falls in line with the white American dream of a football scholarship as the economic means to becoming "something to be proud of" and the importance of forging a reputation becomes Auntie's obsession. After witnessing Rocky's death in battle, Tayo is left with trauma in the form of survivor's guilt and his shame builds for not bringing Rocky home, as he proposed and prayed for. Tayo's mixed heritage is a feature that the community recognizes with shame and in their fears rejects, even in his family under the care of Auntie. She deals with the trauma of her own loss and rejection by inflicting a passive aggressive attitude towards Tayo even as a child and through his adulthood. Tayo senses the aggression just as he's eventually able to sense the feeling of the unconditional love of his mother, Grandma, Josiah, "brother" Rocky, and the Montana woman, while the pain in the destruction of land and the people ripples and is felt by all.

Ultimately the trauma is met with love and because of this love works as a heartbeat of the universe. Silko changes the binaries of the past/present and black/white into a position akin to the ever-revolving sun and constant as the day. A gift and a chance with each rising to hold on to what is left by respecting what's been given through the memory of the story because it is the strength of the past that guides the way to a new future.

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A Queer-Psychoanalytic Analysis of *Hamlet*

Dominic Ayala

In the more than four hundred years since William Shakespeare created his tragic play *Hamlet*, titled after its main character, the young prince Hamlet and the play have both been read, viewed, analyzed, and interpreted countless times. In the study of English literature and the application of literary theory, *Hamlet* has been viewed through nearly every theoretical lens. This essay will continue that trend but with a blended approach that fuses queer theory and psychoanalytic theory. Scrutinizing the character Hamlet within the outlook of queer-Freudian-psychoanalytic criticism, it can be argued that *Hamlet* depicts a troubled young man experiencing a homosexual Oedipus complex.

Before it can be argued that Hamlet is in the throes of a homosexual complex, it must first be established that he is indeed queer. In his paper "Revenge Most Queer: Hamlet and Vengeance," Michael Anthony DiBattista conducts a queer reading of *Hamlet* that argues that Hamlet is a queer player and that his quest for revenge is what primarily constitutes his queerness. The bulk of DiBattista's argument is centered on Hamlet's repudiation of heterosexual reproductive futurism, that is to reproduce the family and society through sex (DiBattista 2-3). He cites Hamlet's repulsion of Claudius and his mother Gertrude's marriage, his spurning of Ophelia, and his revenge quest to kill Claudius as acts of rebellion against the heterosexual reproductive futurism system; those actions can be said to demonstrate his disgust at producing more heirs, and his own refusal to partake in that system, as well as an outright aim to end it (DiBattista 9-11, 19). Hamlet's queerness is further expounded by DiBattista in his conclusions that some of Shakespeare's other works that deal with revenge closely associate vengeance with sexual deviancy (DiBattista 7-8). Although Hamlet does not engage in any explicitly sexual acts in the play, DiBattista posits that Hamlet exhibits sexually deviant behavior, but through negation. It is precisely Hamlet's disregard of sex and reproduction that is deviant and, by extension, queer. It is crucial at this point to know that DiBattista is arguing Hamlet's queerness through the understanding of a queer figure "as one that works counter to the heteronormative and in doing so, subverts heterocentric societal constructs, thus deconstructing the society in which he lives- dismantling the essence of the state" (DiBattista 1). DiBattista

does not go so far as to assert that Hamlet is homosexual. This essay accepts DiBattista's argument that Hamlet is a queer figure for seeking revenge and opposing heterosexual reproductive futurism, but it will go even further to prove that Hamlet is indeed homosexual. Furthermore, it will advance the tenet of queer theory that seeks to "foreground homosexual aspects of mainstream literature which have previously been glossed over" (Barry 127).

Before Hamlet can be uncloseted, an understanding of the homosexual Oedipus complex is necessitated. Founder of the field of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, originated the Oedipus complex which holds that men rival their fathers for the love of their mothers. This understanding of the Oedipus complex is obviously incongruous with analyzing a homosexual man and requires an amendment. Scott J. Goldsmith, in his paper "Oedipus or Orestes? Homosexual Men, Their Mothers, and Other Women Revisited," provides a model to psychoanalyze father-son and mother-son relationship dynamics in keeping with the overall concept of the Oedipus complex. Goldsmith argues that an Oedipal stage does exist in homosexual boys and that "not only is his father the boy's primary love object, but his mother becomes the chief rival for the father's affection." This requires the homosexual boy "master both his anger and aggression toward his mother and his fear of reprisal from her," which should concur with "the development of fantasies of a dyadic love relationship with the father" (1273). This results in the inverse of the Oedipus complex. Goldsmith expands on this model by explaining how heterosexual boys and girls are encouraged to enact Oedipal affection and aggression through play with their same and opposite-sex parents, while homosexual boys are denied that sort of play by fathers who do not mirror the Oedipal affection their son might unconsciously be seeking and instead act competitively or withdrawn (1275). Next, Goldsmith writes that homosexual boys take an adversarial stance against their mothers for their father's affection, while their mothers are expecting the typical Oedipal affections of their sons who are rivaling and entertaining hostility against them, which can cause them to view their mothers as "malignant, seductive, intrusive, or over-aggressive" (1275). The dissonance between the homosexual Oedipus complex a boy will attempt to play out and the heterosexual Oedipus complex that each of his parents is expecting to play out can result in him being distant from and unaffectionate towards both parents, having low self-esteem, and feeling the need to hide his homosexuality (1275). From that, Goldsmith establishes the status of gay men as "double agent[s]" who feel the need to outwardly perform the behavior of the heterosexual Oedipus complex to avoid exposing their homosexuality while desiring the inverse (1276). Furthermore, these men can act as double agents by having superficially close relationships with their mothers and competitive relationships

with their fathers while redirecting their Oedipal aggressions towards their female peers and their affections onto their male peers (Goldsmith 1278-1279). Applying these results from a psychoanalytic review of the Oedipus complex within homosexual males to Hamlet will indicate the occurrence of classical psychoanalytic symptoms and conditions in keeping with Freudian psychoanalytic criticism (Barry 94).

Now with an understanding of Hamlet as a queer figure and a psychoanalytic framework to further explore Hamlet's sexuality, a queer-Freudian-psychoanalytic analysis of Hamlet's relationship dynamics with his father figures, his mother Gertrude, and the unconscious homosexual Oedipus complex can be better understood. *Hamlet* begins *en media res* after King Hamlet has already been poisoned and Claudius has usurped his position, so the standing of Hamlet's relationship with his father King Hamlet is not so obvious. In the play's first act, Hamlet is seething, contentious with both his mother and Claudius while still mourning his father. He has not yet decided to seek revenge against them until he encounters the ghost of his father, who tells him of his murder at the hands of Claudius and impels Hamlet to avenge him. Hamlet agrees (Shakespeare 1209-1212) . Hamlet does appear to have fixed his Oedipal affection on his father since he is devoted to and convinced by his father's ghost to commit regicide for his honor. Yet, Hamlet infamously delays his revenge. His constant delay can be interpreted as what Goldsmith called a "double agent." His love for his father drives his need for revenge, but his intent to conceal the affection he feels for his father causes him to delay his vengeance and distance himself from appearing to care. Hamlet is torn between honoring his beloved father and acting out the heterosexual Oedipus complex by treating King Hamlet as one less competitor for his mother's love that should not be honored. This can be compared to the diametrically opposed reaction of the heterosexual Laertes who, upon learning of his father Polonius' murder, immediately seeks to fulfill the tradition of avenging his father's murder without fail or delay (Shakespeare 1259 ; DiBattista 6). Separately, Claudius is blatantly regarded by Hamlet with disgust and aggression. Hamlet's hostility towards Claudius and his disgust at his marriage to Gertrude seemingly fit the model of the heterosexual Oedipus complex, but once again can be recontextualized through Goldsmith's idea of the double agent. Hamlet's obsession with the sex life of Gertrude and Claudius stems in part from his revolt against sexual reproduction and his jealousy (DiBattista 9-10). Although his father has been killed, Hamlet still desires a father figure to dote on; he wants to play a part "in the rank sweat of an enseamèd bed" with Claudius (Shakespeare 3.4.104). But Gertrude is his competitor, who has snatched his desired place, hence the Oedipal aggression towards her increases as the play continues. Yet Hamlet's

desire for an Oedipal relationship with Claudius as a substitute for his father is desirable, but not accepted. Claudius stays distant from Hamlet, preoccupying himself with his leadership responsibilities and the hostilities coming from abroad.

Moreover, Hamlet's homosexual Oedipus complex involves more than his parental figures; it extends to his peers. To reiterate, the aggressions and affections of the homosexual Oedipus complex can be displaced from the parents to the queer man's relationships with his male and female peers; this can be seen in Hamlet's feelings toward Ophelia and Laertes (Goldsmith 1279). In the famous scene in which Hamlet rejects Ophelia in the most transparently harsh terms possible, he tells her to "Get thee to a nunnery!" which expresses his animosity towards heterosexuality and also is his unconscious wish for his mother (Shakespeare 3.1.131). Hamlet entertained the idea of courting Ophelia, not out of any genuine affection for her, but out of his actions as a double agent, seeking to conceal his homosexuality. His desexualization of Ophelia is partly the result of his redirected aggression since he unconsciously wants Gertrude to be desexualized so that he can be with Claudius. Hamlet's rejection of Ophelia as a sexual interest also stems from the fact that he is genuinely not attracted to women. Ophelia was merely caught in the crossfire of Hamlet's homosexual Oedipus complex.

Conversely, Hamlet is unable to express his affection for either his father or Claudius and instead redirects it toward Laertes, his heterosexual foil. In his analysis of Hamlet's queerness, DiBattista points out the phallic nature of the rapiers used in Laertes and Hamlet's duel in the final scene of the play and highlights the duel itself as a queer act, but he does not mention a previous scene in which Laertes' rapier is noteworthy (DiBattista 20-21). When Claudius provides Laertes with a plan to kill Hamlet, Claudius mentions Hamlet's jealousy of Laertes's skill with a sword (Shakespeare 1265). Continuing to see the sword as a phallic symbol, it would appear that Hamlet was at that point redirecting his Oedipal affections toward Laertes. Concluding the phallic interpretation of the sword, it could be said that Hamlet did unfortunately get to express his Oedipal affections.

Interpreting William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* through a queer-Freudian-psychoanalytic lens elucidates Hamlet's struggle with a homosexual Oedipus complex. Hamlet's queerness causes his disgust with the heterosexual reproductive system, but it is his homosexual Oedipus complex that compels him to revolt against it. He craves the love of the father figures in his life and retaliates against both when they are unreachable or when his Oedipal desires risk breaching consciousness and being visible. Hamlet unconsciously recognizes the women that he loves to be his competition for male affection, so

he seeks to desexualize them to take their place. The complexity and turmoil that Hamlet grapples with results in his Oedipal affection and aggression being redirected in ways that conceal his true homosexual Oedipus complex but make clear his detestation of heterosexuality.

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When Black Boys Look Blue: An Intersectional Analysis of Chiron in *Moonlight*

Jane Chung

In 2016, director Barry Jenkins took a manuscript for a play called *In Moonlight, Black Boys Look Blue*, written by Tarell Alven McCraney, and converted it into a film. The significance of McCraney's involvement in the writing process of film production of his play is critical, as it serves as a semi-autobiography of his own life, which brings raw authenticity to every aspect of the film. His personal experience comprised the intersectional trifecta of a poor, black, homosexual man, providing the film with provocative layers added to its striking visual storytelling. In *Moonlight*, Jenkins provides a three-part visual narrative about the life of Chiron, an African American boy growing up in urban Miami who struggles with understanding his community, masculinity, and homosexuality. With each part highlighting Chiron's critical moments in boyhood, adolescence, and adulthood, *Moonlight* provides profoundly critical characters that pointedly influence the trajectory of his path to self-identity, revealing a compelling truth on the struggles of social, racial, and sexual oppression and discrimination through the lens of intersectionality.

Moonlight revolves around Chiron's journey in search for self-identity as a black homosexual man. At the very foundation of his intersectional challenges, Chiron must first learn to navigate the struggles of being a black male minority member in an economically disadvantageous area of Miami. Although general racial disparities and tropes are not openly stressed in the film, they are implied by the setting of the poor and drug-ridden neighborhood of Liberty City, which seems to have a mostly black population. The importance of the setting to the growth of Chiron lies within the characteristics of his local community that lack in quality education, much-needed resources, and social progression, providing no assistance, guidance, or peers for the entirety of Chiron's disparities. According to an article focusing on the issues of poverty and drug abuse in African American communities, statistical evidence and literature show that the cycle of both poverty and drug addiction is "trans-generational," mostly in inner-city neighborhoods in "severely distressed conditions" due to the

history of racial segregation, oppression, and the introduction of crack cocaine, making it extremely difficult to get out (Dunlap at al. 116-117). Unfortunately for Chiron, these circumstances affected his family situation, where his single mother fell into a hard crack cocaine addiction, making it difficult for him to find the proper love and support he needed to thrive. In fact, the severe oppression and lack of support for Chiron's needs causes him to assault a fellow student, which results in a stint in juvenile hall and getting involved with drug dealers. They provide Chiron with a job as a trapper when he is released. Chiron's identity as a drug dealer is an example of the unfortunately common cycle that confines many black boys in inner-city and "severely distressed" neighborhoods.

Other than overcoming racially fueled economic disparities among society, gender identity is another quality that causes a severe identity crisis, specifically in reference to black masculinity. In *Moonlight*, McCraney and Jenkins develop the character of Juan, who represents dual sides of the roles expected of masculine black men to his own community with one side being traditionally manly and the other side being a good father. In part one of the film entitled "Little," eight-year-old Chiron is chased by a gang of young bullies and gets rescued by Juan, the one man that will prove to have any constructive masculine influence on his life. The pressure for hegemonic masculinity is hard enough with expectations of being the provider, the protector, the ladies' man, and the model citizen. The expectations of masculinity for black males include all of the above, except that those expectations have "historically been prevented by racial disparities" (Young 447). Juan, however, seems to fulfill the quintessential example of what is expected of a black man. He is tall, well-built, and handsome, and seems to have a comfortable life with money, a car, a home, and a beautiful wife around an area that is economically deficient. And although Juan makes a living as a drug dealer, he still embodies the qualities of a good man with the ability to be intimidating and demanding when it comes to business. Juan's desirably masculine qualities leave a favorable impression on Chiron and, since his own father is absent, are used as the foundational guidebook on how to be a black man to the point that he himself embraces the job of dealing drugs in his early adulthood.

The other side of black masculinity that Juan embodies is the black father figure. The expectations of the father figure are also transcultural in providing, caring, informing, and being present for their families. But like black masculinity, the role of the father includes all of those qualities expected of all fathers, but for black fathers they are harder to achieve. According to a scholarly paper covering the black father and son relationship, black fathers typically have the added burden of unfair reputations, such as the "incarcerated," "deadbeat,"

or "abusive" dad, and the pressures to provide and be responsible for the success and safety of black youth are extremely prevalent, even for children that are not biologically their own (Jones 12-14). In *Moonlight*, Juan is kind, understanding, and devotedly fatherly towards Chiron. In addition, after he becomes aware of Chiron's possible sexuality, he continues to show him care, decency, and protection. He teaches Chiron how to swim and gives him fatherly advice. The father and son dynamic is so substantial to Chiron that after he confirms the drugs his mother uses are from Juan, he still seeks Juan's protection and views him as a positive influence on his life. Juan is a deeply complex, cinematic model for the expectations of black masculinity and showcases the absolute significance of the influence a black man has on a young black boy's tumultuous life, where an absence thereof could result in worse consequences than a mild-mannered and decently moral drug dealer.

Another identity crisis Chiron experiences is the intersection of race, gender, and sexuality. In "Little," young Chiron does not understand why he seems to be so different from the other boys or why he gets picked on so frequently. However, his mother Paula picks up on it instinctively. At one point in the film, she screams at him inaudibly (00:30:21-00:30:24), and it is not until Chiron asks Juan what the meaning of the word "faggot" is that we learn the discrimination Chiron faces by his own mother (00:33:31-00:33:35). The relationships between black mothers and their sons are also unique to their community. A journal article navigating the connection between African American men's lives and maternal sources of influence notes that literature on the distinctiveness of the black mother and son relationships is highly affected by historical and contemporary racism, sexism, and economic conditions. The guilt and fear of failing their sons to injustice, poverty, and social disparities result in aggressive but also extremely loyal and loving mothering that focuses on traditional masculinity. In turn, black sons also feel loyalty and obligation to their mothers in respect to supporting and respecting black women (Davis 4). Although Paula resents her son for lacking conventionally masculine traits and abuses him when under the influence of crack cocaine, she shows moments of vulnerability, love, and possessiveness for her son. In return, Chiron continues to show respect and maintains a loving relationship with his mother into adulthood while she is living in a sobriety home. The harrowing relationship that Chiron experiences with Paula in his early years is full of drug-fueled skirmishes and heart-breaking rejection, challenging Chiron's understanding of his masculinity, sexuality, and love for his mother.

Furthermore, Chiron's search for identity involving his masculinity and sexuality is even more harshly tested during the second part of the film entitled "Chiron." Since the beginning in "Little," boys from Chiron's school

had bullied and chased him, yelling slurs like "Get his faggot ass!" (00:02:25-00:03:00). By the time they are in high school, the boys' behaviors become more intense, and the audience experiences harsher forms of black masculinity. Unlike the desirable traits of conventional masculinity portrayed by the older Juan, Terrel depicts the aggressive version of masculinity commonly known as toxic masculinity. Toxic masculinity is a heightened expression of negative masculine behaviors, like fighting, sexism, and insensitivity. For black boys, toxic masculinity is motivated by an expectation to "express minimum 'signs' of weakness, vulnerability, and/or sensitivity," and any behaviors that do not show overt masculinity, such as aggression, drug use, and sexual degradation of women, are considered to be "gay" (Hines 1). Terrel is especially aggressive towards Chiron, consistently calling him slurs regarding his sexuality and picking fights with him. He instigates conflict, calling his mother a whore. Interestingly, Terrel's toxic masculinity is juxtaposed by his appearance with a hairless face, long hair, and soft facial features. The toxic masculinity, intense aggressive behaviors, and threats to penetrate Chiron to harm him are all masks that hide his possible fear of looking less masculine or even his own homosexuality. Regardless, Terrel's portrayal of hyper masculinity causes extreme distress and powerful inner conflict for Chiron, triggering his oppressed feelings and emotions to climax into his own bout of violence against Terrel that results in his arrest and sentence to juvenile hall.

One substantial character in Chiron's life, Kevin, also displays certain traits of toxic masculinity. It is confirmed in the film that Kevin's behavior is a cover for his sexuality, unlike Terrel, for whom only speculation exists. When looking at Chiron's struggle with his gender and sexual identity, there is definite confusion, resentment, and social withdrawal. Chiron's good friend Kevin appears as the complete opposite. As children in "Little," Kevin befriends Chiron and tries to help him stand up to his bullies. In "Chiron," Kevin seems to be the average teenage boy in his community—confident, masculine, overtly sexual with women, and also violent when he needs or wants to be. The closeness that Kevin feels with Chiron passes for brotherly friendship; however, after one fateful night spent in a sexual awakening with Kevin on the beach, it is more clear that there has always been a more potentially intimate relationship between them. It also reveals that those hyper masculine behaviors displayed by Kevin are a façade. Unlike Chiron, Kevin displayed the social intelligence and understanding to blend in with the other boys and portray himself the way society and the black community deemed properly masculine. Because we do not know Kevin's home life or background, it is difficult to determine how Kevin and Chiron navigated their own identities so differently. Regardless, Terrel successfully convinces Kevin to punch Chiron, and in a moment of

pressure to keep up appearances, Kevin begins the beatdown of Chiron that is followed by Terrel and his friends. This is the substantial moment, added up by years of social, sexual, and gender oppression, where his fellow students and close friend betray him, determining the type of man he ends up being in his early adulthood.

In the third and final part entitled "Black," Chiron is in his twenties and seems to have found a sense of identity influenced by everyone and everything he had experienced in his life thus far. He is physically muscular and emotionally hard and stoic. He is a drug dealer and has his own money, home, and car. He listens to gangster rap, bears a grill, and epitomizes the stereotype of a drug dealer. However, when he gets a surprising phone call from Kevin and goes to visit him, Kevin immediately calls out his false identity. Kevin blatantly says, "This ain't you, Chiron" (01:32:37-01:32:40), and Chiron explains that when he got to Atlanta, he "started over" (01:42:50-01:43:33), implying that the identities of "Little" and "Chiron" caused him too much turmoil, so he adopted more masculine traits. Chiron also reveals that no man had ever touched him but Kevin. This reveals that he continues to hide his sexuality, suggesting that Chiron has yet to find confidence in his true sexual identity. This final chapter in the film conveys closure between Chiron and Kevin, but it is not the end of Chiron's story, and the search to accept and embrace his true identity.

At the base of the story, the theme builds upon a black man's search for identity, which is then layered by experiences of economical, racial, sexual, and gender disparities. *Moonlight* instills a key lesson on this theme through the wise words of Juan. In "Little," Juan tells Chiron that an old woman once said to him, "In the moonlight, black boys look blue" (00:20:30-00:20:41), implying that black boys are far more complex than what society sees in them. Juan emphasizes this point by saying, "At some point, you gotta decide for yourself who you gonna be. Can't let nobody make that decision for you" (00:21:03-00:21:42). *Moonlight* conveys the message to own and be proud of your identity regardless of what society or those around you say or do to you. This inspiring film has exhibited the visually stunning story of Chiron that evokes deep, empathetic emotions for those searching for an identity while burdened by intersectional discrimination and oppression, all while leaving the viewers with the notion that black boys are not just black boys, but beautifully blue, complicated human beings under the moonlight.

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Sofi and Esperanza: Resisting the Patriarchy

Madeline Folsom

Women and their relationships have long eluded men, both in literature and in the real world. For centuries women existed almost entirely as accessories to their male family members (fathers, husbands, brothers, sons), and twentieth-century literature frequently perpetuated this idea, particularly literature from male authors. This made female characters and their relationships appear very one-dimensional, which represented the understanding of women as shallow side characters, even in their own lives. While female writers would challenge these ideas, the rise of the third-wave feminist movement in the early 1990s made room for more female authors, particularly female authors of color, to emerge and critique this societal understanding through their depiction of more complex female characters. Ana Castillo approaches her work *So Far from God* (1993) through this lens, and her novel about a mother and her four daughters presents multi-dimensional female characters and their intricate relationships while living in a male dominated world. Sofi and Esperanza are two characters who are frequently brushed aside by readers, critics, and even the other characters, but they present some of the strongest evidence of the intricacy of relationships and the value of women. Throughout the novel Sofi and Esperanza and their relationships work to promote third-wave feminist ideals while critiquing, and at times resisting, the patriarchal nature of society as a whole.

So Far from God presents the story of Sofia and her four daughters, and their uniquely matriarchal family led by Sofi herself. From the very first chapter, it is made clear that the girls' father, Domingo, abandoned the family very soon after La Loca's birth, and Sofi, rather than being depressed and wallowing in her husband's abandonment, is "so mad, she forbade anyone to ever mention his name in her presence" (Castillo 7). Sofi fully steps into the role of the matriarch after Domingo leaves and provides for her family at every turn in the novel, even at the resistance of some prominent community leaders. When La Loca is resurrected and floats to the top of the church during her funeral and Father Jerome begins to ask if she is an angel or a demon, Sofi shuts him down outright with the claim that "the devil doesn't produce miracles" (Castillo 7). This blatant resistance to a man in a position of power is only the beginning of Sofi challenging traditional gender roles.

After Esperanza's disappearance, Sofi pushes female boundaries even further when she decides to run for mayor. While their city of Tome, New Mexico, has never had a mayor before, Sofi doesn't allow that to stop her and enlists her friend to help her run. Her comadre is reluctant at first but grows to support her, which is in direct contrast to Domingo, Sofi's reappeared husband, who immediately attempts to tear her down and thinks to himself that Sofi and her friend must be making fun of him because Sofi was "never going to completely forgive him" for abandoning her and their children (Castillo 45). The depiction of women as bitter and cruel is not an uncommon one, and this belief existed beyond just literature. The way Castillo represents Domingo in this scene creates an ironic twist in this typical female portrait. The reader knows that Sofi is not mocking Domingo and she sincerely wants to pursue this path because of what she learned from her missing daughter. The insight into what Sofi is actually thinking makes Domingo come across as self-important because he cannot imagine for one second that Sofi might be doing something that has absolutely nothing to do with him. In an article titled "Forms of Chicana Feminist Resistance: Hybrid Spirituality in Castillo's "*So Far From God*," Theresa Delgadillo analyzes the way that Sofi and the other female characters "resist domination every day of their lives—though some more successfully than others" (Delgadillo 888). This moment of Sofi's resistance to Domingo's criticism is one of her more categorical refusals of the gender standard. Castillo also uses this scene to represent a deep female friendship where a female friend is closer than the husband. The way that Sofi's friend is more supportive of her goal than Sofi's own husband shows how little Domingo actually understands her, and how female friendships are often more significant than marriages due to the disinterest men frequently have in their partners.

Throughout the novel, Sofi continues to challenge the patriarchy culminating in her creation and leadership of the Mothers of Martyrs and Saints organization. After all of her daughters suffer the effects of living in a patriarchal society in different ways, Sofi is the only member of her family who remains earthside, and she takes that as an opportunity to create a community for women who have lost their children in traumatic events. Despite her and her children being torn down by men at every turn throughout the novel regardless of their commitment to feminism, Sofi still continues to battle the patriarchy, and through this organization, she and other women are able to "break through" the glass ceiling that has been placed above them.

On the other hand, Sofi's eldest daughter Esperanza has one of the more challenging relationships with her sisters and her mother, that creates an intriguing conversation about family dynamics, even in matriarchal ones. While Esperanza is only physically present at the beginning of the novel, it becomes

clear right away that she is struggling in her current family dynamic, and she feels neglected by her mother, especially because her three sisters require so much attention. When she is offered a job as a journalist in Houston and she tries to communicate this to her family, she is ignored, but "she was used to her mother's preoccupation with her younger sisters" (Castillo 11). Her unique role in her family, and the issues that plague her are further revealed when she mentions how she likes to read self-help books about dysfunctional families in an effort to understand the sense of "displacement" she feels in society (Castillo 12). After Caridad and Fe are suddenly healed, she decides that she needs to get away, so she takes a journalist job in Washington D.C. as a reporter and breaks up with her deadbeat boyfriend.

The first time that the reader sees the family truly care about Esperanza is when Caridad has her first vision and tells Sofi that Esperanza's job is sending her far away, and urgently needs to keep her home. Esperanza returns home seconds after this vision and tells her family she is being sent to Saudi Arabia to cover the unfolding global crisis there. Unfortunately, the only family member that puts up any fight at all is Domingo, and Esperanza shuts him down easily enough. This is the last time the reader or the family see Esperanza in a psychical form, as she later dies in Saudi Arabia. Frequently in literature and in life, the eldest daughter is forced to take a semi-parental role. Especially in situations where one of the parents is missing for whatever reason, Esperanza's relationship with her family is indicative of this oldest daughter role, as before she leaves for the D.C. job, she thinks to herself, "with the reappearance of her father…Esperanza thought that her mother might not need her around no more" (Castillo 15). While Sofi frequently challenges the female stereotype, the treatment of Esperanza is one way that she doesn't. The way that Esperanza uses her career as a means to finally get some freedom from the demands her family has placed on her is a subscription to the feminist ideal that women are so much more than homemakers or caretakers. Unfortunately, the career instead leads Esperanza to a tragic ending.

While Esperanza is the most radically feminist member of the family, her death and subsequent return as an "ectoplasmic" figure highlight a darker side of the patriarchy, and even society as a whole. Esperanza is a journalist who is attempting to create a space for herself as a Chicana woman in a male-dominated sphere to advance her life. In contrast to Sofi's interest in discussing the small or local issues, Esperanza is more interested in the global issues. After taking a job in Washington D.C., she is sent to cover news occurring in Saudi Arabia, and she tells her father that she has the potential to be sent where there is real danger because "That's the whole point of being a journalist" (Castillo 15). She ends up getting captured as a prisoner of war by the Saudi Arabians

and is never seen again. Even after Esperanza and her team are captured, only one senator invites Domingo and Sofi to Washington, and it is clear that he only invited them for the good publicity due to the fact that this was happening during an election year. While this in and of itself is not indicative of any patriarchal views, there is a political point that Castillo is attempting to make with her depiction of the lack of value that Esperanza and the rest of her camera crew has to the government, which at this point was almost entirely made up of men. In her 1998 article "Hearing the Voices: Women and Home and Ana Castillo's *So Far from God*," Carmela Lanza describes the way that the "home space in Castillo's novel is infused with political resistance" (Lanza 66). Through both Sofi gaining a position of political power and the treatment of Esperanza's disappearance, Castillo is highlighting a lack of women and compassion in a government space.

After her disappearance, Esperanza returns to visit her family in an astral form, but even more interesting than her ghostly reappearance is the fact that she is inexplicably linked to the spirit of the Mexican La Llorona. La Loca spent time during her childhood playing with the ghost of La Llorona, and she is the one who breaks the news to La Loca that Esperanza has died. Later the two can be seen together at the river where Loca found La Llorona, and Esperanza's spirit believes that "La Llorona in the beginning (before men got in the way of it all) may have been nothing short of a loving mother goddess" (Castillo 52). The myth of La Llorona depicts the story of a woman who murdered her children in cold blood because she was angry that her lover left her. La Llorona was then so consumed with guilt that she drowned herself and now searches for children to bring with her into the afterlife. She was then used to scare young mothers into never taking their eyes off of their children because she would drown them. Castillo uses this myth that was nightmare inducing for many young mothers and spins it in such a way that the men who told the story are the real villains who are trying to manipulate women. She presents the idea that the patriarchy is responsible for perpetuating this story of grief and fear that paint women as cruel and vengeful creatures, rather than a different story where perhaps this ghost is just a loving mother who watches over the children of busy mothers, rather than one who kills those of inattentive mothers. Summing up the novel, Petr Anténe describes it as one that "does not operate according to a patriarchal capitalist logic; on the contrary, the text becomes a manifestation of the resistance against it" (Anténe 109).

This reevaluation of a cruel myth also aligns with the third-wave feminist effort to redefine ideas about women transmitted by the media. This was especially prevalent in consideration of non-European texts due to the emphasis on equally valuing other cultural stories. Esperanza's close

relationship with La Llorona is significant in a lot of ways, and Lanza describes this cosmic connection as the linking between the two due to their mischaracterization of defiant women like them by men, and the fact that in death "La Llorona is revisioned and so is Esperanza. Both are liberated from the boundaries of white culture" (Lanza 69).

Sofi and Esperanza are both undervalued, by readers and by other characters, even by their own family members. This mistreatment signals Castillo's attempt at critiquing a larger societal issue of misrepresenting and minimizing women and their complexities, both in relationships and in their actions. The third wave feminist movement created a platform for Castillo to highlight her ideas in a way they might be understood, and Sofi and Esperanza help her achieve those goals. Through their resistance of societal mores, and even their subtle undermining of patriarchal ways, these characters make room for a discussion about patriarchal views and the mistreatment of women in broad world contexts.

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Questioning the Unquestionable: Maintaining The Governmental Status Quo in Emily St. John Mandel's *Sea of Tranquility*

Devyn Hollis

The maintenance and disruption of the status quo are essential topics in Canadian novelist Emily St. John Mandel's speculative fiction work, *Sea of Tranquility* (2023), as they are simultaneously overt or subtle depending upon what institution is depicted. The Time Institute is one such institution. Indeed, the organization's own uncompromising assertion is that time must be preserved according to specific demands and expectations rather than be subject to the opinions of a general public and result in anomalies and the potential destruction of the world. According to Mandel's depiction of the status quo, chaos is brought about by the Time Institute's staunch adherence to said status quo, as well as Gaspery-Jacques Robert's subversive act of human compassion. Furthermore, loyalty to an unfeeling governmental body unveils the full reach of its cruelty, particularly towards those who are most at risk and/or vulnerable.

Prior to delving into the complexities of Gaspery's character, time loops, and paradoxes, one must first explicate why the Time Institute not only reinforces the status quo but is in fact *the* status quo within *Sea of Tranquility*. Although the Time Institute poses as a university, the reality is unveiled when Zoey Roberts, sister to Gaspery and employee of the Time Institute, tells Gaspery, one of the main characters of the book, that it is a governmental body holding the ability to time travel (Mandel 115, 130). According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), the noun "status quo" can be defined as the "existing state of affairs," commonly associated with "the sense 'that maintains, or is committed to maintaining, the existing state of affairs" ("Status Quo, *N*."). A status quo must be accepted by the public and "maintain[ed]" by institutions to count as such, and one might understandably argue that an institution such as the Time Institute cannot be a status quo, even if it simply symbolizes a particular state of affairs ("Status Quo, *N*."). Nevertheless, this viewpoint ignores the fact that Emily St. John Mandel specifically focuses upon narratives that have gone unquestioned and have become part of one's world,

thus reflecting the simulation hypothesis that is central to the story's plot.[1] Consequently, when the status quo is reinforced by an institution, its narrative becomes reality. Although Mandel was discussing colonialism in the interview quoted here, she is generally discussing the topic of how narratives —and by extension— any status quo can become part of a world or society's reality:

> […] where I'm from [Canada] the false narrative was a narrative of the empty land— this idea that here was this vast empty land just there for the taking, but that wasn't true and that's why it was a bloodbath […] so if you're coming across the Atlantic in the service of this absolutely false narrative, isn't that kind of the same as living in a simulation in a strange way? ("Emily St. John Mandel," 13:58-14:27)

Similarly, the Time Institute reinforces the particular status quo within the novel. Rejecting or questioning its narratives often leads to a situation akin to a "bloodbath," such as when loved ones are separated by time and space, families are shoved down the socio-economic ladder, and individuals are held responsible for crimes they did not commit ("Emily St. John Mandel," 14:12). The Time Institute inherently perpetuates itself and prevents the general public from questioning either the institution or the status quo that ensures its elevated station in society. As discussed earlier, it is not enough for the Time Institute to adhere and uphold the status quo; it must also preside over the sole status quo, which everyone bows down to and is controlled by.

Although one might argue that the status quo is essential to the preservation of a normal, functioning society wherein people do not experience "terminal ennui," as reflected upon by one of the characters named Zoey, this perception overlooks the fact that change is an inextricable part of life (Mandel 137). An unchanging status quo can range from enforcing seemingly positive scenarios– such as helping the less fortunate, allowing religious services, and popularizing physical books over eBooks– to harmful and persistent perceptions that include heteronormativity and gender roles. In *Sea of Tranquility*, a primary status quo is the Time Institute's belief in preventing any potential disruptions that would advertently or inadvertently undermine their authoritative position in the world. However, for any establishment or person to grow and change– to question reality and assumptions about one's world, society, or culture– it is essential to experience strife and disagreement, lest a lack of adaptation lead to inactivity at best and blatant cruelty at worst. A prime example of being forced out of stagnation and into positive change is when Gaspery forces himself into situations that either place him in danger or excite him, such as when he requests to be employed at the Time Institute: "This will sound … look, I don't

1 According to Mandel's novel, a simulation hypothesis can be defined as an inability to "rule out the possibility that all of reality is a simulation," which is assumed to be run on some type of "computer" (111).

mean to sound pathetic, but I've literally never had an interesting job before" (Mandel 146). Mandel highlights that Gaspery's decision to extract himself from monotony was preempted by his mother's prolonged illness and subsequent death. His life is permeated by repeated moments of "stillness," briefly interrupted by interactions with other people (Mandel 111-112). Consequently, it can be inferred that Gaspery and the Time Institute –as represented by Ephram, a character employed at the Time Institute who seems trustworthy, but later betrays the main characters– are unlikely foils to one another, as Gaspery's questioning of the status quo results in his growing compassion, sacrificial nature, and self-reflections. In contrast, the Time Institute's adherence to the status quo emblematizes an inability to change, thus leading to its inherently cold and unfeeling perception of people and the world.

The reach of The Time Institute as an authoritative presence that punishes others for its inability and refusal to depart from the status quo does not limit itself to reproving its employees, as the repercussions of rebelling against the institute are experienced by multiple people throughout the course of the story. Symbolically, efforts to maintain the status quo mirror solidarity and loyalty because such actions indicate the character or characters are not a threat to either the governmental body or to the status quo. Acceptance means that they understand how the status quo impacts their day-to-day lives. One may argue that the status quo does not hold such intense sway over individual people or society, but they must simply examine the self-fulfilling promise of typically assumed gender roles, including women excelling in the humanities/arts or being better than men at childcare. One may argue that gender roles are merely being studied or analyzed with a critical eye. A skeptic of the status quo's power simply misses the point entirely and may neglect to notice when they are actively being warned about it. In this manner, when Talia, a childhood friend of Gaspery, attempts to warn him from becoming a member of the Time Institute because she has personally experienced long-term repercussions due to "a mission [going] wrong in some kind of awful way," Gaspery counters by pursuing employment at the institute: "[…] I felt such impatience with my life. I turned back to the hotel, and found that I couldn't go in. The hotel was the past. I wanted the future" (Mandel 149, 151-152). It is not simply that Gaspery requires better-paying employment (this is never mentioned as a reason, though), thus he pursues the Time Institute. Conversely, he has never experienced the wrath of the Time Institute, so Gaspery turns a deaf ear to Talia's attempts to dissuade him. Furthermore, Gaspery's cold response -or his lack of response- to Talia's tragic family life could be interpreted as him being influenced by the forcefulness of the Time Institute enforcement of the status quo. Gaspery does not question why he wants to work there -he only feels he

needs to. The paradoxical nature of Gaspery's predicament– a central paradox in the book– is that his fate is deeply intertwined with the Time Institute and vice versa.

When a status quo is unchallenged and accepted, it remains so to the detriment of all people and there is one situation/theme that resembles this fact within *Sea of Tranquility*: the anomaly or paradox that is being investigated by the Time Institute.[2] The paradox is not merely a plot point that occurs due to the Time Institute sending Gaspery into the past as punishment for his rebellion against their mandate to not prevent people from dying in the manner that they are supposed to according to historical records. More pointedly, the paradox represents and embodies the cyclical nature of the status quo. As discussed previously, when a status quo is not challenged or undermined, its mandates remain unopposed for better or worse; moreover, if they only undergo minute changes, the status quo often survives in a perpetual cycle in the same manner that the paradox does. Although readers are left unaware of what Gaspery's final fate is, they are left to ponder if an older version of Gaspery will be stuck in a time loop by meeting himself as a younger man: "[…] what they didn't know was that I had already moved too fast, too far, and wished to travel no further. I've been thinking a great deal about time and motion lately, about being a still point in the ceaseless rush" (Mandel 255).[3] Gaspery is both the paradox and the status quo, as he chooses to resign himself to the state of affairs, though this is not necessarily without good reason. Indeed, he has undergone long-term trauma that likely places him in the freeze state of the three-point stress response; thus he feels perpetually stuck.[4] Nevertheless, it should be argued that Mandel wisely chooses not to force Gaspery all the way out of the status quo to highlight the absolute power and influence that the Time Institute wields. Gaspery will be–for the most part– negatively impacted for the rest of his life. He will be imprisoned for almost thirty years after being unfairly charged with murders he did not commit; he will be transported to multiple different times; he will be forced to undergo facial reconstruction and, albeit happily married at a late age, he will be cursed to know that his wife will die before him. Although

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2 Although definitions for "anomaly" and "paradox" are difficult to find in the context of science fiction writing, they can essentially be defined as irregularities or outliers that go against reason, logic, and/or counter-intuitive, which nevertheless prove to be true ("Anomaly, N., Sense 1."; "Paradox, Adj.").

3 The United States version of the *Cambridge Dictionary* defines "time loop" as a "a situation in which a period of time is repeated, sometimes several times, so that the characters have to live through a series of events again" ("Time Loop").

4 Technically, recent psychological research has stated that the stress response is composed of five possible responses: 1. Freeze; 2. Fight; 3. Flight; 4. Fawn (sometimes called "Friend"); 5. Flop.

Gaspery states that "[h]is conscience was clear," readers are ultimately left to ponder one final, extremely personal question: Is the potential suffering, anguish, pain, and martyrdom to rebel against status quo worth it, especially when they are enforced by authoritative and/or ruthless governmental bodies (Mandel 230)?

The status quo is incredibly powerful, particularly when it is accompanied by societal and/or governmental enforcement; however, it need not be as enduring as they appear on the surface, as represented in the incredibly nuanced speculative fiction work, *Sea of Tranquility*. If individual members of a culture or an entire group rally to upend what is expected of them and others, the status quo can be changed and adapted, as any type of entity requires discomfort and pressure to change. Nothing in life grows without encountering setbacks -weak crops unaccustomed to winters fail, students who have seldom excelled in their field will become frustrated when placed into unfamiliar classes, and institutions will make assumptions about the general public that are inappropriate. Although Gaspery-Jacques Roberts was but one man, he dared to take on an entire authority figure that could -and would- ruin his life. However, it is up to each person to decide if they wish to remain stagnant and acquiescent, thus inviting little to no change in their life, or rather, if they wish for their society and culture to essentially self-actualize, challenging entities to become the best they can possibly be. Speculative fiction calls out to society as a whole to achieve this aforementioned goal, yet certain entities within fictional works – and even in the real world– strive to maintain their stronghold in their societies to retain power and influence, thereby reinforcing any status quo that ensures their survival at the expense of the individual, group, or even whole worlds.

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Relationship Between Language and Identity

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Bilingual education has been a polarizing topic that has been debated for a great deal of time. Many arguments for and against bilingual education have been presented over the years with varying focuses ranging from political, sociological, and economical standpoints. Because of this intractability, bilingual education has fallen to the wayside as it has gone unresolved. To best understand the arguments for and against bilingual education, a brief explanation and definition of the terms used and involved is needed, as is a discussion on the connection between the languages one speaks and their identity. This essay assesses the connection between language and identity, the arguments in support of and the arguments against bilingual education, and finally reveals the importance and need for bilingual education.

Among the many approaches to bilingual education, immersion strategy, early-exit, late-exit, and two-way immersion/dual language (Ramírez et al., 1991; Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015) will be discussed. In the immersion strategy approach, students are taught in English. The early-exit strategy is an approach wherein a child's mother tongue is partially used and then phased out entirely as they proceed in their education (Ramírez et al., 1991). The late-exit strategy, in contrast, makes use of a student's native language for a greater portion of their instruction, and stops at middle school (Ramírez et al., 1991). What makes two-way immersion/dual language strategy stand out from other approaches is that, unlike them, both students who speak English as their primary language and those who are learning it as a secondary language partake in the strategy, allowing both groups to learn a second language (Ramírez et al., 1991).

Beyond understanding the terms discussed in relation to bilingual education, knowing and understanding the relationship between language and identity is just as, if not arguably more, important when discussing the topic. There are numerous reasons that this aspect is important, including meeting the three basic aspects in every good argument– pathos, ethos, and logos– but more importantly, to help understand how bilingual education helps meet a basic human right. Some elucidation of this can be found within Rosemary Salomone's (2010) work, *True American*, as they define identity in the following

excerpt:

> "Identity" refers to the patterns of meaning by which we structure our lives. It develops through recognizing a concept of self as both an individual and […] as a member of a social group along with the values and emotional associations that come with that membership. (p. 69)

Salomone (2010) builds upon this as they connect the concept that language, arguably more than anything else, is what is responsible for this social aspect of identity that makes one feel part of a group, and because of this has very real effects on people as they speak different ways across and within languages (pp. 70-71). As such, the process of assimilating to, adapting, and losing aspects of cultures new and old through language is extremely important in shaping an individual's language skills, cultural identity, and opportunities in life (Salomone, 2010). Salomone provides a compelling reason to assert that bilingual education is a basic human right, which shall be explained next.

The ways in which bilingual education is a basic human right is wonderfully illustrated by Chicana writer Gloria Anzaldúa (2023) in her work "How to Tame a Wild Tongue," as she speaks from personal experiences in her own life to illustrate the matter. One example from her life that she shares includes having her hands slapped with a sharp metal ruler repeatedly when she was caught speaking Spanish during recess as a child (Anzaldúa, p. 1575). Another was one of her teachers of Anglo descent punishing her for trying to tell them how to pronounce her own name, to which the teacher responded, "If you want to be American, speak 'American.' If you don't like it, go back to Mexico where you belong" (Anzaldúa, p. 1575). Even Anzaldúa's (2023) college professors and own mother tried to make her speak English, especially without her natural accent. All of this is an infringement upon one's First Amendment right that many who do not speak English as their first language have undergone firsthand, as attacks on one's expression with the intent of censorship is a breach of this basic human right protected by our Constitution, as Anzaldúa (2023) pointedly remarks. All of this said, now that it has been established how this is a human right, it is time to discuss how bilingual education comes into play in relation to this.

Bilingual Education Programs

Efficacy of Bilingual Education Programs

Although it is easy to proclaim that all bilingual education programs are beneficial to every aspect of society, one must look to evidence and peer-reviewed sources to substantiate or disprove any claim. Regarding bilingual education programs and associated statistics, numerous resources can be found,

though few prove to be reliable due to disagreements and inconsistencies on what criteria such studies should be forced to meet (Greene, 1998). One source that demonstrates its trustworthiness is the study by Ramírez et al. (1991), which examines a variety of bilingual education programs for "Language Minority Children" (p. 1). According to Ramírez et al. (1991), the full titles of the three different programs are: "Structured English Immersion Strategy, Early-Exit, [or] Late-Exit Transitional Bilingual Education Programs," and each of these differs regarding the extent of English that is utilized during instruction (p. 1). As briefly addressed earlier, immersion strategies teach their students completely in English, and early-exit programs instruct with a limited amount of a child's native language, which is decreased in use as the child increases in grade level. Meanwhile, students in late-exit programs are taught in their primary language "a minimum of forty percent of their total instructional time" and continue the program "through the sixth grade" (Ramírez et al., 1991, p. 2). Based upon Ramírez et al.'s (1991) summary, bilingual programs have proven highly effective at promoting equity amongst students by assisting them in either exceeding or matching achievement levels of comparable students. The aforementioned achievement levels were affected by whether or not students had been placed into immersion strategy, early-exit, or late-exit. It should be emphasized that in all of the bilingual programs none of the students experienced a reduction in their academic skills. In addition, it is notable that some students within the study experienced spikes in certain skills, yet plateaued in their growth rates as they increased in grade levels. For example:

> While immersion strategy students had higher language skills than early-exit students at the end of first grade, by the end of third grade both groups were again comparable. This suggests that there is a temporary boost in language skills among immersion strategy students in first grade which decelerates thereafter, [...]. (p. 22)

Although this statistic can be viewed as a drawback of bilingual programs, it is suggested that such an occurrence is a result of becoming accustomed to a new language, given the fact that it is only observed in language minority children. Moreover, students who excel and then plateau in specific academic skills are granted a unique social opportunity by quickly rising to their peers' intellectual level; therefore, the bilingual students are able to potentially foster interpersonal relationships through their enhanced communication skills. Consequently, it is exceedingly difficult to argue that bilingual education programs lack merit or are even damaging to society as a whole. In contrast, bilingual programs positively affect students who are drastically disadvantaged in most aspects of their lives, thus raising such students to academic achievements they might not have otherwise attained.

Benefits of Bilingual Education Programs

While the article by Ramírez et al. (1991) focuses upon positive effects of bilingual education programs, there is a continual possibility that such benefits will lessen during a students' school life, potentially before they have the opportunity to graduate. Nevertheless, there are a number of studies that discuss encouraging statistics, which demonstrate how bilingual education drastically enhances students' educational experience. One such research project is expressed in an article by Curiel et al. (1986), which focuses upon bilingual education and its effects on secondary students, such as their grade point average (GPA), drop out rates, and attendance, among other discussion points. Curiel et al. (1986) utilized two different groups of students in their study: "The experimental group (N = 86) had received one or more years of instruction in an elementary bilingual program. [...] The control group (N = 90) had received instruction in a traditional elementary program where all subject matter was presented in English" (p. 360). Statistically speaking, the students within the experimental group "performed" better overall in essentially every aspect of their academic lives when compared to the control group. The control group tended to have worse drop-out rates, sometimes double the percentage of the experimental group; for example, 8.1% of Junior High students in the experimental group dropped out, yet 25.8% of control group students in the same school grade withdrew from school (Curiel et al., 1986). Furthermore, student GPAs increased in conjunction with how many years they attended bilingual programs; 10th graders enrolled for only one year possessed a grade point average of 1.87, whereas those who had been enrolled in a bilingual program for six years had a GPA of 2.61 (Curiel et al., 1986). Similar statistics, which demonstrate bilingual educations' positive influence upon students, permeate throughout the Curiel et al. (1986) study, thus elevating bilingual programs' benefits from a coincidental happenstance into a reality that is reflected throughout a wide span of age and grade groups, as well as in large numbers of students. As the research was not conducted in a laboratory, it can be predicted that students who attend bilingual education programs will consistently experience greater success rates throughout their academic life; therefore, "students with longer periods of bilingual exposure" are more likely to succeed than either those with very little bilingual experience or none at all (p. 365). If the Curiel et al.(1986) findings were simply coincidental, the statistics would not have consistently demonstrated improvements in numerous areas of academic studies; as a result, one can conclude that bilingual education is not only responsible for encouraging students to remain in school, but also to succeed in their classes.

Applicability of Bilingual Education Programs

The two aforementioned studies have provided examinations into the extensive boons that can be found in bilingual programs, yet both studies are unintentionally plagued by potential weaknesses in the number of students they assess. While Ramírez et al. (1991) analyzed "[c]lasses across programs [...], ranging from a mean of 21.8 to 27.1 students per class," Curiel et al. (1986) investigated an experimental group that encompassed 86 students and a control group with 90 students (Ramírez et al., p. 20). Although these are not small sample sizes by any means, they lack the statistical power that large sample sizes are capable of embodying because expansive sample sizes result in smaller margins of error, thus making answers to research questions easier to substantiate and prove. Consequently, Greene (1998) assembles "eleven studies [that] include standardized test score results from 2,719 students, 1,562 of whom were enrolled in bilingual programs, in thirteen different states," in order to reveal how standard deviations unveil the academic benefits of bilingual education (p. 2). The utilization of one's native language during instruction was estimated at ".18 of a standard deviation on standardized tests" (Greene, 1998, p. 2). Within the eleven different studies, the standard deviations of the programs varied significantly depending upon whether or not they were conducted in English or Spanish, as English reading tests and math test scores improved by .21 and .12, respectively (Greene, 1998).

In contrast, when the tests were coordinated in Spanish, the standard deviations increased by .74, thus demonstrating a substantial change when students are permitted to learn in their native language (Greene, 1998). If students, particularly young students, are expected to succeed and be productive members in their society, they must not only be able to learn new subjects, but also to understand them in their home and standard languages. Bilingual education programs help prevent these damaging cycles from ever occurring: If a student is not taught in their home language, they can never fully understand new topics, yet when they are taught to speak a region's standard language, students quickly begin to reach similar, if not greater, academic skills as their English-only peers. While Greene (1998) discusses a Milwaukee school choice program, he highlights that bilingual education students experienced a .33 and .5 increase in standard deviations after participating for roughly four years. It is easy to state proclamations that overgeneralize and mislead, such as "all bilingual education programs are good" or "bilingual education will taint a region's standard language," yet it is extremely difficult to dismiss and deny statistics, especially those that have been critically analyzed according to stringent criteria.

Bilingual Education Programs Benefiting *all* Students

Although the previously mentioned strategies have proven highly effective in educating bilingual youths, it should be noted that there is one type of bilingual education program that is unique in its instruction, yet has demonstrated its successes in strengthening academic achievements, psychological benefits and, most importantly, the embracement of ethnolinguistic groups that are different from the majority. According to Ronald Wardhaugh and Janet M. Fuller (2015), in *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, "two-way immersion programs," also referred to as dual language programs, are extremely successful via their atypical instruction methods, as they "provide them [children] with instruction in their dominant language and expose them to English through Anglophone peers" (p. 353). Whereas some bilingual education strategies emphasize that their classrooms should contain exclusively students who are learning English, or a second language, two-way immersion programs engage both Anglophone and English language learners. While some may view this decision as encouraging tension and discomfort amongst all young students, the opposite is actually true, as demonstrated by English language learners *and* Anglophone students experiencing positive academic, social, and psychological results.

Within these various beneficial developments, English language learners were "less likely to drop out of school, have higher long-term academic achievement, and show more positive attitudes on the whole towards school" (Genesee et al., 2006, as cited in Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015, p. 353). Similarly, Anglophone two-way immersion students demonstrated that they were "less likely to discriminate against members of other ethnolinguistic groups," which might explain why English language learner students tended to be more positive in their academic lives (Lindholm-Leary, 2001, as cited in Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015, p. 353). Furthermore, the Anglophone students were academically successful, exposed to students of other races and ethnicities at a young age, and learned a second language while their minds were still malleable and able to absorb the language at a faster rate (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). As a result, one can conclude that it is not only students who learn English that benefit greatly from learning multiple languages, but also those being instructed in a language besides English experience academic success and exposure to youths and languages that they might never have encountered in their day-to-day lives. Despite the potential controversy of two-way immersion programs through its integration of both Anglophone and English language learners, the benefits clearly outweigh political debates, as it is only through exposure and connections with other ethnicities that embracement of all people and languages is able to occur.

Controversies in Bilingual Education

The benefits of bilingual education are innumerable for those both young and old, and the programs promote equity for those who are continuing to learn a completely different language from their home language or mother tongue. Still, doubts and questions persist when examining a multitude of sources that provide beneficial statistics yet do not address how – or how many – bilingual programs should be implemented, paid for, or even taught. Ultimately, to properly assess these programs, a question must be acknowledged: Are bilingual education programs worth the amount of money, controversies, and stressors that may arise if they become mandated?

Political Involvement

Support for bilingual education in the United States (U.S.) on a federal level has existed since at least the late 1950s; the way for which was paved by the National Defense Education Act of 1958 that provided federal funds for teaching foreign languages in schools. The support was furthered by the passing of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Salomone's *True American* (2010) explains that while the administration under Lyndon B. Johnson supported bilingual education endeavors, lawmakers were reluctant to advocate for a separate law specifically mandating or approving funding for bilingual education, due to the funding already designated for support of war defense during the Vietnam conflict. Supporting the lack of federal level funding was testimony provided by the Commissioner of Education in 1967, Harold "Doc" Howe II, who, Salomone explains, "cautioned Congress that there were 'possible dangers' in the 'spotlight' approach. 'What suited the needs of one [ethnic] group would not necessarily suit the needs of others'" (Testimony by Commissioner Howe, 1967, as cited in Salomone, 2010, p. 107). Indeed, the majority of bilingual education studies are performed only in Spanish, which has been the dominant minority language in the U.S. since the 1980s, according to Waggoner (1988), and further supported with information from the 2000 census as explained by Crawford's (2004) *Educating English Learners*. On this detail, Crawford further develops the argument that is most frequently used against offering federal funding to bilingual education:

> There is no **one-size-fits-all** when it comes to educating diverse groups of students […] The popularity of such measures [like the 1998 Proposition 227 in California] stems from two widespread assumptions: (1) that there is a universally superior way to acquire a second language, "total immersion," and (2) that any young child, given intensive

> exposure to a second language, will acquire it in a very short time. (pp. 28-29)

Notwithstanding that a full immersion in another language is meaningless without even a modicum of translation to understand how new words, phrases, and syntax compare to what is known, the assumption that bilingual education programs must be one type or nothing at all is erroneous. It acts as a vast disservice to millions of people who reside in the United States who make up a significant portion of current and future work forces. A full immersion program also leaves out the ability to have family aid outside of school hours on homework. The article by Ramírez et al. (1991) explains that parents of students in the late-exit bilingual programs are more likely to assist with student homework simply because they can better understand it when the homework is provided in their home language. A full immersion program that is only taught in English removes that potential aid from parents significantly, from 93.3% of parents helping in the late-exit program down to 68.2% of parents helping in the immersion program (Ramírez et al., 1991, p. 17). While political involvement has played a significant role in bilingual programs being implemented or delayed, another controversy (in tandem to politics) has played a compelling role in providing arguments for opponents of bilingual education programs.

Budgetary Confinements

Combined with reluctance on the federal level to create specific laws approving bilingual education programs is the topic of cost for such programs and their implementation. Crawford (2004) estimates the amount of funding the U.S. government provided for foreign-language education for federal personnel training and subsidizing college level programs by the early 1990s was approximately $1 billion annually; the treasury was providing a similar amount in funding for public school students from minority language households to integrate into English-speaking environments (Crawford, 2004, p. 56). Crawford specifies the figures are estimates only, as the federal government does not have a specific tracking on this segment of education costs. With these figures that have likely risen since the early 1990s, opponents of bilingual education argue the programs would be cost prohibitive as an addendum to funding already provided on at least the federal level to subsidize public education. However, those funds are already integrated in the education budgets to provide to schools, with a higher cost per student provided to federal personnel and college level programs that could arguably be allocated more efficiently. In addition, the idea of maintaining power in today's global economy is worth additional funding. Crawford's (2004) discussion of Language Policies in the U.S. reveals that the United States lags crucially behind other industrialized

nations in prioritizing funding for bilingual education in language planning (pp. 56-57). Countries ranging from Canada to India, South Africa to Switzerland and Australia all have multilingual policies that advocate for their population to learn both native languages and English, or immigrant languages if English is their native language, providing an advantage as students become adults and step into the workforce. A similar stance for the United States could prove more beneficial than opponents would recognize on a financial scale – theoretically providing additional funding for bilingual programs while increasing the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the U.S. – especially as the U.S. does not have an official language at all.

Limitations of Available Studies for Bilingual Education Programs

In creating the argument against avoiding bilingual education programs altogether simply because of their lack of uniformity, Crawford (2004) explains:

> [T]he National Research Council offered the following advice in a 1997 report on language-minority education: "The key issue is not finding a program that works for all children and all localities, but rather finding a set of program components that works for the children in the community of interest." (p. 29)

It is acknowledged that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach, and thus far studies have been primarily conducted with Spanish as the minority language, but a series of items within these programs can be implemented in multiple ways to benefit students meeting educational standards regardless of where they live in the United States, and regardless of what language they speak. Waggoner's (1988) 1980 Census data analysis confirms that minority language households exist in every state in the U.S., though some states have a higher concentration than others, but also Census data shows more than 30 different languages are spoken in minority language households (p. 81). While most of the reliable studies on bilingual education and its benefits for students have been held in Spanish, key components of processes in those programs can be implemented for different languages and on different scales, broadening the ability for more students in minority language households to better reach minimum education standards held in the U.S.

Workplace Discrimination Against Bilingual Speakers

With bilingual education programs, the ability to speak English fluently and immersion among English speakers aids in reducing a portion of a mother tongue accent while speaking English. While initially this sounds like a negative assimilation attempt, the benefit is provided in reducing workplace discrimination. Cañas and Sondak (2014) detail the legal case *Fragante v.*

Honolulu in 1989, where Fragante spoke English with a thick Filipino accent. Despite meeting and exceeding all qualifications for the position, they were rejected, and they sued claiming racial discrimination. However, the federal appeals court argued that the accent in question actually inhibited their ability to interact with the English-speaking public, which was the main requirement for the position. As that ability to communicate was considered a legitimate business purpose, Fragante did not have recourse against the employer under Title VII, because the employer was not in violation (p. 29). This case set a precedent for legal discrimination against workers whose primary language is other than English and who may have an accent, because the determination of what constitutes a true inhibition of a legitimate business purpose is ambiguous and subject to prejudice and bias. A robust bilingual education and English for students from minority language households that aids in providing not only fluency in English but also a higher comprehension factor for others can reduce the chances of being discriminated against for positions in the workplace that can better benefit them and their families.

Closing Arguments Supporting Bilingual Education

As has been touched upon in depth now, discrimination against those from minority language households has been a persistent issue, but one that has been proven that it can be reduced while raising other general quality of life improvements through bilingual education. This is optimally achieved through educating both minority language speakers learning English while retaining and maintaining their own native tongue. In addition, those who speak English as their native tongue learn an additional language through such ideal programs as the two-way immersion strategy.

Bilingual Education is Worth the Cost

All of this said, while the debate on bilingual education has been a long one worth having, the resolution to the matter has become apparent. Possessing knowledge on the topic is needed to truly understand this, as is the understanding that the languages one speaks are intricately related to their identity, as well as the right of freedom of speech. The efficacy, benefits, and applicability have all been markedly proven scientifically, and have held up against the counter arguments over the controversies stemming from the presented political, budgetary, limitations of studies, and workplace discrimination confinements. Bilingual education is worth whatever cost in the long run, as it improves the equity, quality of life, and the social and economic future of the United States of America.

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Ophelia and the Motif of the Madwoman

Rebekah Lemons

Numerous examples of madwomen exist in literature, but one of the most well-known and enduring examples is Ophelia from William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. While her role in the play is small, she has been the subject of countless feminist critiques, interpretations, and retellings, and there are just as many ways to examine her character. Two critical approaches that provide insight into how her character was shaped by culture are structuralism and feminism. Structuralism is a critical theory that places a particular work or character within a wider structure, such as a genre or motif, to examine parallels and contrasts between Ophelia and characters like Bertha Mason Rochester from Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre.* By doing so, structuralism is able to understand how culture influences the way that both her character and the larger structures she is a part of are socially constructed. Feminist critical theory examines how the portrayal of women in literature is influenced by the cultural construct of gender and the underlying attitudes toward women. As a result, using a blended structuralist and feminist approach to examine Ophelia reveals how the belief that women were inferior to men shaped the motif of the madwoman and in particular, the characters of Ophelia and Bertha.

To understand how Ophelia is shaped by society, it is first necessary to place her within the wider context of the madwoman motif and examine the central paradigm within it. While there are numerous characters who are part of the motif that have parallels to Ophelia, Bertha Mason Rochester is the character that will be used for the sake of focus. In examining their characters, an important paradigm emerges within the motif; though Ophelia and Bertha are silenced by their madness, they still find alternative ways to communicate. In *Hamlet*, Ophelia goes mad following her father's death, resulting in the Gentleman's brief comment that "Her speech is nothing" (Shakespeare 4.5.7). She is still capable of speech, but her words do not make sense to those listening. Despite her madness, Ophelia still tries to communicate. Referencing her father's hasty burial without proper ceremony, she sings, "Larded all with sweet flowers; / Which bewept to the ground did not go" (Shakespeare 4.5.39-40). This demonstrates that she is trying to communicate her distress regarding her father's death. Unfortunately, despite her singing and the symbolic meaning of the flowers Ophelia gives to Laertes and Gertrude, her attempts at

communication are ignored. Ophelia's attempts to speak through alternative means are paralleled in *Jane Eyre*. Unlike Ophelia, Bertha's mental illness renders her unable to speak. Bertha "growled like some strange animal" (Brontë 302) when Jane and Rochester visit the attic, following the aborted wedding ceremony. However, Bertha does find a way of communicating by tearing the veil "in two parts, and flinging both on the floor, [trampling] them" (Brontë 293), expressing her fury at the upcoming bigamous wedding between Jane and Mr. Rochester. The paradigm of the silent woman is therefore comprised of women who have limited agency and lack a voice, but still try to communicate to those around them. Unfortunately, neither Ophelia nor Bertha are properly understood. As a result, a paradigm of alternative communication that emerges within the motif shows that despite the attempts to communicate, they are ignored and dismissed.

By blending structuralism and feminism, it is possible to understand how the madwoman motif, and Ophelia herself, are influenced by the prevalent attitude toward women within culture by adapting the first level of *vraisemblance*. The Cambridge Dictionary defines *vraisemblance* as a French word that means "plausibility." Jonathan Culler, author of *Structuralist Poetics*, defines the five levels of *vraisemblance* as "ways in which a text may be brought into contact with and defined in relation to another text which helps make it intelligible" (164). This makes it possible to understand how culture influences the way the motif, and therefore Ophelia, are constructed. As such, *vraisemblance* is a process in which structuralists examine a particular text through its relationship with a larger structure. This process may be adapted to examine not a particular text, but a character instead. The first level of *vraisemblance* is the "real," which Culler defines "as a discourse which requires no justification because it seems to derive directly from the structure of the world" (164), and is therefore an ingrained attitude or belief that is widely accepted within a society. From the perspective of feminist critical theory, an ingrained attitude that has been taken for granted throughout history is that women are inferior to men. According to *Shakespeare and Women* by Phyllis Rackin, in Elizabethan culture "inequalities between men and women were taken for granted. Sanctioned by law and religion and reinforced by the duties and customs of daily life, they were deeply embedded in the fabric of culture" (27). This created the attitude that women were inferior, an example of the first level of *vraisemblance*. The inequality between men and women is not an attitude limited to Shakespeare's time. Hundreds of years later when *Jane Eyre* was published in 1847 during the Victorian period, women were still not allowed to retain their own property after marriage. According to Mary Beth Combs, in an article titled "A Measure of Independence" from the *Journal of*

Economic History, the 1870 Marriage Act "gave women married after 1870 the right to own and control their certain forms of property" (1028). The parallels between Ophelia and Bertha therefore extend beyond the paradigm they are both part of to the cultural construction of gender when both characters were created. As a result, the ingrained attitude that women are inferior is a central aspect of how the cultural construction of gender impacts the madwoman motif.

Adapting the first level of *vraisemblance* to a blended structuralist and feminist critical approach reveals the differences in how Ophelia and Hamlet's madness is treated. For example, Ophelia's attempts to make herself understood are ignored, while Hamlet's actions receive constant scrutiny. The Gentleman notes that "[i]ndeed one would think there might be thought / Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily" (Shakespeare 4.5.12-13), showing that any character, even a minor one, can sense that Ophelia is trying to communicate but will ultimately dismiss her. That "nothing" is indicative that to those around her, even her own brother, her words have no meaning and no value. She is dismissed and ignored, which directly contrasts with how Hamlet's feigned madness is treated. Hamlet is not ignored; Claudius states that "what he spake, though it lacked form a little, / Was not like madness" (Shakespeare 3.2.162-163). While Claudius has more reason to be concerned for Hamlet's behavior because of the perceived threat to his reign, important parallels exist between Hamlet and Ophelia. Both have lost their father under suspicious circumstances, and in both cases Claudius attempts to hide what happened. However, while Claudius sees Hamlet as a threat, stating that "Madness in great ones must not unwatched go" (Shakespeare 3.2.188), his attitude toward Ophelia is patronizing, dismissive, and dehumanizing. Even though Ophelia attempts to communicate her distress regarding her father's clandestine and hasty burial, Claudius does not take action to appease her, stating, "Divided from herself and her fair judgment / without which we are pictures or mere beasts" (Shakespeare 4.5.183-185). As a result, despite the potential threat that Ophelia's attempts to draw attention to her father's death represents, she is ignored, with Claudius focusing on controlling her brother, Laertes, instead. Upon seeing the mad Ophelia, Laertes states that "Hadst though thy wits, and didst persuade revenge, / it could not move thus" (Shakespeare 4.5.163-4), showing that while the sight of Ophelia is moving, her words, songs, and actions do not make sense and are ignored. The contrast between Hamlet and Ophelia demonstrates that women's perceived inferiority determines how their madness is treated. Ophelia is dehumanized and ignored despite the power that Ophelia has to move the emotions of others. She is not treated as a threat because as a woman she is inherently harmless.

Using feminist critical theory to interpret the parallels between Ophelia

and Bertha, their madness allows them to express their unconscious rage at the way they are treated in a manner that they would not be able to otherwise. From a feminist critical theory perspective, the madwoman motif operates as a way for female characters to communicate their unconscious anger at the way that society treats them. While Jane is not part of the madwoman motif, Bertha serves as a double for Jane who is able to express Jane's unconscious feelings. According to feminist writers Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar in *The Madwoman in the Attic*, "Bertha. . . is Jane's truest and darkest double; she is the angry aspect of the orphan child, the ferocious secret self Jane has been trying to repress" (360). As a result, the ripping of the veil takes on new symbolic meaning; it is not simply Bertha finding an alternative way to communicate but serves as an expression of the rage that Jane herself feels regarding her upcoming marriage but cannot express. Therefore, her repressed rage is a response to the belief in women's inferiority, which shaped the institution of marriage in the Victorian period. Leading up to the wedding, Jane feels uneasy because marrying Rochester would tip the balance of power within their relationship in his favor. When shopping with Rochester, Jane "thought [Rochester's] smile was such as a sultan might. . . bestow upon a slave his gold and gems" (Brontë 277) as he picks out clothes for her. While Rochester asserts that Jane is "[his] equal" (Brontë 263), to Jane, the unequal way that marriage is constructed shifts the balance in their relationship by making a sultan of Rochester and a slave of Jane through the unfair power dynamic that marriage at the time created. Gilbert and Gubar state that "Jane's profound desire to destroy Thornfield, the symbol of Rochester's mastery and of her own servitude, will be acted out by Bertha, who burns down the house and destroys *herself* in the process as if she were an agent of Jane's desire as well as her own" (360). Consequently, the madwoman motif extends to characters like Ophelia, who act out their desires in a way that they otherwise could not. Just as Bertha serves as a double for Jane, Ophelia's madness allows her to express her distress at her father's death more effectively. Their madness therefore allows them to transgress the norms of society and thereby give voice to their rage, even if no one can understand or is willing to listen.

Ultimately, blending structuralist and feminist critical theory demonstrates how the motif of the madwoman, and therefore Ophelia, is constructed by the cultural attitude that women are inferior. While Ophelia and Bertha are only two examples, this motif is frequently found throughout literature. The result is that Ophelia represents a paradigm wherein women are ignored, dismissed, and dehumanized by madness, which is often the direct result of the patriarchal ideals. Using the first level of *vraisemblance* demonstrates that the contrasting treatment of Hamlet and Ophelia's madness

is influenced by women's status as lesser beings than their male counterparts. Rather than recognizing the innate power her grief and madness have to move the hearts of others, Claudius dehumanizes and dismisses her. The character of Ophelia represents a paradigm wherein marginalized women struggle to be heard in a society that does not value their voice. Her speech is "nothing" to those around her, but Ophelia is not voiceless. While she has very little power to affect the overall arc of the play, she nevertheless regains a level of agency by finding alternative ways to communicate her distress regarding her father, even if she is ignored. As a result, Ophelia's character represents a recurring symbol in literature through which women struggle to be heard in a phallocentric world that seeks to strip them of their dignity and voice.

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If Greek Mythological Tragedies Aren't Inherently Feminine, Why Do They Bleed?

Aubrianna Martinez

In U.S. culture students are taught that much of the standing world that young students will interact with was established by the Greeks first. Architecture in the U.S. government's capital is modeled after Greek temples, Greek philosophy is still studied in universities to teach the structure of argumentation and debate, and Greek mythology seems to pervade all cultural zeitgeists regardless of the race or gender of the individual prominent figures contributing to the culture at the time. Greek mythology—while having some exceptions to this rule—largely focused on or revolved around the idea of tragedy, which is why references to it are so frequent and adapted to new contexts. Greek mythology is taught to be inherently relatable to all readers despite lacking important contemporary relevance such as representation, recognition of different worldviews, and many other hurdles that the Greeks did not grapple with. Still, the use of this mythology is extremely prevalent for writers today. New generations rewrite the original myths and continue this fascination with tragedy. Native American poet Natalie Diaz explores various tragedies in her book of poetry, *Postcolonial Love Poem* (2020). As a woman of color, Diaz reskins Greek mythological tragedies, writing specifically and highly of the monstrous and murdered figures who are not often looked upon with pity and empowerment. This exacerbates the unfortunate aspects of her life which she writes biographically about, such as the treatment of indigenous people in the U.S., her experiences as a woman, sisterhood, and sapphism.

There is a deeply "American" element to the concept of Diaz taking Greek mythology and refashioning the elements that she is interested in to be more relevant to her experiences. She exhibits a control over the text that feels abstract until the readers reassess their perception of the Greek mythological figures; she prompts them to reconsider through her frequent allusions and references. Author Colleen G. Eils analyzes different indigenous writers in her literary article titled "Deborah Miranda, Natalie Diaz, Tommy Pico, and Metaphors of Representation," wherein she articulates how Diaz, just as much as the other poets, "suspend presence and absence in their metaphors, layering deep, local California contexts with geographically and temporally expansive

images into a 'palimpsest of pasts and presents'" (Eils 84). The use of the term palimpsest is quite intriguing for multiple reasons: one that it is of Greek origin such as the myths Diaz alludes to, and second that it denotes the partial or wholesale removal of writing from its original placement, as it is replaced by new writing. Diaz effectively begins a process of starting to view Briareus the Hecatoncheir as a palimpsest through erasing the sordid history of the hundred-handed creature and instead imbuing him with a sexual nature that did not previously exist in the Greek mythological canon for this character. In her poem "These Hands, If Not Gods," Diaz uses the monstrous figure of the Hecatoncheir to connote a passionate sexual relationship:

> These hands, if not gods, then why
> when you have come to me, and I have returned you,
> to that from which you came—white mud, mica, mineral, salt—
> why then do you whisper, *O Hecatonchire. My Centimani.*
> *My Hundred-Handed One?* (lines 36-40)

The eroticization of the monstrous and traditionally horrific creature demonstrates the way in which Diaz views her love for women—invalidated in the eyes of many due to their unwillingness to acknowledge or accept queer love and charged with guilt and humiliation as someone raised in a heteronormative society. Because she cannot change their nature, she chooses instead to take the monumental task of revising the Greek archetype of the monster into being an erotically active and conscientious lover.

It is known that culturally speaking, tragedies are quite different in regards to their interpretation and value they hold for oppressed peoples compared to those held by oppressors. Similarly, there is power to the concept of mythology. According to essayist James C. Bulman in his article "The Woman and Greek Myth: Bond's Theatre of History," prolific playwright Edward Bond "believes that mythology always serves an unjust society. It codifies and promulgates the value of a repressive culture — in his terms synonymous with capitalist culture, [...] To this end it creates a mythology about men and their societies" (Bulman 505). In analyzing the value Greek tragic mythology holds for oppressed people and the way in which Diaz rewrites and prompts readers to readjust the lens with which they view monstrous Greek mythological figures and their stories, she effectively changes the oppressive culture and society's willingness to humanize indigenous people. In her poem "I, Minotaur," she turns the expectations from constructing an empowering narrative, as she did with her previously cited poem "These Hands, If Not Gods," into a pitying one, depicting herself as the originally male-depicted monstrous creation born of animal and human sexual assault forced onto the human by a god. Diaz writes of herself as a being made in order to cause painful

destruction of others and born of a cursed union:

> I know what it's like to be appetite of your own appetite,
> citizen of what savages you,
> to dare bloom pleasure from your wounds—
> and to bleed out from that bouquet. (lines 20-23)

Yet she finds a disgusting type of beauty from the horrific scene she depicts. Diaz writes of the tragedy of creation and the paradoxical nature she imbues the minotaur figure with. By depicting herself as the human-bull hybrid of Theseus' story, Diaz brings to the front of the reader's mind the racialization of monsters and the depiction of indigenous individuals as monstrous. In creating a space in which the reader finds pity for the monster, Diaz marries the reader's perception of her own emotional self-worth and to the darker urges she associates with her race due to the stigmas passed to her which all combine with the feminine imagery of a bloody bouquet. In turn, this harkens back to a woman's ability to bleed that, rather than springing from injury, is the body's way to signify that it is capable of creating a new life.

The racialization of Diaz's work supersedes many of the other themes present within her works and complicates the already complex issues she tackles. Having a brother who suffers from a drug addiction is an example of the unequal proportion of people of color who fall to drug addiction. Diaz writes frequently of her brother and his struggle with drug addiction and how it affected their family and her relationship with him specifically. In "Blood-Light," she describes how he tries to "pass" her a knife "[l]ike the way Orion and Scorpius—/across all that black night—pass the sun" (Diaz lines 23-24). It should be emphasized that this myth she references focuses in equal parts on the *philia* relationship between that of the goddess Artemis and Orion as well as the *storge* relationship between Artemis and her twin brother Apollo. Yet rather than draw allusions to the rift between Artemis and Apollo that is depicted in the myth she references, Diaz compares her relationship with her brother to that of the hero tragically killed by a venomous arachnid. Garth Greenwell in his article, "To a Green Thought: Varieties of Wildness: On Stephanie Pippin, Greg Wrenn, and Natalie Diaz," examines Diaz's work, focusing on the narrative significance of her poems specifically related to her brother and the eventual strife that developed between the siblings. He writes,

> [T]he most remarked upon poems are stories of family tragedy—but also the one that reaches furthest beyond the self, trying to communicate not just a personal story but a cultural one [...] [A]s we move from culture to family to individual psyche, we're invited to imagine relationships of cause and consequence, or at least of pressure and influence, so that each new section bears the weight of what has preceded it. (Greenwell 8)

In this way Diaz's poems compound the experiences of her life as well as those of the women and indigenous people who came before her, in how they expected equality and respect and received distrust, discrimination, and hatred. Her works demonstrate the unique pain that one experiences when their mistreatment is at the hands not of a stranger poised to hate her, but of a brother poised to love her, and her struggle to reconcile what their relationship has become.

On the other hand, through her poetry on sapphic love and her trauma with her brother, Diaz's identity and experiences as a woman pervade all her other themes, as she is experiencing these aspects of her life through the lens of being a woman. Interestingly on this topic, she avoids or neglects to reference many Greek female figures within her poetry in *Postcolonial Love Poem*, whether they be characters that the sisterhood of feminists have reclaimed such as Medusa or traditionally feminine and adored figures such as Aphrodite. Diaz's draw to the unconventional figures that she does write about subjects her work to deeper scrutiny than the easier path may have. But her commitment to allying herself with characters that few writers and poets before her have demonstrates the new ground upon which she treads. Greek tragedy is not inherently feminine in its design, just as it is not solely male. Diaz may not be able to single-handedly reclaim it for women alone, but her poetry's depiction of these masculine and male-centric figures that she redesigns as feminine and otherwise accessible to her does effectively impact how Greek mythology can be interpreted. Greek mythology is rarely interpreted to be empowering, yet this is what a feminist poet can produce. Through Diaz's reimagining of masculine-focused and authored Greek mythology and its tragedies, she opens the door to what future writers and critics can further say of these dated works. Diaz invites even more interesting adaptations, fresh allegories, and references for future literary-minded people, regardless of their race, gender, or sexual orientation, thus making their identities more applicable.

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More Than a Single Story: America's Tumultuous Relationship with Migrant Workers

Brit Melson

Historically, America has not treated those who migrate here with great kindness. In fact, today we have practices that mirror those of the past, such as the way that ICE Detention Centers maintain practices that run parallel to Mexican Repatriation during The Great Depression (1929-1939). Author Tim Z. Hernandez, a California Central Valley native, visits the ongoing mistreatment of Mexican migrants by the government.Within the first chapter of his story, *Mañana Means Heaven* (2016), Hernandez dives deep into the lived experience of people who were negatively affected by repatriation, and that experience is a prime model for the experiences of migrants who suffer in modern day, government led, detention centers. The exploration of the migrant experience leads to a monolithic idea or single story of an exploited worker. The single story, as writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie essentially describes, is a one-dimensional stereotype that fails to acknowledge the intersectionality of identity. Ultimately, this single story of exploitation points to Mexican migrants providing labor for low wages, theft of those wages by employers, and hazardous and unhealthy working conditions. Both the scene of Mexican Repatriation represented by Hernandez, and the dire situations of people who find themselves in ICE Detention Centers, reek of the exploitation of migrants for America's gain.

In the case of Bea Renteria, the main character in *Mañana Means Heaven*, the Repatriation of her own family becomes a core memory. For her, it was the only time she had seen her father smile, despite the crude strangeness of what was occurring. Hernandez details the way in which Mexican families were herded like cattle onto boxcars by Immigration Officers and many of them hit, pushed, or beaten as they boarded (9-11). Despite being treated like animals by the officers, the families did not fight back. The American Government had "promised, guaranteed, five hundred greenbacks for voluntary deportation" (Hernandez 9). However, life outside of the novel tells us that the money was never given to those who voluntarily left America. Instead, it was just a lie told

to Mexican people. During the Great Depression, there was no money to give and the government no longer saw the need for cheap labor of migrant workers when there was no work to be done. Nor did farmers want to pay the money that was owed for the work that had been previously completed. Instead, these hard workers were financially exploited, socially marginalized, physically and mentally mistreated, and shipped away.

Drawing a historical parallel, the experiences that occurred during Mexican Repatriation show terrifying echoes in the present-day treatment of migrants within ICE Detention Centers. In recent years, we have seen ICE Detention Centers that are less humane than prisons, which in and of itself says so much. In these centers, the detainees have no choice but to be deported. Families are infamously separated, sometimes forever. Additionally, the detainees are beaten, not given adequate supplies nor adequate nutrition, and have even been known to be held illegally at an alarmingly high rate. Though modern times are different than the 1930-40s, it is evident that America still has nuanced, and sometimes not so nuanced, forms of exploitation it uses towards migrants. Hernandez's novel seeks to push back against the mistreatment of migrants. Most of us living in America today are familiar with ICE Detention facilities, but the same may not be true of Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s.

During the Great Depression, the American government thought that deporting Mexicans and Mexican Americans to Mexico would help boost the economy, or at least, substantially reduce the number of people drawing from it. Author Camille Guerin-Gonzales informs readers that

> More than a million Mexican immigrant workers traveled north to the United States in the years 1900-1930…[and] in the 1930's … half a million immigrants and Americans of Mexican descent became targets of one of the largest mass-removal operations ever sanctioned by the United States Government. Immigration and repatriation both invigorated and disrupted the lives of Mexicans and Mexican Americans. (Guerin-Gonzales 1)

Displacement and exploitation of Mexican migrants are clearly ongoing themes since the early 1900s. As Guerin-Gonzales said, immigrating to America was revitalizing for many migrants, and the subsequent forced departure was demoralizing. Additionally, author Abraham Hoffman says, "Mexican repatriation studies have been practically nonexistent…a movement of such significance [being] omitted from our history books is a forceful indictment of the neglect given to the historical presence of the Mexican-American people" (Hoffman, xiv). This forceful indictment and evidence of negligence sums up in brevity the experience of migrant workers.

Considering the single story of exploitation, the true intersectionality

of migrant workers is ignored. It does not tell of family or culture, and it omits personality and passion. This harmful stereotype of the exploited worker enforces the false assumption that migrant workers should be paid less, if they are to be paid at all. It also devalues them as almost being non-human and forces working conditions that are riddled with hazards and show little care for their well-being. This stereotype homogenizes migrant workers as a single unit, which is true of no group of people. Overall, it can be said that ICE Detention Centers were foreshadowed by what the Renteria family and many others went through during Mexican Repatriation, especially because this country never seems to learn from its mistakes.

Fortunately for purveyors of literature and of history, Hernandez works wonders to untie the knot of this single story and bring out the various threads of who Mexican migrant workers are. Adichie herself, Nigerian-born and well-traveled, admits to having internalized the negative stereotypes associated with poor migrant workers in the U.S. ("Adichie" 08:09–09:13). But Hernandez, from his part, details the ways in which this resilient group of people live very individualistic lives and represents the diversity and heterogeneity of migrant workers. Through this groundbreaking novel, Hernandez paints the quintessential picture of migrant exploitation. He also carefully crafts their response to said exploitation, particularly with his excellent character development made possible by an omniscient narrator and strong leading roles within the text. Most importantly, in giving substance to Bea Franco, Hernandez forcefully pushes back against Jack Kerouac's single story of "The Mexican Girl." Despite Terry's (Bea Franco) status in the canonical classic *On the Road* (1974), Hernandez asserts that Kerouac's work was complicit in the erasure culture that America frequently engages in. Hernandez's research, conducted forty years after the publication of Kerouac's novel, erodes the power of fragmentary depictions of migrant workers. Literary works like *Mañana Means Heaven* remind America as a whole, heterogeneous as it is, that we must continue to push back against the harsh inequities of this world.

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The Evolution of Gender Roles in the Chinese Immigrant Experience

Sarah Mendez-Jimenez

The connection between ethnic identities and gender roles is an unmistakably impactful one, especially in immigrant families. The expectations that both men and women are subjected to are developed by the prominent characteristics of each minority group, such as family structures and nationality. In the case of the short story "My Father's Chinese Wives" (1996), Sandra Tsing Loh comments on how gender identities vary across two different generations of Chinese people. Each of these generations features different standards for men and women; as time passes, they begin to adjust in order to accommodate to the changing physical landscape and societal rules that result from immigration. In particular, Chinese families demand the fulfillment of traditional masculine and feminine roles which are eventually challenged and modified to allow for hybridity between American and Chinese identities.

In an article analyzing the changes that Chinese women experienced after immigrating to the United States, Huping Ling states that immigration was absolutely critical to the subversion of conventional values. Not only did it transform the roles that Chinese women were expected to fulfill with their families, but it also changed the expectations for marriage itself: "Having suffered pain of leaving a familiar surrounding, seasickness for months, and prolonged interrogation and detention at the American immigration station on Angel Island in San Francisco Bay, Chinese immigrant women, and young wives especially, found that they were no longer subjected to the authority of their mothers-in law and for the first time they were the female heads of their families" (Ling 47). Chinese women, though they did not always contribute an equal amount as their partners did to family economics, became undoubtedly essential to the survival of their families as providers. With the ability to work came freedoms that they were not accustomed to in their native homes, and as such, these women were able to change the ways in which they viewed their own identities and established autonomy. There was no longer a need to adhere to the standards set for them by their husbands or in-laws; rather, they could amplify their own voices and branch out from traditional gender roles.

This does not mean they were entirely liberated from the expectations set for them—including ideas of authority, respect, and domesticity—but they did experience significantly more independence that was not previously available. Ling's research presents a historical perspective on a time before Loh was born and decades before she wrote "My Father's Chinese Wives," but traces of this history are undoubtedly an inspiration for Loh's characterization. Individuals like the narrator, her sister, and Zhou Ping are examples of Chinese women that have been affected by the historical and cultural demands made of them.

Loh is very careful in building different depictions of men and women in her short story. On one hand, the narrator's father represents the pinnacle of Chinese masculinity as the head of his household. The sisters provide descriptions of their father, calling him extremely frugal and the source of a lot of trauma. Kaitlin is vocal about this during their family dinner, accusing him of mistreating the family with angry remarks that were often directed at their mother. The father, however, is entirely clueless as to why he behaved this way: "It's as if anger was this chemical which reacted on him for 20 years. Who knows why, but like some kind of spirit, it has left him now. The rage is spent. He is old now. He is old" (Loh 904). Through the father, Loh speaks to the gender roles that exacerbate hardships on both sides of the spectrum. Not only are women harmed through oppressive systems that deny them access to power or self-determination, but men also struggle to react in an emotionally appropriate manner because they have never been taught how to do so. The father's anger and his frustration are translated into dominance—or perhaps even stem from *having* such dominance—and come to life as trauma that dramatically impacts how the rest of the family view him and live their own lives, allowing for toxic masculinity to persevere. Loh succeeds in demonstrating that the patriarchy hurts all involved, even the men that rule it.

On the other hand, Loh also does not shy away from describing the multiple struggles that Chinese women face at all ages and from multiple sources. First are the traditional standards they encounter from Chinese family members, which emphasize qualities like hard work and respect for others as necessary. This is demonstrated by the father being incredibly impressed by the content of Liu Tzun's letters, who chose to emphasize her admiration for the father's "great scientific genius" and "many awards" (Loh 899) to gain his favor. This is later further stressed through the father's commentary on his newest wife, Zhou Ping, whom he describes as hard-working despite the tough life she suffered from laborious farm work and mining. These two women portray the standard Chinese woman who is expected to stand out for her achievements while simultaneously maintaining the proper respect for her family members. This is a stark contrast to the expectations from American or foreign influences.

For example, Jenna describes the wariness she feels at a man's fascination with Asian women, which is recognized as a fetish. Fred, who attends a creative writing workshop with the narrator, writes a novel about a man—conveniently also named Fred—who falls in love with a Japanese woman; his writing features many of the stereotypes associated with this ethnicity, including Japanese cherry blossom scents on dainty, fragile, and oversexualized women. Moreover, it is clear that he views Japanese women—and Asian culture at large—through a lens of exoticism. Loh writes, "Fred would always italicize the Japanese words, as if to separate and somehow protect them from other, lesser words" (898). Asian cultures are seen as strikingly attractive, and Fred certainly plays into this by giving power to orientalism: He distinguishes languages from each other because of the way he views Japanese as superior, and this indirectly contributes to how he regards women too. Women are seen as pure and desirable, and therefore need to be protected, demonstrating the highly different expectations that are held for women between different cultures. One is extremely fetishized, while the other is expected to accomplish often-unrealistic standards—both are ultimately reduced to the same submissive stereotype.

Sandra Tsing Loh's short story isn't altogether pessimistic about the status of gender equality in Chinese cultures. In fact, she makes sure to highlight the possibility of change in both old and new generations. The most glaring example of this is Zhou Ping; despite being hailed as the perfect wife for the father, it is clear that she will not bend his anger or disapproval. After being reprimanded for a poorly-cooked meal, Zhou Ping laughs, which Jenna finds startling: "It is a big laugh, an enormous laugh, the laugh of a woman who has birthed calves and hoed crops and seen harsh winters decimate countrysides. [...] My jaw drops. No one has ever laughed out loud at this table, ever" (Loh 904). Zhou Ping's laughter is indicative of a woman whose spirit will not be stifled and is a further extension of the subversion that began years ago when Chinese women first began to immigrate to the United States and started to dismantle the roles placed for them. Similarly, Kaitlin, Jenna's sister, represents the new generation that will not be bowed down by the trauma inflicted on them by their parental figures. Where before any complaints made against Chinese parents were expected to be kept quiet, Kaitlin forms part of a new group of individuals that demands for their pain to be acknowledged. Not only does she reference the specific events that hurt her, such as being yelled at for failing to understand addition or her father throwing her books across the room, but she also directly confronts her father about them. Shortly after Zhou Ping has laughed at him, Kaitlin emphatically asks her father, "'Why were you always so angry?' [...] 'No really,' Kaitlin insists. 'All those years. With Mama. Why?'" (Loh 904). She is determined to get an answer from her father and deems it necessary to

hold him accountable for his misdeeds, even going as far as to do so in front of the entire family. For a culture that is built around respect for the male leader of the household, this is incredibly significant; it is a purposeful challenge to the systems of authority and goes against the expectation that women should take what they were given.

"My Father's Chinese Wives" is a crucial literary piece when it comes to understanding the intersection between gender and ethnicity. Loh emphasizes that different cultures and ethnic backgrounds can reinforce oppressive systems that hurt all genders. However, she is also certain to posit that there is a brighter future in sight and that the systems can be successfully challenged and deconstructed with change in each new generation. Particularly, the fusion between American and Chinese cultures allows for people to honor the beneficial aspects of their cultures while moving forward with positive progress.

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Olanna and Kainene's Distant and Allegorical Relationship

Esmeralda Ochoa

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), tells the story of the historical and tragic civil war between Nigeria and Biafra. During this time of the civil war, much political tension and external consequential events occur and affect the mass of Nigeria and Biafra. Adichie makes various references to essential events during this time of the civil war in varied ways to display the severity of tragedy, such as with the characters, their personality, essential events during their lives, and more. A prime example of her referencing an allegorical message of the civil war is her use of the twin sisters, Olanna and Kainene; both sisters represent the conflict between Nigeria and Biafra with their personalities and their life events represent the conflict between the two countries, such as the strict border regulation, boycotts, and more. Therefore, Adichie uses Olanna and Kainene's complicated relationship to represent the two countries of Nigeria and Biafra and show her political desires of peace through the twin's personalities and life events.

The relationship between Olanna and Kainene experiences many conflicts and represents specific events during the civil war of Nigeria. One of the first conflicts that the sisters experience is when Kainene discovers the affair between Olanna and Richard, Kainene's husband. Kainene stops speaking to Olanna and this gradually harms their relationship as siblings. This separation as sisters creates a permanent fracture in their relationship and Olanna describes it as "a sharp cracking inside her" (Adichie 312). This metaphoric crack represents the initial separation of Biafra from Nigeria when they claimed their independence from the state. In an article named, "'She Is Waiting': Political Allegory and The Spector of Secession in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Half of A Yellow Sun," by Meredith Coffey, the author elaborates and criticizes this metaphoric separation between the sisters. Coffey indicates that "This emotional 'cracking' might function similarly to the geopolitical 'cracking' (Coffey 12). Thus, this argument between Olanna and Kainene is an allegorical parallel of the election in Nigeria because of the lack of honesty from the government and the sister. Adichie is metaphorically stating that the countries of Biafra and Nigeria must make peace because their relationship is similar

to a familial relationship and the destruction of this relationship will have external and physical consequences to the mass of the two parties. Therefore, this metaphorical fracture of Olanna and Kainene's sisterly relationship is an allegory of the division of Nigeria and Biafra and these relational destructions correspond to the negative external outcomes of war and division.

Adichie's allegorical message of war is further elaborated with the disappearance of Kainene, and the twin sister's distant relationship can also be interpreted as an allegory for the current political situation during the civil war. During the search for Kainene, Olanna describes her agony to find her sister as "if they were all scratching desperate fingernails on a hard scarred wall" (Adichie 521). This description and simile are representative of the strict border limits between Biafra and Nigeria. In the same article, Coffey writes that this metaphorical wall is to "replace the geopolitical border" (Coffey 13). Moreover, the wall being metaphoric of the Nigerian-Biafran border represents the robust restrictions of the mass crossing of the border to Nigeria during the civil war. The border of Nigeria-Biafra excluded Biafrans from entering Nigeria, thus whoever crossed the border was considered to be on the 'other side' and was likely to be considered as disappeared from a Nigerian perspective. This historical reference and event of the Nigerian-Biafran border further elaborates on Adichie's political position of the war. Adichie uses the disappearance of Kainene and the border to represent the distant relationship of the sisters in correlation to the countries. Adichie's political position of peace is seen in the distance and the impossible reunion of the countries and sisters. This metaphorical and literal separation creates a tragic effect on the masses and eventually they see each other as "other" and missing. Therefore, this metaphorical division between the sisters and countries creates further tension for the two elements and expresses the call for peace by Adichie.

The complicated and controversial relationship between Olanna and Kainene corresponds to essential and main historical events during the Nigerian-Biafran civil war. In the novel, Kainene discovers the affair between Olanna and Richard which leads Kainene to ignore and exclude Olanna from her life permanently. Olanna is regretful towards her affair with Richard and expresses to him that her sister, "doesn't forgive easily [and] it would make no sense at all to tell her" (Adichie 297). This silence and distance between Olanna and Kainene of not speaking to each other represents a historical moment during the Nigerian-Biafran civil war. Coffey comments that this particular moment in the sisters' relationship represents the historical general election of Nigeria in 1964 during the civil war. This particular historical election during the Nigerian-Biafran war was boycotted because it had "allegations of fraud on the part of the federal government" (Coffey 12). Thus, this betrayal and argument between

Olanna and Kainene are allegorical towards the election of Nigeria because of infidelity and betrayal towards the rest of the country and the two sisters. Adichie further allegorically represents her political position of peace with this disagreement and historical event. The allegory represents the continuous fracture of the two countries and when fraud and betrayal occur in a war, or sibling relationships, it creates more conflict and further division between the two parties, such as the two sister's relationship. Therefore, Adichie uses the allegory of the distant relationship between Kainene and Olanna to represent the election and express her personal desire for peace between the countries.

Overall, Adichie uses the twin sister Olanna and Kainene's controversial relationship to represent the two countries' war of Nigeria and Biafra to express her political desire for peace through their life events and personality. This allegory of peace is seen through various examples. Firstly, when Kainene and Olanna stop speaking to each other, it is metaphorically expressed as a crack between the two, which represents the crack of Nigeria when Biafra claims independence. Additionally, when Olanna is searching for Kainene, it is a metaphorically expressed wall between the two sisters. Thus, this wall is representative of the border between Biafra and Nigeria. Moreover, when Kainene discovers the affair between Olanna and Richard, Kainene stops speaking with her sister. This silence between the sisters represents the historical boycott of the election in Nigeria because of fraud and betrayal. These events between the two sisters correlate to the Nigerian-Biafran war but are also representative of Adichie's take on the relationship between the two countries. She expresses that when two countries, or people, are in a conflict, it has external consequences for the rest. Therefore, this allegory humanizes the civil war of Nigeria-Biafra and explains that the conflict is similar to relational conflict between siblings.

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A Raisin in the Sun: A Lesson in Pride, Power, and The American Dream

Casandra Schafer

Lorraine Hansberry's play *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959) showcases the struggles a Black family in Chicago faces from external sources in their attempt to achieve the colloquial "American Dream" and purchase a house that just happens to be in a White neighborhood. These external struggles in turn create internal power struggles within the Younger family, primarily displayed between Walter and Mama, and between Mama, Ruth, and Beneatha. Frequently hindered by systemic racism including legally binding policies prohibiting Black families from purchasing homes in any location they chose, the "American Dream" has been out of reach for Black people determined to own their own home. The external obstacles of that path forward also creates or exacerbates power struggles within their family unit. Hansberry takes her experience with external forces against her own family's home purchase and recreates them in the play, showcasing how those struggles can cause breakdown internally within the Younger family. Expressing the push-back against these external forces and how they can mitigate the internal struggles caused by them, *A Raisin in the Sun* dramatizes Hansberry's lesson: that these struggles can and should be overcome through individuals' unique approaches toward that common goal.

The unique approach to combating racism Hansberry encompasses in her play was based on the real-life events of her own family purchasing a home in a white neighborhood in Chicago in 1937. In that period, home deeds had legally binding racially restrictive covenants that discriminated against Black people buying homes in white neighborhoods. Her family was sued to push them to move out, and the case was elevated to the Supreme Court, in *Hansberry v. Lee.* As described on the Library of Congress blog,

> [T]he Supreme Court reversed the state court ruling because the interests of the parties in *Hansberry* were not adequately represented in *Burke* [an earlier class action lawsuit enforcing a restrictive covenant]. […] The Hansberrys successfully argued that the agreement was invalid and defended their right to keep their Woodlawn home, but the fight to outlaw all discriminatory covenants carried on. (Price)

The case of *Hansberry v. Lee* won on a technicality as opposed to completely overturning legal segregation of the time. Though it did not overturn these exisiting covenants, it paved the way for additional individuals to push for and eventually abolish the legality of these covenants thanks Hansberry's father's choice to pursue the case beyond the state of Illinois' ruling. In the time reflected in *Raisin,* these covenants were still enforceable, and the Younger family is subject to them when Mr. Lindner visits their home to offer to buy them out and prevent them from moving into the neighborhood. Mr. Lindner describes his visit's purpose as part of a welcoming committee: "And we also have the category of what the association calls – [*He looks elsewhere*.] – uh – special community problems…" (Hansberry 513). The external force of racism against the Younger family in the play presents the strongest conflict to address because they are the community problem to the group Lindner represents, and it exemplifies the obstacles in having their own pride and power over their obtaining The American Dream of homeownership.

While Lindner represents the external forces that aim to prohibit Black people from homeownership and ambition in reaching that goal, internal family struggles also show the power plays within the family that can hinder moving forward together. The power dynamics at play between between Walter and Mama, and between Mama, Beneatha, and Ruth, determine individual choices that initially hinder their common goal of having a better life for the family. Walter resents Mama's position as head of the household and his status of a working man subject to the needs of his employer, while Mama struggles with understanding why being a working man is considered a negative:

> RUTH. It's just that he got that heart set on that store –
> MAMA. You mean that liquor store that Willie Harris want him to invest in?
> RUTH. Yes –
> MAMA. We ain't no business people, Ruth. We just plain working folks.
> RUTH. Ain't nobody business people till they go into business. Walter Lee say colored people ain't never going to start getting ahead till they start gambling on some different kinds of things in the world – investments and things. (Hansberry 483)

As Mama comes from a time when "we was worried about not being lynched and getting to the North if we could and how to stay alive and still have a pinch of dignity" (497). She also laments that those ideals have altered with Walter: "You ain't satisfied or proud of nothing we done" (497). To Mama, having a job and a family is something to be proud of, avoiding illegal activity to make sure the family has a roof over their heads and food on their table is all they need, by itself it is powerful and satisfactory for her. The next generation, personified

by Walter, hopes for more than just survival the way Mama views it. Instead, Walter expresses dissatisfaction with his position and what it means for their family, when he complains to Ruth, "I'm thirty-five years old; I been married eleven years and I got a boy who sleeps in the living room – [*Very, very quietly*.] – and all I got to give him is stories about how rich white people live…" (479). However, his choice to move into investing and owning a business the way Ruth described to Mama is consistently talked down and disparaged: through Hansberry's writing she touches on how the capitalist society that discriminates against Black people is far more unstable of a path forward than Walter idealizes it to be. In an article titled "The Politics of 'Home' in Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*," Kristin Matthews further explains Walter's position in society and how his aspirations are doomed to fail. She argues, "[I]t is this romantic belief in the ability to make it 'big' that undermines Walter's efforts at self-determination […] Walter's failing is his *acceptance* of the capitalist economic system that necessarily excludes him from ascendancy" (558), showing his choice hinders his pride and his power over moving forward. His choice to take the money without anyone's knowledge and invest it anyway creates an obstacle even more catastrophic to their family and their power to move forward and take part in the American Dream than his attempts to have everyone convince Mama to let him do what he wants with the money.

While Walter and Mama disagree on what pride and power mean from their near opposing viewpoints, conflict simultaneously exists between Mama, Beneatha, and Ruth. A feminist view on the women's power relations is explained in "From Power-over to Power-to: Power Relations of Women in Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun.*" All three women differ in their view of success and pride, and the play uses the portrayal of each to express it. Saravia-Vargas maintains that "[t]he play portrays the traditional role of the housewife, represented by Ruth, in contrast to the emerging role of the literate, educated working female, which Beneatha embodies. Lena represents the old generation of African-American women coming right from slave sharecroppers" (35). The choices these three women make throughout the play can exacerbate the conflicts between them, undermining parenthood or condemning God or the choice to marry or simply refusing to understand each other's points of view. In addition it creates power struggles inhibiting each woman's ability to feel pride in the way each chooses her life. It is through the women's choices to see each other's perspective. Ruth admits Mama is a strong woman to have nurtured such strong children in Beneatha and Walter Lee. Mama's acceptance of Beneatha's rejection of the desirable rich suitor George creates a better understanding between them. Beneatha's gratitude of Mama's understanding - that foreshadow the choices made to show support and familial pride over pettiness and conflict,

empowering Walter's future choices in the play (Saravia Vargas 48-9).

The recurrence of Walter's selfish demands and choices throughout *Raisin* can hinder the idea that he is a positive hero who makes the right choices for his family. Walter's callousness about what he feels he deserves–frustration at his failed manipulation of Mama to agree what he wants is the best choice, his willingness to overcome his pride for money from Lindner–and in so doing, bruising the pride his family feels in him–combine to create a complex character that is difficult to appreciate in a positive way. He creates obstacle after obstacle with his choices, in particular after Mama puts a down payment on a house for the family. She bought a house in a white neighborhood which shocks everyone together, and for good reason. Mama explains to everyone, particularly to Walter, who is bitter about not being allowed to dispose of the insurance money, "Son – I just tried to find the nicest place for the least amount of money for my family. […] Them houses they put up for colored in them areas way out all seem to cost twice as much as other houses. I did the best I could" (Hansberry 506). Mama's point embodies the external forces pushing against the Younger family's chance to reach the American Dream. In the international article "In Search of Equality: A Dream Deferred for African Americans in *A Raisin in the Sun,*" Nowrouzi, Faghfori, and Zohdi explain the historical accuracy of Mama's lines:

> Mama's response to the question why she bought a home in a white neighborhood reveals the discriminations and economic exploitations. […] In 1950, black people had to pay more for less appropriate places than whites. […] Discriminations trapped Blacks in ghettos and provided no opportunity for them to escape from them (Nowrouzi et al 2272).

Walter's sullenness over this creates a depression that has him skipping work, something the family learns after several days of absence and risk of losing his job. This encourages Mama to prove her trust and love in him by giving him the rest of the money to dispose of and do as he wishes: "I paid the man thirty-five hundred dollars down on the house. That leaves sixty-five hundred dollars. […] I want you to take this money and take three thousand dollars […] for Beneatha's medical schooling. The rest you put in a checking account – with your name on it" (Hansberry 509). While Mama makes a point that she is proud of him and willing to help him achieve his dreams in a way that does not damage the family, Walter makes a choice that jeopardizes any way forward for any of them, internally as well as against the external forces of racism. He takes all the money and invests it in the liquor store with a friend that the whole family was so set against. The friend to whom he gives the money instead runs away with it. When the money is stolen from him – "*That money is made out of my father's flesh…*" (519) – there seems no way to set it right, until he chooses

to invite Mr. Lindner back to accept their payout as long as they do not move into the white neighborhood where Mama bought the house.

The possibility of redemption for Walter seems unattainable. Lorraine Hansberry discusses this in a 1959 interview after the play showed such success on Broadway. Hansberry explains:

> Walter is affirmative because he refuses to give up. There are moments when he doubts himself, and even retreats, and goes back into something that I don't agree with [as the author], and things that he decides to do. But in the end, beyond that point [of investing the money instead of taking it to the bank] he says not only was he cheated the solution is to go out and cheat everybody else [asking Lindner to return in preparation of taking the buyout] because this is the way life is, but what he really means is this is the way life around *him* is. What he represents is my own feeling that sooner or later, we're going to have to make principled decisions about a lot of things. (Hansberry 06:26-07:22)

Here Hansberry spells out the complex operation of power, self-pride, and the American Dream. She reasons that Walter's stumbling does not equate to a fall. So when Lindner returns, and Mama keeps Travis in the room to witness Walter's next step, the time to make a principled decision presents itself. Travis' presence completely alters Walter's course of action: "[W]e have all thought about your offer and we have decided to move into our house because my father – my father – he earned it. […] We don't want to make no trouble for nobody or fight no causes – but we will try to be good neighbors" (Hansberry 529). This step is small but profound, and with Hansberry's experience in real life it is understood that this is not a guarantee that the Younger family will live in peace, but it creates a path forward for other individuals willing to make the same choices for a common good for Black people to have power over working toward the American Dream.

As the play ends with the Youngers moving out of their run down apartment and anticipating moving into their own home, with playful teasing echoes of their former conflicts with each other, the ending is filled with ambiguity. The ambiguity rests on the fact that the Youngers' move does not necessarily create a "happily ever after" ending, because there will still be struggles and trials in attempting to overcome the segregation laws of the era. Like real life, the individual choice to move forward in *Raisin* gives other Black families who share the goal of the American Dream something to emulate and aim for other families. Though the internal familial struggles and external forces against the goals can be relatable by all, Hansberry assures her audience that "this is a [Black] play before it is anything else" (Hansberry 03:09-03:11). These struggles are focused primarily on what a Black family – and Hansberry

writes about a particular family in Chicago – faced at the time, and to some extent still face today.

The societal struggles against racism coupled with the struggles of the family create severe obstacles for a Black Chicago family in their pursuit of the American Dream in the 40s and 50s. In *A Raisin in the Sun*, Hansberry details these struggles and dramatizes the choices the Youngers make to resolve their conflicts. To accomplish their objectives with pride, they also have to bolster their determination to take charge of the direction of their lives. The Youngers exemplify the power that individuals exercise to resolve internal conflicts, which in turn result from external racist pressures that society places on them. Through the internal conflict resolutions, those individuals can make principled choices to overcome external pressures.

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