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Calliope

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GRADUATE ESSAYS

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Contributions in all areas of literary criticism are warmly welcomed. Essays must have the recommendations 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

This is the thirteenth issue of *Calliope*, the annual publication that generally features some of the best work in literary theory, criticism, and culture by undergraduates and graduates in the Department of English at California State University, Bakersfield.

The issue includes eleven original essays covering a wide range of literature from Shakespeare and Milton to Edwidge Danticat and Anne Rice. There are two essays on Shakespeare's Hamlet; two honors senior projects; two essays that won the 2020 Outstanding Undergraduate and Graduate Awards for the School of Humanities; a graduate paper that won first place in the 2020 Student Research Poster Competition in Humanities and Letters; and six literary reviews.

The cover design incorporates a reproduction of Caliope by José Luis Muňoz Luque, an acrylic, gold leaf, and gold painting from his series called "The Nine Muses of Greek Mythology" (Spain, 1969).

The issue was almost entirely edited and designed online after the campus became virtual during the Covid-19 pandemic. Team *Calliope* thanks Bailey Russell for the expert photoshop of the digital image used on the front cover.

Elizabeth Lewis

Milton's Latent Queerness: A Theoretical Reading of the Paradise Cycle

John Milton, despite being a historian and poet rather than a theologian, has influenced the Catholic Church's inward mythology regarding angels, demons, and even marriage. His text, focused on the Fall of both angels and humanity, draws on Catholic Tradition and deep Canon, as well as Jewish Talmudic concepts and, perhaps unintentionally, Muslim concepts of Satan . While his beliefs have not, unlike Augustine or Thomas Aquinas, influenced formal Catholic theology, he absolutely gave us the imagery of angels and demons that surround Catholic superstition and mysticism. Like Dante, Milton's religious writing lies outside the explicit canon but has certainly influenced our tradition, and in fact holds a valid argument for affirmation of queerness.

Milton's beliefs are more than privately held beliefs. His prior work, *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* , influenced personal belief about divorce within Christian communities, even as the act is still considered immoral and to be abhorred. Milton's address to the Westminster Assembly of Divines regarding divorce influenced their approval of divorce under certain circumstances. His argument, based in both Biblically and personally influenced theology, was outside of religious norm, yet impacted his own religious contemporaries and their decision. Thus, Milton's views can be seen as a valid, *as well as* controversial, interpretation of scripture and canon.

While Milton ascribes to a form of complementarianism, the idea that man and woman were created to perfectly complement each other, he does not weaponize such a theory against homosexuality. Rather, he presents a nuanced and theologically sound argument *for* homosexuality as not only a valid but even holy option. [iii] While the modern church [iv] still ignores theologically sound arguments for affirmation of homosexuality, Milton was subtly giving credence to these arguments as early as 1666. Queerness, while broadly meaning not-straight and/or not cisgender, refers to fluidity and a transgressive nature that centers experiences, attractions, and identities outside the binary. Milton, in fact, presents angels as inherently queer and queer humans as still worthy of honor.

The first way Milton engages with queerness is by musing, through his mouthpiece Adam, as to why women were even created at all. Adam asks:

O why did God,
Creator wise, that peopl'd highest Heav'n
With Spirits Masculine, create at last This
novelty on Earth, this fair defect Of Nature,
and not fill the World at once With Men as
Angels without Feminine Or find some other
way to generate Mankind? (Book X,
888-895)

He is, through Adam, musing as to why God created women- this "novelty" and "fair defect / Of Nature" rather than making humans all Masculine/between Men. This would of course necessitate some form of queer, man-on-man relationships on Earth that would *be Divinely ordained* . The idea of Heaven being populated with entirely Masculine beings—that is to say, all the angels are male-is also interesting in its implications. Is Milton here wishing for a biological reality with no women, one which reflects the apparent state of Heaven? As he was married three times to women and we're unsure of his orientation, this could just reflect the misogyny of the time, based in Eve-blaming for the Fall. However, the intimation that it was Adam's weak, human masculinity, "From Man's effeminate slackness [weakness] it begins" (XI.634) and not Eve's inherent flaws, that is, womanhood, that led to the fall are impossible to ignore. I would posit that this indicates androphilia [vii] in Milton's ideal--that manhood is the perfect form of being, that Angels choose to remain Masculine in Heaven to reflect the image of the Father-Male-God. This continuation of Aristotelian belief regarding manhood as perfection with womanhood being flawed inherently [vii] is cemented in the continuous gendering of God and Angels as masculine.

Gender is where things get a little complicated, though, Milton refers to Angels as both Masculine and androgynous. Gender and sex are, oddly enough considering the date of the text, not the same; they are separate, as Spirits (that is, angels and Demons and the rest of the non-human humanoid concepts such as Night) can shift their Sex to reflect their "Essence," a word which I believe contextually refers to internal gender:

For Spirits **when they please**
Can either Sex assume, or both; so soft
And uncompounded is their Essence pure
Not ti'd or manacl'd with joynt or limb (423-6, emphasis added).

Are we then to assume that Angels, as they are Spirits, can- and do- know their gender and choose their sexual being? That gender and sex are not inextricably locked together in a biological certainty that humans echo? This concept is a cornerstone of modern queer and transgender theory and it is perhaps shocking to see it in the context of angelic beings. However, we return to this again and again within the text. Spirits choose their shape- sex- to "execute their aerie purposes/ And works of love or enmity fulfill" (430, and "when they please" (423. Thus, it can be posited that if angels are presenting as a particular gender, such as Male, it is because of their choice to do so. This is radical in its suggestion that angels are both not-inherently-gendered *and* choosing to be Masculine. This is not, it must be noted, an implication that angels can or do simply shift their bodies to conform to heteronormative standards; rather, it seems that this furthers the queerness of angelic identities, as the angels can choose other sexes, and are choosing to*present* as masculine/male. This is freeing: they can choose to be whichever sex they identify with (thus, presentation and identity are more important than physical form. It seems that the angels are intrinsically masculine and shift their appearance and form accordingly.

Perhaps this discussion of form and presentation is too hypothetical, as angels are not bodied beings: yet, they absolutely engage in sexual activity. Adam asks Raphael "Love not the heav'nly Spirits, and how their Love / Express they" (VII.1253-4. Raphael *blushes* , which indicates*something* intimate that must occur between angels- that Raphael himself has experienced. This is a stunning revelation, that Raphael, second of all arch-angels, highest and purest, has had experiences that make him blush to speak of openly. Adam is asking for specifics: "do they [Angels] mix / Irradiance, virtual, or immediate touch?" (VII.1253-4). This context, while obviously referring to eroticism and sexuality,and it is perhaps what makes Raphael blush. However, rather than brushing it off with an easy "angels don't do such things," Raphael explains in detail that there is some form of erotic expression between angels, saying:

...we enjoy / In eminence, and obstacle find none
Of membrane, joint, or limb, exclusive bars;
Easier than air with Air, if Spirits embrace,
Total they mix, **Union of Pure with Pure**
Desiring nor restrain'd conveyance need
As Flesh to mix with Flesh, or Soul with Soul (VII.1260-6, emphasis added).

Let us unpack this more in full: The angels "enjoy / in eminence," or, indulge in plea-

sure in the highest plane, heaven, or the most perfect state of being. "Membrane" and "limb" are not obstacles to sexual expression, or, in modern language, sexuality is made of more than a hymen breaking and phallic penetration. This answers any questions as to how the Church's view on sodomy fits here [ix] --because despite being sexual and androphilic, angel sexuality is perhaps too formless to be interpreted as sodomy. Sexual ecstasy occurs on a heavenly plane, between beings who, again, are masculine in expression and formless in body--no obstacle exists between their erotic experience, their subversive "Union." Even the use of the word "union" must be addressed, as in a Biblical context the term consistently refers to the Christian conceptualization of marriage, man and wife, engaging in conjugal relations by which, to quote the Catechism, the "marriage bonds are sanctified." Sexuality within marriage is seen as a holy good for the sole purpose of pro-creation. However, if angels are solely created by God, and thus do not need to procreate, why would they engage in sexual acts if not *solely for pleasure*? What does this say about Milton's view of human sexuality, if we are merely emulating heaven? It seems impossible not to see sex for pleasure as blessed in this interpretation. Also important is the emphasis of "Pure with Pure," of angel with angel. Let us not forget that Angels are coded as Masculine, and that Raphael in particular reads as Masculine. Thus, we must read a queerness into this scene, an androphilic sexuality between angels that must by definition be ordained by God. If total union is considered pure within the guidelines of the church then angels will be engaging in the "ultimate sexual union of complete and utter oneness of being" (Herath 2017.

It is important to briefly address the humans in Milton's world as well as the angels. Adam and Eve obviously have a tumultuous relationship. They are created for and from each other, and yet Adam is dissatisfied. This echoes the unfortunate ancient view of women being inferior beings, but doing so brings up echoes of male/male idealized relationships. Milton references Alexander the Great, a hero whose homosexuality was part of his humanity. His flaws were not based in his orientation—that is to say, his queerness did not make him inherently sinful. Satan is not reveling in their queerness as a path to having particular sinners, but rather comes off as annoyed that the standard sexual temptation of young women did not work (*Paradise Regained*, II.196-200). He is used as an example for temptation being rather difficult work for the demons to attempt. The temptation of Christ is also presented as gender-neutral. Satan's temptation of Christ is presented as a banquet not only of food but of all earthly temptations. Belial's suggestion to "Set woman in [Christ's] eye" (2.153) is disregarded, in favor of a genderless

series of temptations, of androgynous nymphs, beautiful ladies, and "Tall stripling youths rich clad, of fairer hue / Than Ganymede or Hylas" (2.352-53). Even more interesting is that Christ does not reject these delights and their ends as sinful by nature, but only because they come from Satan. He can get these delights himself, without taking fruit from the forbidden hand- an image which is itself erotic.[x] Temptation is framed as leaning towards excess, not towards absolute immorality.

Milton, albeit unintentionally, engages in a most modern argument for queerness. David Halperin writes that Queer is "by definition whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant... it describes a horizon of possibility" (*Saint Foucault* 1995).[xi] Writing a text focused on redemption for Satan, criticizing Adam and even Christ, framing angels as queer, and androphilic; all of these things are at odds with the traditional, acceptable view of Christian figures and even Christian values. Angels are presented, most radically, as genderqueer beings who freely choose their presentation over physical form, in order to reflect their intrinsic masculinity. The concept of transness and genderqueerness is something the modern queer community is still struggling with, and we see it presented here in a quasi-religious text. Yet, so much of Milton has influenced modern Christian thought. Most Christians' perceptions of the Fall, of angels and demons, of Christ's temptation, come from Milton rather than actual Biblically based theology. Thus, could the modern church, in its battle between affirming theology and anti-gay creeds, take a note from Milton?

Endnotes

[i] Islam presents the Fall as the result of Satan's pride, which has over the centuries become the general characterization of Satan/Lucifer (in no small part because of Milton).

ii While Milton was not himself Catholic, *Paradise Lost* has influenced theology closest to Catholicism within the historical context, and as it is also that which I am most familiar with, so it is what we will be referencing in regards to theology.

[iii] While I'm not of the opinion that he *intentionally* argues *for* homosexuality, it could be that he was subconsciously affirming or even queer himself. Either way, the text stands in all its queerness.

[iv] Excepting certain faiths such as Episcopalians, half of Lutheranism, Unitarians, as well as Mennonite and similar smaller faith communities, which are open and affirming to LGBTQ+ Christians.

[v] There are multiple arguments regarding the open affirmation of queer folk within the Church (ie, that queerness is not inherently sinful, but the one I find most compelling is the fact that Christ blessed and affirmed a queer couple (the Centurion begs Christ to heal his "pais", not his servant--a term which refers to a younger, submissive partner within a male-male queer relationship in the Roman era.)

[vi] Milton was famously referred to as "so faire that they called him the Lady of Christ's College" by John Aubrey.

[vii] Androphilia is the behavioral science term for, typically, male-male homosexuality--specifically love for men or masculinity. Gynophilia, seen more commonly, is female-female homosexuality--specifically love for women or femininity.

[viii] "..the male is by nature superior and the female inferior, the male ruler and the female subject. And the same must also necessarily apply in the case of mankind as a whole." Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 1, 1254b [1].

[ix] "Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity, tradition has always declared that 'homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered.' They are con-trary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed

from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved." *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Second Edition, promulgated by Pope John Paul II. Liberace Editrice Vaticana. 1994.

[x] This is where I remind readers that Christ surrounded himself with twelve men, one of whom (at least) he kissed.

[xi] Finding a set definition of "queer," a concept both personal and focused on liminality and amorphous identity, is incredibly difficult.

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Michael Musick

The Limits of Perspective: A Postcolonial and Feminist Critiquque of *Hamlet*

The plays and the poetry of William Shakespeare occupy a hallowed place in Western culture- British culture in particular- as well as in world literature. Some of the universally acknowledged reasons for the enduring power of Shakespeare's work rest on the long-held view that the themes developed in his plays concern themselves with the gamut of human experience. Love, both euphoric and tragic, injustice, compassion, betrayal, revenge, and death, virtually every conceivable aspect of the human condition is eloquently represented in some way in his plays. And when in addition, we consider the well-developed characters Shakespeare places in different contexts and their complex responses of hate, fear, cruelty, jealousy, madness, violence, we have a sample of the most complicated forms of human interaction. Many, if not most, readers and audience members throughout the centuries have been able to identify with those characters' circumstances and emotions in some way large or small and have been able to see a part of themselves depicted either on the page or the stage. To experience this self-recognition is to understand that the weaknesses and supposed evils each of us secretly find in ourselves are neither new nor unique; they are of universal significance. When each of us arrives at this realization, we can find some consolation, perhaps even inspiration, to persevere in our attempts to overcome our defects, strengthen our weaknesses, or at the very least meditate deeply about them. But viewed through the perspectives of Postcolonial and Feminist criticism, texts can yield other insights into ourselves both as individuals and as members of the global community. When viewed through these two modern perspectives, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* has even more to offer than to allow a universal response to age-old dilemmas. These perspectives broaden a reader's understanding of the sociocultural forces of imperialist patriarchy that have devalued and marginalized nations and women as a whole.

In "Reading *Hamlet* Upside Down: The Shakespeare Criticism of Natsume Sōseki", Todd Andrew Borlik introduces the critical work of the preeminent Japanese English scholar,

professor and author, by describing Sōseki's critical approach: "By insisting that an author's reception is always historically and culturally determined, Sōseki anticipates key aspects of postcolonial theory" (383). Adopting this critical view, it is not difficult to see some inherent advantages that come from being raised outside of Western culture. Borlik cites Sōseki's concise summary of his perspective rather humorously:

> Even the works of Shakespeare might be more thoroughly appreciated if they were reexamined from unorthodox positions. Someone, once in a while, should take a good long look at Hamlet through his legs. Presented upside-down, the tragedy might earn the bald remark: 'Ye Gods, this play is bad.' How else, except by standing on their heads, can the critics in our literary world make any progress? (383)

In his book, *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*, Peter Barry, Emeritus Professor of English at Aberystwyth University, identifies several aspects of the postcolonial critical perspective, one of which is to identify those elements within a text that engage in the lessening of other cultures or civilizations by identifying them as "other" or devaluing them as uncivilized or tainting them with the basest of human qualities (195). The first instance of this debasement is encountered fairly early in the play, when Horatio, in describing the ghost of Hamlet's father, references the armor he wore in battle with the enemy. This enemy is described in terms of their nationality with an ethnic slur: "He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice" (1.1.65). This same derogatory moniker for the enemy recurs when Voltemand, speaking to the King, describes the actions of Norway "to be a preparation 'gainst the Polack" (2.2.63.

Another occasion this language occurs is when Hamlet learns of the worthless piece of land Fortinbras intends to claim;, he declares, "Why, the Polack never will defend it" (4.4.23. Throughout the play, despite the acrimony between Denmark and Norway, the neighboring Scandinavians are consistently referred to in lofty terms of honor and respect. Reading *Hamlet* from a postcolonial perspective suddenly foregrounds that which was previously invisible: that Poland and its people are less or "other", fit only to be characterized as mercenaries, unwilling or unable to defend their own land. One reason for the facile use of this derogatory term, both in Shakespeare's day as well as the 11th century setting of the play, is the variant of Christianity that was well established in Poland, and throughout eastern Europe, that would come to be known as the Eastern Orthodox Church, viewed by western Europeans as pagan or heretical. Because this enemy, unlike Norway, had differences of faith that were unbridgeable and unacceptable, they were deemed unequal and undeserving of the respect paid to cultures

that shared similar cultural inheritance.

In her thesis entitled, "A Critique of Feminist Criticism in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* : The Decomposition of Ophelia and Gertrude", author Carolyne M. Evans addresses a similarly urgent need to apply new approaches to the Western canon, particularly to the "sacred" works of writers like Shakespeare (6). She faults the preponderantly formalist treatment of Shakespeare as perpetuating the unconscious acceptance of the patriarchal mindset by men and women alike, and she acknowledges that Feminist critical theory does not only inform a purely academic, literary approach, but also seeks to advance a socio-political agenda. This approach sharply "[identifies] Western literature as 'the record and the instrument of the sexism, racism, and class oppression of Western civilization, [that] both embodies and perpetuates the anti-egalitarian values of politically dominant groups, mainly upperclass white males" (6). When adopting a Feminist critical perspective, the textual artifacts of the hegemonic patriarchy of Shakespeare's day readily advance to the foreground. The first example of the diminution of women comes from Claudius, when he takes issue with Hamlet's inconsolable demeanor after his father's death, calling it "unmanly grief" (1.2.94). Feeling betrayed, bitter, and jealous about his mother's hasty re-marriage, Hamlet gripes, "Frailty, thy name is woman!" (1.2.146). Taken in isolation, one might say that Claudius's employment of such trope served merely to characterize him negatively as sexist, hinting at his unscrupulous willingness to manipulate and dominate by whatever means. But in Hamlet's case, it may be excused as the resentful, inconsiderate generalization of one in the throes of grief. However, Laertes, brought to tears over the loss of his beloved sister Ophelia, acknowledges the "shame" of the moment, declaring, "when these [tears] are gone,/ The woman will be out" (5.1.187-88). These subtle and not so subtle references to the weakness and inadequacy of women are compounded when this perspective is used also to shed a light on both prominent female characters of the play, Gertrude and Ophelia. They are both hapless, helpless creatures at the mercy of the men in their lives. Their limited options for survival are characterized as pernicious in the case of Gertrude, and pitiful, in the prevailing depiction of Ophelia's tragic decent into madness. Full credit must be given to the impact that Feminist theory and criticism in more recent times has had in interpreting Ophelia's madness and suicide as a rejection of patriarchal constraints — an option that one of Gertrude's generation and position would not have entertained. In "Representing Ophelia: Women, Madness, and the Responsibilities of Feminist Criticism", Elaine Showalter, one of the first practitioners of American Feminist literary criticism, speaks to this contemporary reinterpretation: "For many feminist theorists, the madwoman is a heroine,

a powerful figure who rebels against the family and the social order; and the hysteric who refuses to speak the language of the patriarchal order" (91).

When the postcolonial and feminist critical approaches are applied to classic works like Shakespeare's *Hamlet* , they reveal that it is precisely the assumptions of liberal humanism (UK) and formalism (US) that allow such works to have a universal appeal. Modern critical approaches undermine universalist claims and help us see that even the most creatively gifted of writers are the products of their time and place. Using such alternative viewpoints allows us to combat our unconscious reaction to what the world presents to us. We only have one life — one lived experience — and reading, what poet and critic Matthew Arnold called "the best that has been known and thought" is the best way to come close to an understanding of and an empathy with the experiences of others, fictional and otherwise. Adopting a hybrid critical approach broadens and deepens our understanding of the human condition.

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Julia Anna Rinaldi

Hamlet Postmodernism Archetype

Hamlet's Quest for Authenticity in a Postmodern Landscape of Illusions

Religion, ethical codes, and moral philosophies are stabilizing forces that guide actions and frame reality in a way that is straightforward and navigable. Jean-Francois Lyotard's postmodern theory redefines these belief systems as nothing more than "grand narratives" - illusions about human progress and moral certitude intended to stifle an underlying disunity and inconceivable void (Barry 88). *Hamlet* dramatizes the internal agony of a man who, in the face of murder and incest within his own family, is forced to question his once secure, idealized, and preconceived notions about benevolence, honor, and moral responsibility. With his belief in an authoritative moral narrative irreparably shattered, Hamlet's perception of the real begins to fracture, and in an attempt to cling to some reassuring model for action, he draws inspiration from the archetypal roles of irreverent trickster and heroic avenger.

Hamlet's soliloquies reveal his desire to reaffirm traditional values of Western Christendom, specifically, that existence is morally ordered and governed by universal, rational principles (King 42). This overarching religious and historical narrative lends itself to an optimistic worldview, in which the "hero of knowledge works toward a good etho-political end," and humanity is directed along a single, predetermined path toward its highest potential (Lyotard xxiv). In the aftermath of his father's death and the "o' erhasty" marriage between Claudius and Gertrude, Hamlet is disillusioned by the Danish court's lack of solemn respect for the dead, especially since traditional mourning rites have been sacrificed for the sexual and personal desires of his mother and uncle. With this "common" display of indifference towards death, fidelity, and brotherhood, along with the lack of moral consequence that follows, Hamlet's worldview becomes warped and his moral convictions, dismally obscured. Rather than a world held accountable to values like authenticity and loyalty, he now sees, "an unweeded garden/ That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature" (Shakespeare 1.2: 135-136). With this harrowing realization, Hamlet adopts an "incredulity toward meta-narratives,"especially ones that value moral objectivity and authenticity (Lyotard xxiv). He

begins to question whether this set of ideal values is ever actually personified - whether there is any corresponding reality in human practice - or if it's only ever the appearance of virtue that is presented (King 43). During Claudius and Gertrude's wedding, Hamlet begins to articulate his dismay at the growing disparity between what "seems" and what "is" (King 43). He indignantly remarks to Gertrude that his black mourning clothes and tears "indeed 'seem' /For they are actions that a man might play; /But I have within which passes show, /These but the trappings and the suits of woe" (Shakespeare 1.2.83-86). After King Hamlet's ghost confirms Claudius's treachery, Hamlet is thrust into an anguished and unstable oblivion, in which he becomes acutely aware of the appearances people slip on and off like masks. Realizing there is no unified, single narrative to guide his decisions, he finds himself at the intersection of a multiplicity of possible roles he could assume. To him, the earth is no longer fathomable and concrete, but "stale," "flat," and constantly shifting - nothing more substantial than a "foul and pestilent congregation of vapors" (l.2.133, 2.2.264). In an attempt to excavate this superficial landscape of illusions for any sense of truth and model for action, Hamlet adapts to his environment and finds temporary relief by committing himself to role-playing. In this way, Hamlet embraces "the postmodernist condition of identity as a constant switching among a range of different roles and positions" (Barry 147).

By assuming an "antic disposition" Hamlet plays the archetypal role of trickster and gadfly, dispensing veiled judgments upon Polonius, Claudius, Gertrude, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern, through wordplay and insinuation (Shakespeare 1.5 .179). With his irreverent and bawdy linguistic tricks, Hamlet personifies a "collective shadow figure, a summation of all the inferior traits of character in individuals" (Jung 150). According to Jungian theory, mythical tricksters seem nonsensical and "inferior" due to their apparent "unreason and unconsciousness," but they are in fact physical, wily manifestations of repressed instincts or hidden faults in other characters (142). Tricksters keenly expose the corruption and baser desires at work beneath the appearance of virtue. Polonius senses that there is a "method" to Hamlet's madness but does not fully comprehend his "pregnant" replies to be jabs at Polonius's gullibility, superficial concerns, and cliche-ridden philosophies. Similarly, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are oblivious to Hamlet's shrewdly insightful wordplay, even when he bluntly refers to them as sycophantic "sponges" who soak up the "King's countenance, rewards, and authorities" until they are dry and of no use to Claudius (Shakespeare 4.2.14-15). Although he eventually criticizes Gertrude's incestuous actions in a more abrasive manner, Hamlet at first goads her with the same, shrewd a wordplay. In her chambers, the Queen confronts him: "Thou hast thy father much offended,"

and Hamlet replies in double-tongue, ‘’Mother you have my father much offended” (Shakespeare 3 .4.8-9).

Despite reveling in his role as trickster, Hamlet suffers from a paralyzing sense of “identity confusion” (King 120). Unsatisfied with the inaction and mere cynical speculation that comprises his trickster role, he considers role-playing as the heroic avenger, a desire that is articulated in his soliloquy following the player’s emotionally charged performance of the legend of Pyrrhus: “Is it not monstrous that this player here /But in a dream of passion, Could force his soul so to his own conceit... And all for nothing” (Shakespeare 2.2: 4 72-474, 479). Hamlet identifies the irony in an artificial imitation of grief onstage seeming more tangible than what he perceives to be his own, authentic grief. When listening to the players’ tales of legendary heroic archetypes in myths, Hamlet recognizes the elements of ancient Greek tragedy within his own circumstances - betrayal, vengeance, and the call to complete a quest - resulting in an ironic instance of intertextuality. Sanctioned with the task of revenge by the ghost of his father, Hamlet wonders if in fulfilling this quest, he, like his mythic antecedents, will undergo an enlightening rebirth that will enable him to regenerate a corrupt society (Campbell 33-34). Although the hero’s quest archetype provides an attractive delineation of steps to follow, Hamlet begins to reevaluate its authenticity and whether the role of heroic avenger truly embodies justice or if it is merely another grand, illusory narrative (King 110). This hesitation is clear when Hamlet fails to exact vengeance with the single thrust of a dagger, when the opportunity presents itself while Claudius is praying. Killing Claudius in this instant would have aligned with the narrative of heroic avenger, in the same way “Pyrrhus’s bleeding sword” remorselessly fell on King Priam (Shakespeare 2.2.415-416). However, Hamlet is still compelled by yet another narrative, one of Christian salvation and the afterlife, in which a repentant Claudius is assured passage to heaven, rather than the eternal damnation that Hamlet believes he deserves.

Hamlet is burdened by the task of choosing which role he should play within his own story, inciting an episode of existential anguish. Until the final acts of the play, he is hopelessly caught at the nexus of these narrative roles and has yet to find a fulfilling and clearly defined path toward action. When confronted with the potent image of Yorick’s skull, however, Hamlet gains a newer, less daunting perspective on existence. Peering into the skull’s empty eye sockets, Hamlet marvels at the “base uses” to which we inevitably return. Even Yorick - a jester blanketed in childhood nostalgia, untainted by the corruption that now festers in the court - cannot escape the dusty abandonment of mortality. Hamlet realizes, that despite their

charades and duplicity, people are destined for the same unremarkable fate; their masks and painted virtues eventually decay, leaving only bones and anonymity. This does not engender a feeling of reckless, apocalyptic abandon, but a feeling of peace and consolation, as shown in his conversation with Horatio: "When our deep plots do pall and that should learn us /there's a divinity that shapes our ends /Rough-hew them how we will" (Shakespeare 5.2.9-11). This guiding divinity is not a "reductive formula" with strict absolutes, moral cause and effects, and clear directives (King 153). It is ambiguous and inscrutable, permitting a person to "rough-hew" and write their own story, outside the narrow confines of a single archetypal role or a grand, prescriptive narrative.

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Bailey Russell and Sidney Russell

Exploring Ovid: Translations and Textbooks

Latin is often considered a "dead language" that has fallen out of use and time. *Lexico.com* gives the primary definition "the language of *ancient* Rome and its empire, widely used historically as a language of scholarship and administration" (italics added) as if to emphasize that Latin is a language of the past ("Latin"). Of course, the qualifier is often added 'except in the Vatican' where Latin, up until recently, was still used by the Catholic Church as the language of official documents and meetings (Pullella). If pressed, people may even think of the use of Latinate terms in medicine, biology, and some other scientific fields – indeed, "Latin was the **language of science** [original emphasis] up to the beginning of the 18th century, so all medical texts were written in Latin including *De humani corporis fabrica* (1543) in which "the **terminology of anatomy is almost exclusively Latin**" (Répás 5).[1] Latin is also in quotidian use in the law.[2] Gamers can tell you that Latin is used, sometimes more accurately than other times, in video games such as "*Glory of the Roman Empire* [which] is a turn-based strategy game" and "includes an option to play in Latin" (Christesen and Machado 108). In other words, Latin is far from dead. So, how should someone interested in learning more about this not-so-dead language begin their journey? Well, the first step is picking up a book. From textbooks for beginning Latin students to avid Latinists looking for a good place to get their fix, one of the great ways into Latin, in particular Classical Latin, is via Ovid's *Metamorphoses* – a compendium of Roman Mythology which is available in its original Classical Latin glory (often along with a translation), simplified forms for people hoping to learn the language, or, for someone who

[1] Note that this source is a textbook for first year students of medicine compiled in 2013 and includes a section on Latin pronunciation rules, abbreviations, and vocabulary as well as exercises for practicing use.

[2] A simple Google search will pull up many different sources talking about Latin in the law including a Wikipedia page titled "List of Latin legal terms."

wants to know something about the culture Latin comes from but is not interested in the language itself, in various forms of translation. What form a reader ought to choose largely depends on their purpose.

TRANSLATING OVID: FINDING A BALANCE BETWEEN LITERAL AND AESTHETIC

Should translators stick literally to the words and syntax of the original work, or should they attempt to capture the aesthetics and meaning that the author was trying to convey? Depending on who you ask, the answer may be quite different. For instance, the Catholic Church recently (2011) changed the wording of several prayers in the New Roman Missal because the previous versions were, as Bishop Robert Barron writes, "not sufficiently faithful to the Latin and [were], at least in some instances, informed by questionable theological assumptions." Theoretically, word-for-word translations of a text will be true to the author's intent. However, literal translations are not always understandable as in the case of Nishida Kitaro, whose philosophical works have been translated from Japanese to English in such an "excessively literal style" that Nishida's thoughts were "virtually inaccessible" (Maraldo 465). Because languages like Japanese, English, and Latin have greatly varied syntax and grammar, a direct translation may be exceed-ingly difficult for readers to interpret. In addition, direct word-for-word translation often fails to account for stylistic choices a writer has made, such as alliteration and rhyme scheme, which can be equally as important as the content of the text in conveying the author's intent. Ultimately, when translating works such as Ovid's *Metamorphoses* from Classical Latin into English (or any other set of languages), it is important to find a balance between the literal meaning of the work and the aesthetic choices that an author made while also keeping in mind the audience the translation must reach.

Distinct Language Structure

From syntax to semantics to tense, languages have different structures. The greater the difference in structure, the more challenging word-for-word translations are to understand. In addition, cultural context can affect the meaning that certain words and phrases have, so what may be innocuous in one language may have a much stronger connotation in another, and some phrases, like idioms, which hold significance for one language or culture, are confusing jumbles of words for other languages and cultures. This leads to the necessity for

rearranging a sentence or original author and text intended to convey.

Language Law and Order: SVO v. DAGAN

English has many "complicated rules for the way in which we organize such structures [e.g. word order], rules which we have internalized, even if we cannot formulate them" (Barber 183). These rules are, however, not universal.

In some cases, this makes little to no difference when translating a work word for word. English readers could, for instance, understand "I have a book green" easily enough, though it is a little awkward. However, some rules do not translate well between languages. For instance, in English the object always follows the verb which follows the subject (Barber 187-188, 183-184); whereas "Classical Latin does not have an obligatory word order" (Clackson 89), and the conjugation system of Latin verbs sometimes leads to omission of the subject of the verb – for example "*Est dea sapientiae*" (Golman and Nyenhuis 19). This sentence, which means 'Minerva is a wise goddess,' literally translates to 'Is goddess wise;' however, the subject, "Minerva" was omitted, supplied only by its context (see Goldman and Nyenhuis 19). This causes the English translation to appear as though "goddess" is the subject and the sentence, an awkwardly worded question.

To some degree, problems with word order can be alleviated by using the Latin declensions and conjugations to write a coherent English sentence that, admittedly, changes the order of the words but does not change meaning. As an example, let us examine the Latin sentence "*Medea nunc ad aras antiquas Hecates ivit ut in silva carmina secreta et artes magicas disceret*." (Goldman and Nyenhuis 231). Word-for-word translation yields the English sentence 'Medea now to altar of ancient Hecate went so that into woods song secret and arts of magic learned.' A more accurate translation of this sentence can be constructed using Latin grammar rules. *Medea* is a nominative singular noun, telling us that Medea is the subject of the sentence. The verb, *ivit* is the past tense, third person, singular verb 'went,' and *ad aras antiquas* consists of ad 'to' (preposition) followed by an ablative (object of the preposition) singular noun *aras* and *antiquas* (adjective), which agrees in case and number with *aras*; thus, in traditional English syntax, 'Medea went to the ancient altar.'[3] The rest of the sentence may be likewise constructed.

'At this time, Medea went to the ancient altar of Hecate in the secret song woods and learned the art of magic'

An Issue with Tense: That Doesn't Exist in My Language

A further issue of translation is the absence of certain verb tenses in some languages that exist in others. Wigtil captures this issue as he writes, "Latin verb tenses translate easily into English, if one believes elementary language textbooks" (675); however, "Present tenses may need at various times English renditions in three different presents, a variety of past tenses, or even the perfect progressive. Each of the other Latin tenses poses similar difficulties" (685). One example of this is the difficulty in identifying the Latin hortatory and optative forms of the subjunctive which are relatively foreign to many English speakers.

The Latin hortatory expresses "a milder *exhortation* or *command* than the more direct imperative mood" (Goldman and Nyenhuis 225). An English speaker could translate a phrase like "*Vivat tamen!*" as 'yet let him live' (225); however, they would hardly distinguish this in meaning from an imperative like 'do not kill him.' A Latin speaker, on the other hand, would understand that 'Yet let him live' is not as direct as (and less rued when addressing a god than) 'do not kill him.' Further, the Latin optative case, which "is used to express a wish" (Goldman and Nyenhuis 225), seems gratuitous to the English speaker and sounds exceedingly archaic when translated, e.g."*Utiam di meliora dent!*" or 'Would that the gods may give better things!" (225), which in Modern English may be 'I wish the gods would give good things.'

When Words Mean Different Things

Because "rhetorical conventions carry different meanings in different contexts, "the meaning of a sentence may be completely different "even though the component parts of the text (eg. the words) are entirely translatable" (Bassnett 394-395).

Synonyms, Connotations, and Context: Well, It Could Mean This...

Bassnett talks about how direct translation can cause misinterpretations due to use of words which may hold different meanings by language and culture. She gives the example of the use of "caliphate" to mean 'state' in the translation of an Arabic statement on an Islamic website, noting that "caliphate" is "resonant of medieval legend and a vanished word of antiquity," which causes the text to "come across as archaic, over-the-top, ranting, almost absurdly Old Testament..." (395). Indeed, older words such as "caliphate" and even frequently used words such as "odor" (as opposed to "aroma") have very distinct connotations and can cause misinterpretation when translating. Two prime examples of this are "rape", which has come to mean 'to sexually violate someone against their will' even though it could mean 'to abduct' ("rape") and, "sinister"

which in Classical Latin simply meant 'left' as in "*manu sinistra*" 'on the left hand' (Goldman and Nyenhuis 147) and now is associated with something evil.

Even within books, authors recognize that different contexts and cultures can cause translation errors both between and within languages. For example, in T*he Two Towers*, Tolkien describes a scene when the gentle Hobbit, Sam, declares, "'I'd give a lot for half a dozen taters'" and the creature Gollum asks, "'What's taters, precious, eh, what's taters?'" Sam has to clarify "'Po—ta—toes'" even though both are speaking the same language because Gollum lacks the cultural context which led to the use of "taters" as synecdoche for "potato" (Tolkien, *The Two Towers* 332). If within one language the meaning of a word causes issues of understanding, then the transfer between languages multiplies the chance of such occurrences.

Additionally, the appropriate translation of words becomes difficult when one word can have multiple meanings such as the Latin word "*os*," which can mean "face, mouth; any opening, such as the harbor of a river or the opening of a cave' or (as a homonym in certain forms of) 'bone' (Goldman and Nyenhuis 469).

Though context clues can help in determining which meaning to use, sometimes the text really is not clear. We may turn to Tolkien's translation of Beowulf to aid in understanding this. In Tolkien's commentary, he mentions, "As for Scefing, it can thus, as we see, mean 'provided with a sheaf', 'connected in some way with a sheaf of corn', or 'son of a figure called Sheaf'" (Tolkien, Beowulf 138). While Tolkien ultimately uses the latter translation, he states, "I think the poet meant…" showing inability to definitively decide what the author intended (138). Translators are – at best – guessing at the meaning of the original work, lending credence to the idea of translating by meaning, an aesthetic method of translation which helps not only with differences in the words themselves but also with phrases that simply do not translate.

Idioms: That Really Doesn't Exist in My Language

Idioms are expressions which, though they have literal meaning, are not readily understood by speakers of languages or members of cultures other than those in which the idiom originates. A good example of the problems created by translation of idioms is "'cars of death'" – an idiom from an Islamic website. While the overall meaning of this phrase is recognizable as 'cars that cause death,' the actual meaning 'car bombs,' is very different (Bassnett 393). The former suggests cars such as the Ford Pinto that may lead to death (see *The Auto Editors of Consumer Guide*) while the latter refers to bombs placed in cars and relates to acts of terrorism.

Issues of Rhetorical Devices

Especially in poetry, though also extant in other forms of writing, the use of rhetorical devices, from meter to allegory to rhyme, shape the feeling that an author intends to convey. As Martin points out while delineating the process by which he came to use blank verse for his translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, there are many stylistic choices which make up Ovid's work including, to name a few, speed of narration, wordplay, and vacillation between sympathy and indifference to the characters in the poem – choices which form the work just as much as the words used to write it (Ovid, Martin, trans. 7-9). Some of these effects are, however, "impossible to reproduce" in English due to grammatical differences (7). When the Latin cannot be directly translated to English, translators have to decide how to adjust. In Martin's case, this meant using blank verse as "both an analogue to Ovid's dactylic hexameter and a willing and patient war-horse, infinitely adaptable…" to fit with the feeling of the original (Ovid, Martin, trans. 9).

Similarly, when translating Tolkien's *The Hobbit* into Latin, Walker explains, "One of the most enjoyable, as well as one of the most challenging, tasks was to render Tolkien's many songs into Latin verse" (VII). He explains that translations of poetry are inevitably "more paraphrase than translation," and, when he translated Tolkien's verses, his primary goal was to remain "true to the spirit, if not necessarily the letter, of Tolkien's originals" (VII).

However, as Underhill cautions, we must not favor form to the extent of losing the original meaning of the text. Underhill calls this "Translating Form Blindly" and claims that "[c]elebrating form deforms our impression of the poem and our impression of its voice" when we focus so much on how a poem says something that we forget to pay attention to what it says (155). Both form and meaning are intrinsic parts of the original work, and translators have to discover a way to convey this complexity by finding the *via media* between form and meaning.

Making the Tough Decision

With time, translation methods have shifted from the literal to the aesthetic and there and back again. In 1966, Fraser wrote, "Modern scholarly translators…try to see if it is possible to take Horace or Homer line by line, phrase by phrase, and give in English" equivalence in both meaning and in metrics. They mention that "to sound strange and odd… is thought a merit in modern verse translations where it would have been thought a fault in the older translators"

who "reshaped the sense of the original poem in English idiom" as opposed to the 1960s approach of providing "something like a map of the original" (130-131). Both methods have alternately been lauded as *the* method of translation; however, the reality is that both methods are good only in so far as they do not overstep one another.

Giles: "Construed Literally and Word for Word"

The late Reverend Doctor Giles left in his legacy a word-for-word translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which is certainly useful for studying vocabulary but is hardly a best-seller. He focuses exclusively on the word-level meaning of the text. To sample his work, let us examine the first sentence from his translation:

> *Animus* my mind *fert* inclines [me] *dicere* to speak of *formas* forms *mutates* changed in *nova corpora* into new bodies. (Giles 5)

The magic of Ovid's original work becomes muddied in Giles's translation by the constant back and forth between Latin and English, and it is easy for the reader to become lost. Reading only the English allows the general meaning of the text to be gleaned; however, the reader must work around the Latin words in order to do so, and at times the structure is extremely confusing, *exempla gratia*, "When whoever of the gods he was, he had divided the heap thus arranged, and had reduced it divided into members…" (Giles 6). Giles's work is far more promising as a study tool for someone interested in Latin vocabulary or grammar than for reading the stories of Ovid.

Martin: The Fun One

Close to the opposite end of the spectrum from Giles, Martin's sole translation seeks to "bring over as best he may those elements of Ovid's style that *can* be translated" (Ovid, Martin, trans. 6). He writes, "If the translator cannot reproduce one of Ovid's jokes, he may perhaps substitute one of his own in a different place to give a sense of Ovid's playfulness" (7). Martin's use of such creative translations highlights the dramatic side of Ovid's writing as in:

> But Phaëthon, his bright red hair ablaze,
> is whirled headlong, and tracing out an arc,

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[4] For instance, there is some question as to why he chose to say "and as they marvel at these happenings,/their private parts are wrapped in sheathes of bark," and includes "loins" in the description as well (Ovid, Martin, trans. 65) when at least two other sources only say "loins" or "thighs" (Ovid, Miller, trans 85; Ovid, Lombardo, trans. 44).

seems like a comet with a tail of fire,
or like a star about to fall that doesn't. (63)

Whether this is the most accurate rendering of Ovid's work or not,[4] it is certainly a good source for attracting the average reader. Martin takes some liberties in translating, but these liberties are generally negligible and easier to overlook than the complicated back and forth of Giles.

Lombardo: Good Translation, but What about Latin?

Lombardo attempts to capture "just these [e.g. fluidity amidst tensions and complexities of Latin hexameter verse] Ovidian sensibilities of pace and tone" in his translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Ovid, Lombardo, trans. xl) and claims to "have been conservative in retaining lines and passages bracketed for various reasons" by previous translators and editors of Ovid (xlii). This more conservative approach renders Lombardo's translation somewhere in between Giles and Martin on the spectrum of meaning and form. For instance, Lombardo translates:

But Phaëthon's red hair was a plume of flame,
As he was propelled in a long arc through the air,
Leaving a trail the way a star sometimes does
When it seems to have fallen from a cloudless sky. (42)

Compared to Martin's "comet with a tail of fire" (Ovid, Martin, trans. 63), Lombardo's translation is less dramatic; however, it flows more smoothly and has a more melodic feel.

Miller and the Side by Side: No Fear Ovid

Readers who favor Lombardo's translation but wish to have access to the original Latin can look to Miller's side-by-side translation in the Loeb Classical Library series. Someone who values meaning over form may prefer Miller to Lombardo and Martin as Miller chooses to write in accessible prose as opposed to poetic verse. For example, Miller translates:

But Phaëthon, fire ravaging his ruddy hair, is hurled headlong and falls with a long trail through the air; as sometimes a star from the clear heavens, although it does not fall, still seems to fall. (Ovid, Miller, trans., *Books I-VIII* 83)

This passage is set side by side with Ovid's original Latin:

At Phaethon rutilos flamma populante capillos volvitur in praeceps longoque per aera tractu fertur, ut interdum de caelo stella sereno esti non cecidit, potuit cecidisse videri. (82)

Miller's translation is clear and, as opposed to Giles's word for word which can be hard to follow, Miller's text rearranges the syntax into coherent English structure, albeit slightly dated. The benefit of the side by side is that it is possible to have a sense of the original work at the same time as the ease of reading in translation. Additionally, Latin students can practice decoding Ovid's original text with a reference guide to check their progress.

And the Award for Best Translation (In Our Humble Opinion) Goes to...

Overall, if we had only one translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, we would choose Miller's side-by-side from the Loeb Classical Library, which offers accessible prose and the original Latin. However, there are certainly reasons to look at other translations. For instance, as mentioned above, someone interested purely in vocabulary might find Giles's translation useful. Meanwhile, if the reader has little to no interest in the original Latin and simply wishes to read Ovid for pleasure, either Martin or Lombardo would be a good choice. For the true Ovid aficionado, however, the best translation is *many* translations: *e pluribus unum*. Having a selection of translations utilizing various methods offers the best approximation for the original intent. Further, students of Latin may find Ovid an access point to the language, and the various translations may offer insight into complicated sentences.

LATIN VIA OVID: A GOOD LATIN TEXTBOOK OR NOT?

Latin Via Ovid: A First Course by Norma Goldman and Jacob E. Nyenhuis is a text which teaches students to read Classical Latin through Ovid. On the surface, at least, this seems like a good choice, as many people are already familiar with these tales of Roman mythology or their Greek counterparts. Having some sense of what the text should say helps the student of Classical Latin analyze and understand the Classical Latin text because it is easier to learn how to read a text you are familiar with in an unfamiliar language than an entirely unfamiliar text in an unfamiliar language. But is *Latin Via Ovid* a good textbook for teaching/learning Classical Latin, particularly for teaching/learning how to *read* Classical Latin?

Making it Simple: It's Elementary, My Dear Students.

Ovid is considered a genius storyteller; few people would argue that point. Of course, someone trying to read his original text without having at least a basic understanding of Classical Latin would likely end up cursing him for his genius as his sentence construction, which creates a beautiful and flowing story, uses words and structures that a beginning student is not

prepared to decode. For this reason, studying Ovid directly, even having familiarity with the tales, is not necessarily the best way to learn how to read Classical Latin. *Latin Via Ovid* attempts to take thisissue into account by simplifying the text, especially in earlier chapters, in order to make Ovid's tales easier for beginning readers to interpret.

The first chapter of *Latin Via Ovid* is the simplest form of Latin, largely consisting of "this is that" statements describing a map in order for students to get their feet wet. Then, in the second chapter, the simplification of Ovid begins in earnest with the story of Europa and the Bull. For example, while Ovid writes:

> ille pater rectorque deum, cui dextra trisulcis ignibus armata est qui nutu concutit orbem, induitur faciem tauri mixtusque iuvencis mugit et in teneris formosus obambulat herbis. (Ovid, Miller, trans., *Books I-VIII* 118)

In comparison, *Latin Via Ovid* reads:

> Ita Iuppiter se in taurum pulchrum transformat. (Goldman and Nyenhuis 11)

A beginning Latin student may look at the original Ovid and feel completely lost, having yet to learn even basic grammatical structure and being faced not only with unfamiliar syntax but with complex language as well as multiple appositive phrases. As Wickens points out, while teaching grammar helps in the long run, to some degree language learners pick up grammar rules as they learn to read, write, or speak in that language, and all students progress at different rates in different areas of grammar, so "a set language syllabus will be unlikely to match the development cycles of learners" and throwing many different grammatical rules at a reader all at once is simply overwhelming (69). Because grammar to some degree has to be learned naturally, *Latin Via Ovid*'s structure of simplifying the original text is approachable for a beginner, setting the stage for students to acclimate to new vocabulary and grammar.

The complexity of the simplifications in *Latin Via Ovid* increases as students move through the book and learn more about Latin grammar and vocabulary, coming ever closer to the original Ovid. Further, whereas Ovid wrote with whatever verb tenses and syntactical structures were most fitting for his purpose, *Latin Via Ovid* holds constants throughout chapters. From personal

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[5] See for example Chapter IX "Callisto (Part 1)" which introduces and focuses on the perfect tense (Goldman and Nyenuis 69-77).

experience, the rate of increasing difficulty is generally proportional to the rate of learning so that students do not feel taxed or discouraged as they move forward.

When Simplifications Aren't Simple: Are You Sure That's What It Says?

Occasionally, the simplifications in *Latin Via Ovid* are not entirely clear in meaning. This is unsurprising as there are bound to be complications in reducing Ovid's complex writing. In a way, *Latin Via Ovid* is a translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and is therefore subject to the same issues described in the first section of this paper.

Perhaps the best example we have come across of an issue with simplifications which actually served to complicate the lesson was the "Interim Reading I: Daedalus et Icarus" (Goldman and Nyenhuis 177-179). The reading tells the classic tale of how Daedalus creates wax wings for himself and his son Icarus in order to escape from Minos, the king of Crete. Icarus is warned by Daedalus not to fly too close to the sun or the sea, and then Daedalus leads the escape. Howev-er, in *Latin Via Ovid* , there is one sentence where Icarus seems to be going ahead of his father: "Et iam insulae Graeciae relictae sunt cum puer gaudere coepit et patrem ducem reliquit" (178). In essence this translates to 'Already the Greek island is left behind while the boy began to re-joice and leave behind his father's lead.' This version leaves off the important detail from the original Ovid that clarifies that Icarus flew higher, not in front of Daedalus (Ovid, Miller, trans. *Books I-VIII* 421, 423). There are not enough errors to overpower the benefits of the textbook; however, it is important to be prepared to handle them.

Grammar Lessons that make no Sense: God Forbid!

While Latin grammar is, as mentioned above, broken down into manageable chunks within *Latin Via Ovid* , the explanations are sometimes complicated and fraught with poor examples. While *Latin Via Ovid* does a fairly good job of adhering to the principle outlined by Wigtil that "Proper instruction must always… [warn] students of the ever-present difficulties of selecting an appropriate English tense for translation," it fails to provide adequate examples of certain tenses in English (677). For example, the optative tense lesson provides seemingly contradictory explanations and examples. The phrase "**O** s**i** di meliora **dent**!" is given three possible translations: *'O that* the gods *may give* better things! *(or) May* the gods *give* better things! (or) God *forbid* !' (Goldman and Nyenhuis 225). The first two renditions show a wish for a positive thing to happen while the third seems to be calling for a forbearance of something bad. How

both of these meanings can be drawn from the same phrase is never explained.

Footnotes: Useful or Useless?

Latin Via Ovid makes use of footnotes to aid students in translating or understanding the context of a given reading. For instance, in "Pan et Syringa," a footnote glosses one of the more complicated lines "Pan autem putat se Syringam in bracchiis tenere" as 'But Pan thinks that he holds (is holding) Syrinx in his arms' (Goldman and Nyenhuis 61). Other times, as in "Labores Iasonis," the footnotes clarify who an important figure is – in this example Hecate, the "three-formed goddess of mystic incantations," who students may not be familiar with (231). Footnotes are also used to mark grammar concepts which have yet to be introduced, noting how to translate the word or phrase, what the concept is, and where to find it in the textbook.[6]

However, occasionally footnotes in the text may cause confusion such as the footnote attached to the phrase '*Quamquam videtur ire non tardius sagitta Scythica* ," which explains this phrase translates to 'not more slowly than a Scythian arrow' (Goldman and Nyenhuis 139). After some puzzling, we came to the conclusion that this was simply an idiom meaning that Atalanta is fast; however, the footnote assumes the reader knows this, an assumption which even Miller does not make when he translates the corresponding phrase "quamquam Scythica non setius ire saggita" as "the girl sped by on winged feet" (Ovid, Miller, trans. Books 9-15 104, 105, 107).

A Holistic View: the Diamond in the Rough

Despite the flaws in Latin Via Ovid, it is generally a good beginners' textbook for Classical Latin. Overall, the text does a good job of simplifying and breaking down Latin into manageable pieces for students to handle, even if there are occasionally some bitter lumps mixed in with the sugar, such as the lack of explanation attached to the optative phrase 'God forbid!' Students who want to learn Latin on their own may struggle with some sections, but with dedication and an occasional Googling of concepts as well as the use of supplemental texts such as the Loeb Classical Library side-by-sides, they can make their way through the textbook learning as they go. Having a mentor who is already familiar with Latin improves the learning experience,

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[6] See for example footnote 4 in "Philemon et Baucis (pars prima)" which explains simulaverant means 'had assumed – pluperfect tense' and is located in section 76 (Goldman and Nyenhuis 87).

especially one who is able to provide alternate explanations. Perhaps the best part of *Latin Via Ovid* remains what the title harkens to: the use of Ovid's writings as a base. These tales create an enjoyable medium for learning Latin and offer a stepping stone into advanced study as readers move from *Latin Via Ovid* to Ovid's original works.

LAST WORDS

Exploring Ovid can be an enjoyable and engaging endeavor. The text that is best for this exploration depends entirely upon the motivation of the individual. Beginning Latin students likely should not start attempting to read Ovid's original text; however, *Latin Via Ovid* provides a type of translation suited to learning the language. If Latin students want a source to help them build their vocabulary, they may look to Giles's word-for-word translation, though it is difficult to interpret as a cohesive story. Other translations such as those by Martin and Lombardo are a joy for anyone interested in the tales and culture of Ovid and can provide an interesting comparison both to the simplified versions of the tales presented in *Latin Via Ovid* and to the original text. Meanwhile, Miller's translation for the Loeb Classical Library which are presented as a side-by-side with Ovid's text offers an opportunity to compare translation and original either for study or for pleasure. Additionally, the side-by-side allows individual analysis of a translation's validity. Of course, someone who wishes to delve whole-heartedly into the world of Classical Latin may seek to acquire several versions of Ovid's works, as the best translation is a compendium of many translations which, when combined, provide a balance between form and meaning in delivering the most representative account of Ovid's writing short of Ovid himself.

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Destinee Sims

Vampires: Their Role in Modern Day Culture

With many faces and names to go by, vampires can be found in cultures around the world. There are few individuals in the modern era that would not recognize the name Dracula; inspired by the vampire folktales of the past, the immortal horror monsters have found their way into literature, film, music, and much more. With the creation of literary works such as *Twilight* (2005), and films such as *Dusk Til Dawn* (1996), vampires have become an appreciated part of 21st century entertainment. Despite traditional folklore encouraging the silent extermination of vampires, public interest has continued to keep vampirism relevant in modern society by incorporating it into popular culture, positively influencing economies, recognizing new disorders, and participating in body modifications.

Background

While vampires may have been villagers' worst nightmare at the time of the species' origin, John Polidori's *The Vampyre* (1819) led to vampires rapidly becoming a source of fascination in literature. With famous works such as the novel *Carmilla* (1872) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), the basic building blocks for modern film productions like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1992) and *Interview with a Vampire* (1994) have been created. In response to the highly successful vampire-themed literature and film, an entire new subculture has been created comprised of vampire fans and scholars alike. Through the lens of these academic fields, scholars can evaluate how the folklore and literature has affected consumers' shopping habits, the field of medicine, and even what vampire fans choose to do with their body.

Discussion

Vampires in Villages

Prior to the 20th century, ordinary individuals could be plausibly accused of vampirism for a plethora of reasons. As science had not been as advanced as it is today, the unknowing

villagers were left to explain regularly occurring problems that were beyond their understanding. It is possible that the first vampire folktale was the result of someone that suffered from any number of diseases, as vampirism essentially became the "wastebasket" answer for what scientists today recognize as spread viruses and bacteria.

One of the most famous American vampires is Mercy Lena Brown. Brown was believed to be a vampire in response to her siblings' decline due to consumption, and the discovery of decomposing blood in her heart after two months of eternal rest was used by the villagers to "confirm" her vampire status (Holly, 2007. pp. 339). With today's understanding of modern science, it is understood that Brown's brother was likely sick due to completely natural causes, such as tuberculosis. Brown and her mother, having both passed shortly before the other children, while modern science indicates that they likely all died of the same illness.

Brown was not the only person to be accused of vampirism due to her fellow villagers' education, as Sarah Tillinghast was deemed a vampire due to her physical appearance post-mortem. After the unexplainable death of multiple of her siblings, Tillinghast was thought to be a vampire because they found her corpse with her eyes open, body full of blood, with hair and nails that had clearly grown since her burial (Holly, 2007. pp. 339). While modern science today indicates that they likely suffered from any number of common diseases, just as Brown's family likely did. However, since both women were accused of being vampires, superstition called for certain measures to be taken to protect the remaining relatives and villagers. Brown and Tillinghast both had their bodies desecrated due to their "vampire" status, as their hearts (and Brown's liver) were burned in an attempt to save their "victims" (Holly, 2007. pp. 339). At the time of Brown and Tillinghast's death, vampires were still considered a legitimate concern, explaining why their families likely felt that they had to complete the rituals.

As a result of the tales surrounding Tillinghast and Brown, their graves became a regular destination for legend trippers. This hunt to find paranormal graves, especially the grave of Brown, resulted in the creation of an entirely new vampire: Nellie Vaughn. In the case of Vaughn, she was accused of being a vampire by later decades due to "a case of mistaken identity" (Holly, 2007. pp. 342). While there is not any record of an accusation against Vaughn specifically, specialists have been able to determine that she likely had no reason to be accused of being a vampire at all beyond having a "creepy" headstone. Instead, it is believed that they mistook Vaughn's grave for Brown's.

There is no evidence that any of these three women had done anything to harm anyone, especially from the afterlife. Cynthia Dimock-Quaglia acknowledges the flaws in the villagers' logic in her article, "The 'Vampire' Quilt [:] A Material-Culture Study." Aware that vampires do not truly exist, Dimock-Quaglia explains, "Lack of education has been implied because of the remarkable belief in superstitions; such superstitions may have been passed down from generation to generation without anybody ever questioning their validity" (Dimock-Quaglia, 1999. n.p.). Considering how patently false many of the folktales are, it is not surprising that vampires found their way into modern-day entertainment.

The Vampire's Role in Popular Culture and Economics

Despite vampires having been taboo in many regions until approximately mid-way through the 19th century, the literary horror monsters have persevered and can be found throughout popular culture still today. Vampires are prominent in film, literature, music, writing, and even travel destinations. One of the most involved aspects would be legend tripping, as vampire fans actively make the journey to the burial sites of those who were accused. Donald H. Holly Jr. and Casey E. Cordy explain in "What's In A Coin? Reading the Material Culture of Legend Tripping and Other Activities" that "To test the legend, legend trippers will often mark their visits with specific activities designed to invoke supernatural powers" (Holly, 2007. pp. 345). This same level of appreciation for the dead can be seen through "[t]he fact that Mercy's quilt has never been used or washed" (Dimock-Quaglia, 1999. n.p.). Mercy Brown's family has clearly highly valued her quilt, plausibly because her family may have believed her innocence after having seen the clotted blood in her heart even when the other villagers accused her of vampirism. It is argued that this shows that "some people use religion to teach morals and control people, and some use it to make sense of [the] world" (Weigel, 2008. n.p.). This fascination with Mercy Brown and old American religious views translates into modern day legend trippers, witches, and sorcerers traveling to Brown's grave in a sort of pilgrimage.

This interest in vampires extends beyond road trips and religious rituals, as they have found their own role in cinema over multiple decades. With the release of T.V. shows like *True Blood* (2008-2014) and *The Vampire Diaries* (2009-2017), and films like *Dark Shadows* (2012), today's youth can be found adorning fangs and gothic attire. The T.V. series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003) even created such a phenomenon among teenagers that a new generation of vampire enthusiasts were born. Film scholar Josh Stenger uses his article "The Clothes Make

the Fan: Fashion and Online Fandom when *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* Goes to eBay" to help demonstrate why many of these vampire-themed series proved so successful. In the case of *Buffy*, he suggests that "these aspects of teen life and lifestyle resonated with audiences and figured prominently in the series quickly earned reputation as a 'cult' phenomenon" (Stenger, 2006. pp. 28). In other words, teens quickly latched onto the fantasy show, as the everyday antics of *Buffy's* characters let them relate to the young vampire hunter and friends.

Buffy's influence extended far beyond the T.V. screen, as it even influenced fans' choices in style of clothing and home décor. Magazines were recognizing that "vampire style is all the rage" (KYWE, 2003. pp. 4). Fans were imitating the styles of famous on-screen vampires and submerging themselves in vampire memorabilia. A prime example of this can be seen after the slayer's series came to an end, as Fox found themselves auctioning off most of the props used. Thousands, if not millions, of fans from around the world found themselves competing to win items like outfits worn by Sarah Michelle Geller (Buffy) and Allyson Hannigan (Willow), as well as weapons like stakes and axes. Sociologists, marketing teams, and cinematographers alike all find themselves confounded by the fan bases' devotion to even the most insignificant prop (i.e. wooden stakes, socks, etc.). Strenger explains his theory on fans' determination to obtain almost any item from *Buffy*, "As fan posts made clear, each prop served as a metonymy for the entire franchise, allowing the buyer to cross the line from viewer to part owner" (Strenger, 2006. pp. 32). This indicates that not only do fans find themselves wanting to enjoy the entertainment provided by series like *Buffy*, but they also would like to possess and feel that they are truly a part of the show's history and success.

The use of vampires in cinema was so overwhelmingly successful that writers began using it to criticize public behavior. In the 1990s, AIDS was one of the most feared viruses that mankind knew of. As it was known by the 90s that HIV/AIDS was spread by sharing bodily fluids, it was not uncommon for filmmakers to begin incorporating this concept into their cinema projects. One film that is argued to have been released in response to the AIDS epidemic is *Club Vampire* (1998). Scholars like David Weigel find themselves questioning the symbolism behind vampire attacks in the film, as it is believed the female vampire strippers' decision to kill their afterhours clientele is meant to represent the act of contracting HIV/AIDS from risky sexual activity (Weigel, 2008. n.p.). This would indicate that vampire-themed media was not only a means for entertainment, but also a platform for social commentary and change.

Fans of vampires have ultimately benefited economies around the world through vampire-themed literature, film, merchandise, and travel sales. A prime example of this can be seen in towns where famous vampires are said to have been located, such as *Twilight*'s Forks, WA. Jessica Crowe from Southern Illinois University studies the relationship between *Twilight* and the town of Forks in the article "The *Twilight* of Forks? The Effect of Social Infrastructure On Film Tourism and Community Development in Forks, WA" (2013). Crowe notes that only 74 people were registered as having visited Forks in December of 2005 (Crowe, 2013. pp. 12). This indicates that travelers and legend trippers previously had little motivation to tour the small town, as most individuals recognize that this means a smaller number of people visited Forks for the entire month of December in 2005 than the number of people that visit the average Walmart in a day. However, the number of visitors that Forks received drastically increased after the release of the film adaptation of Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* in 2008. Crowe confirms, "December of 2009 saw 2,540 visitors sign in to the center, a 3,400-percent increase from December 2005" (Crowe, 2013. pp. 13). With an increase in tourism, local businesses such as stores and hotels experienced an increase in patrons. With more revenue being generated through the businesses and hotels, the overall economy of Forks, WA, can be expected to be positively benefited by the film's widespread success.

The positive relationship between vampires and local economies is not limited to just Forks, as vampire-themed entertainment and merchandise are popular around the world. More than $10 billion dollars has stemmed from the vampire-themed entertainment industry, with the largest sources of revenue having been from film, books, video games, and Halloween costumes. Jon C. Ogg from AOL.COM's *24/7 Wall St.* evaluated the profitability of vampires in "Blood Money: Why Vampires Are Worth $10 Billion to Our Economy" (2011). Ogg elaborates on the sources of this $10 billion, evaluating the value of the industry based off sales leading up to 2011. Vampire-themed entertainment has had a gross profit of $5 billion from film, $2.2 billion from books, $400 million from events and merchandise, $1 billion from video games, and $150 million from T.V., comics, and magazines (Ogg, 2011. n.p.). Over $1.2 billion was earned through the sale of Halloween costumes alone (Ogg, 2011. n.p.). Considering Ogg calculated his gross profit of the vampire-themed entertainment industry in 2011, it would have since increased to unknown numbers. Scholars would have to consider that the film *Dark Shadows* (2012) brought

in roughly $476 million just from ticket sales alone ($150 million budget), indicating that vampires are likely worth several billion dollars more now than they were during the time of Ogg's research (The Numbers, 2019. n.p.).

Beyond ticket sales, vampire-themed entertainment has motivated fans to also support the industry through the purchase of vampire-themed merchandise. This includes the props that were sold by Fox after the conclusion of *Buffy*, as fans paid hundreds of thousands just for a portion of the items that were sold. It is confirmed that fans paid "Fox roughly $563,000" for just 400 items from *Buffy* (Stenger, 2006. pp. 40). Some vampire fans chose to support the industry by purchasing one of the most recognizable symbols of the vampire: fangs. Specialist Sebastiaan Van Houten has found a unique niche in the dental industry by becoming one of the most famous fang crafters in the world. Real-life "vampires," cosplayers, and just fans of the fanged monster regularly pay fair market prices for items such as porcelain and ceramic fangs. Van Houten's fangs sell for $100+ per pair (Herman, 2013. n.p.). Although each item may not have a high price tag alone, this illuminates the fascination the public has with the fanged creatures.

Vampirism's Influence on Medicine and Body Modifications

Although the condition is thought to be relatively uncommon, vampirism has found its own place within modern medicine. Real vampirism, also known as Renfield syndrome after Dracula's minion, can be found primarily in male patients (Olry, 2011. pp. 369). Renfield Syndrome (RS) typically progresses through three major stages: RS patients start off drinking their own blood during the step called autovampirism, progress to eating living creatures during zoophagia, and begin to consume another human's blood when they achieve the final step of vampirism (Olry et al., 2011. pp. 369). Research shows "the compulsion to drink blood almost always has a strong sexual component associated with [RS]" (Olry et al., 2011. pp. 369). This indicates that there is not only a large portion of the population with "vampirism" that it is needed to be medically recognized, but also that Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) was so influential medical professionals decided to name the disease after it.

Since the increase in popularity of vampire folklore and literature in recent decades, some fans of the undead have chosen to express their love in the form of body modifications (BM). One form of vampire inspired BM's would be fangs; fanatics typically get their fangs either as

porcelain/ceramic "dentures," or they opt to have their teeth filed and shaped for cosmetic purposes. Van Houten acknowledges the response that many "vampires" display after viewing themselves with their fangs for the first time, as "Some people growl and stare at themselves for hours" (Herman, 2013. n.p.). BMs can also include tattoos; Bakersfield tattoo artist Jake Subr admits to having done hundreds of vampire-themed tattoos. In an interview via Facebook Messenger, Subr states, "The most frequent [tattoo] I've seen are vampire teeth. When the *Twilight* movies were big, I did a few 'Team Jacob' tattoos" (Subr, 2019. n.p.). While it is unclear whether the body modifications are made due to their desire to truly become a vampire themselves or if it is just their way of demonstrating their appreciation, it very clearly shows society's growing fascination with vampires as a concept.

Conclusion

Vampire folklore has evolved into an entire subculture of its own through its presence in popular culture, economic influence, modern medicine, and body modification. While new research is needed to analyze vampires' effect on culture in 2019, it can ultimately be concluded that they have been benefiting the economy, entertainment industries, and medical industries since the release of Polidori's *The Vampyre*.

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Lyndsey Wheeler

A Feminist Response to Archetypal Myth in Ani DiFranco's "Adam and Eve"

It would be difficult to find a story that has had a greater influence on literature and art than the account of Creation in the Bible. In the Book of Genesis, Adam and Eve are placed in the Garden of Eden, and they provide the archetypal myth still used as an example of the socialization of modern-day men and women. The theological use of the archetype explains the human progression from a state of innocence to the present condition of knowledge of sin and misery. In the Book of Genesis, Eve is punished more severely than Adam for the "sin" of seeking out knowledge and being able to think for herself. Women today are often beholden to the double standard derived from this model of socialization, that it is wrong or unseemly for a woman to desire those taboo things that men are often celebrated for, such as sex. Although the story of Adam and Eve is still widely held as an exemplary tale that one should have (blind) faith in, its social message is that women should remain submissive and not own their sexual desire. Many authors have been stirred by this message; others have protested it. Specifically, Anglo-American feminists of the third wave in the 1990s fueled an expansion of the interests of previous waves of feminists and promoted the empowerment of women beyond the realm of social opportunity to the intimate realm of the body and the sexual. Some innovative artists and writers like Ani DiFranco, whose 1996 song "Adam and Eve" addresses the historical root of sexual inequality, drew heavily on the archetype and applied its fundamental ideas and images to the intimate relationship that constrains the speaker.

In the Book of Genesis, Eve eats the apple which grants her knowledge. This is an act of disobedience and a trespass. Although both Adam and Eve are exiled from the Garden, Eve receives a greater punishment for yielding to the tempter's arguments. The Lord says,"I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy

desire shall rule over thee" (Gen. 3.16), indicating that she is punished more severely for the carnal knowledge the apple granted her. DiFranco stridently protests this interpretation. The speaker in DiFranco's lyrics is Eve herself. The "apple" is the sexual intercourse she has just had with an unnamed lover: "you plot a tiny pin prick / In my big red balloon" (18-19). This line with an explicit phallic connotation also alludes to the biblical apple, here specified as red, a color that symbolizes "violent passion" (Guerin 227). Female initiated passion seems what the man in the song is turning away from. Passion and violence are both typically masculine qualities, undesirable in women. It is considered socially acceptable for a man to aggressively seek sex, but if a woman has carnal desires (like Eve desires the apple), she is often looked down upon and shamed. In an honest display of self-awareness, the speaker acknowledges her lover "rhapsodize[s] about beauty"; she does not. "Everything I love is ugly", she acknowledges. Having slept with her means he has "stoop[ed] to [her] level," in the same way Adam did when he tasted the apple Eve proffered. It is safe to assume that at one point the man thought that the woman was ideal, and he desired her, but the moment she reciprocated, openly welcoming her desire, she became flawed in his eyes and less beautiful.

Adam's counterpart—completely silent in the song—seems to be quite content desiring the apple, but he never would have taken it without prompting. It was Eve who actually took the step of tasting it first, before offering it to Adam. In this way, the woman in the lyrics represents not only Eve, but the fall from Eden also. The difference between the biblical story and the song is that contemporary Eve doesn't regret what she did. She values knowledge over beauty; desiring beauty is a sign of the man's "ignorance." She seems to be suggesting that beauty is simple and uninteresting while the complexity found in "ugliness" is interesting. Where the biblical Eve doesn't get to speak and is only known for her folly, this Eve uses her voice to stand for her values and her choices. Adam's "innocence" ruins the "unspoiled beauty" of the garden he wants her to represent (Guerin 231). DiFranco's Eve defiantly refuses to deny herself for the sake of an idealized beauty, in keeping with the nonconformist attitudes eloquently championed by third-wave feminists.

Although DiFranco's empowered Eve declares, "I just happen to like apples, / And I am not afraid of snakes", she also says, "I am / Truly sorry about all this. / I hear you and your anger hurts." She is not repenting of her actions or blaming the man's feelings. She is aware of the

situation and notes his inability to rise above his original demands. She wants him to appreciate her for who she is rather than as an ideal. This is a massive step away from the archetypal Eve who was expected to shoulder the blame and be submissive, and the archetypal Adam, who was above reproach. This Eve chooses instead to “leave [her Adam] to [his] garden / And the beauty [he] prefer[s]”, that she deems as an unambiguous representation of his ignorance.

Ani DiFranco’s “Adam and Eve” is a song by and for the modern, free-thinking Eve. The lyricist takes the traditional archetypes and turns them on their heads, revealing how irrelevant and outdated they are in a modern world where women are allowed to be agents of their desires. The voice in this song belongs to an independent, free-thinking woman, the complete opposite of the voiceless, submissive Eve of the Bible, creating a contrast that poignantly illuminates DiFranco’s purpose in writing the song. The juxtaposition of a flat archetype with an actual person who breathes and desires creates the portrait of an empowered woman who would rather let her Adam go than pretend to be something she’s not.

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Edwidge Danticat's *Everything Inside*: Observing the Haitian Diaspora

The transnational movement of people, cultures, and knowledge is often clouded by fears of political, economic, and societal turmoil – a turmoil that becomes more pronounced when cultural movement is forced within disenfranchised groups. The term "diaspora" has come to encapsulate a variety of sociocultural movements, such as the European exodus of Jewish people to America during WWII, the movement of people from the Republic of India, and the migration of Haitians to the United States. As a socially relevant topic, the presentation of diaspora in American literature is ever-growing, yet few authors are able to portray the traumatic themes of dias-pora as well as novelist Edwidge Danticat. In her newest collection of short stories,*Everything Inside* (2019), Danticat displays the history and trauma of first- and second-generation diasporic Haitians in the journey to and from Haiti, especially in the stories, "Dosas," "In the Old Days," and "Without Inspection."

Haitian History

To better understand the meaning of diaspora and the ways in which diaspora is presented in Danticat's work, it may be helpful to present recent events of Haiti's history and the characterization of this history in the United States. In the second half of the twentieth century, Haiti has experienced corrupt presidents, political turmoil, and natural disasters. Dr. François Duvalier, also known as "Papa Doc," terrorized Haitian citizens with necropolitical repression from 1957 to 1971, only to be succeeded by his son, Jean-Claude Duvalier or "Baby Doc," from 1971 to 1986. Jean-Claude furthered "policies of economic exploitation and extraction of wealth and resources from the nation that were detrimental to the majority" (James 365). A small ray of hope appeared between the years of 1986 and 1990 due to the*Lavalas* political movement, "a coalition of grassroots activists, church groups, women's rights activists, peasant organizations, and other 'civil society' associations," and the election of Jean-Bertrand Aristide (James 365-366). However, General Raoul Cédras and the Armed Forces of Haiti (FAd'H) performed a

violent coup d'état, defeating Aristide and intensifying necropolitical strategies from 1991 to 1994 (James 366). The Haitian diaspora would be inflamed by the 2010 Haitian earthquake, which further destabilized democratic development in the growing and repairing nation (James 371). This combination of events culminated in the international displacement of nearly 300,000 Haitians in search for asylum, as many Haitians would flee to the United States via boat and arrive in Miami due to its proximity (James 366; Maribel 28).

Within the United States, Haiti is often dismissed as an impoverished third-world country characterized by significant political, social, and environmental dysfunction. According to editors Shi and Hazel, America conceives of other countries as monolithic, lump sums of "heterogenous racial, regional and transhistorical politics," ignoring the position of each country as a "dynamically variegated space wherein politics and cultural production extend in global fashion beyond the limiting parameters of the traditional nation-state" (qtd in. Schlund-Vials 101). The silencing of Haiti's rich transnational and intersectional history in favor of blanket-statement political generalizations only serves to bolster postcolonial prejudices, better allowing the United States and other countries to reject Haitian refugees. Caribbean philosopher Édouard Glissant encapsulates this quite well, noting that the "entangled histories (of colonialism, violence, indigenous genocide, slavery, plantation economies, diaspora, racial and cultural hybridity) are … not the singular and deeply-rooted history of Empire, wholly and intactly transplanted from Europe through conquest, as the colonialists may imagine" (qtd. in Braziel 112). Instead, Haiti and other Caribbean countries are "'not saturated with a single History but effervescent with intermingled histories, spread around, rushing to fuse without destroying or reducing each other'" (qtd. in Braziel 112). Such histories must be considered in the study of the diaspora, as without such crucial examina-tion, the meaning of diaspora and the profound insecurities of first- and second-generation diasporic individuals cannot be fully understood.

Defining the Diaspora

The term, "diaspora," has garnered many meanings since it rose to prominence in global political discourse (James 361). Jonathan Grossman of the Department of Government and the Schusterman Center for Jewish Studies explains that the study of diaspora has burgeoned within academic literature as more studies on diasporic organizations and the effects of transnational movement are examined within the humanities and social sciences (1263). The term was born of the Greek διασπορά ("the scattering of seeds") and was used to describe the religious exile of

Jews from the Holy Land (Grossman 1264). American author Michael Laguerre describes that diaspora "maps places of departure, home or here, and places of arrival, here or here, 'in transnational spatial flow'" (qtd. in Braziel 114). Diaspora falls under other names as well. Poets like Joël des Rosiers renamed the diasporic as *metasporic*, marking the "continual [movement] across the borders and boundaries of identity, identification, nationalities, languages, and places of becoming" (Braziel 114). The term "ontological insecurity" or *ensekirite* (the creole word for insecurity) is also used within the field of research (James 365). Due to the many translations, nuances, and definitions of the word "diaspora," social scientists have often been tasked with the creation of a unanimous and encapsulating definition. In his qualitative analysis of the definitions of diaspora in 2019, Grossman defines the concrete definition as the following: "diaspora is a transnational community whose members (or their ancestors) emigrated or were dispersed from their original homeland but remain oriented to it and preserve a group identity" (1265). Within the Haitian diaspora of the United States, a large group of first-generation (i.e., those who directly immigrated) and second-generation (i.e., the children of those who immigrated) Haitians are forced to recognize the spreading and fragmentation of the Haitian community and identity. As Braziel notes, "[p]resence, absence, love, and loss – all of these elements are forced into migration, forced to up-root, and then re-root in new soil, in new ground" (122). Diaspora is inherently traumatic to the mental and emotional being of displaced individuals, and the representation of these individuals is especially important in literature. Such representation can invoke empathy and understanding in countries hosting displaced people, and it can help remedy the feelings of loss in those who have left their homes.

Edwidge Danticat and Diasporic Representation

Within Caribbean literature, diasporic topics have remained prevalent regardless of the island. The trauma of diasporic insecurity permeates the lives of all diasporic individuals, as it "is both an existential state reflecting the disordering of individual embodied experience and a collective sociopolitical condition the effects of which cannot be contained with national borders" (James 357). As a first-generation Haitian immigrant in the United States, Edwidge Danticat is highly familiar with the topic. In her interview with Nancy Raquel Mirabal for *Callaloo*, Danticat sheds some light on her history as a member of the Haitian diaspora. Danticat describes that she arrived at Miami concurrently with the influx of "sea migrants," those who were economically disadvantaged, who arrived from rural areas, and who suddenly found themselves in sprawling

cities (qtd. in Mirabel 27-28). When questioned on her beliefs of diaspora, Danticat explains that,

> There's definitely a larger, global Diaspora, what we call the *Dyaspora*, the people of Diaspora. It's also very layered because it encompasses many generations, many decades now of migrations and different varying levels of assimilation and return to the community…. Having such a large group of people outside of the country has redefined it what means to be Haitian…. There are real logistical barriers to being a community, but I think it also strengthens what it means to be a family as well" (qtd. in Maribel 29).

Many of her books, including *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994) and more recently *Everything Inside* (2019), tackle common themes within the diaspora, including a profound sense of cultural, social, and political insecurity and the feelings of dislocation and trauma that will occur while acclimating to American culture (Braziel 110). Her short stories are often based upon her own experiences and enriched by the observations of those around her (Mirabel 29).

Everything Inside focuses upon those affected by movement to or from Haiti, those affected by the ethnic heritage of their family members, and those left with an insurmountable feeling of loss due to familial or romantic disconnection. The stories, "Dosas," "The Port-au-Prince Marriage Special," and "The Gift," focus on the love relations of female characters who deal with romantic separation and loss. Danticat's "Hot-Air Balloons," "In the Old Days," and "Seven Stories" discuss the displacement and the cultural responsibility felt by second-generation diasporic individuals, and "Sunrise, Sunset" and "Without Inspection" focus on the feelings of first-generation diasporic individuals as they leave their children and loved ones due to illness and death. Each story illustrates Danticat's well-known, powerful prose, detailing the emotional and griping narration of varied first-hand experiences. These stories can be placed within the larger context of the Haitian diaspora; however, the best illustrators of the theme are "Dosas," "In the Old Days," and "Without Inspection."

Isolation and Loss: "Dosas"

"Dosas" begins*Everything Inside* with the story of a live-in nurse, Elsie, confronted by the kidnapping of her ex-friend and lover, Olivia, and the husband Olivia had stolen away, Blaise. Olivia and Blaise fake Olivia's kidnapping for ransom, encouraging Elsie to provide $5,000 American dollars to rescue her. Typical of Danticat's narrative style, the story is interspersed with Elsie's recollections of the time she, Blaise, and Oliva spent together, as Elsie is confronted

by serious doubts about her place within the triangle. She ponders that "[t]hey were no longer sure whatto call themselves… A triad? A *ménage à trois*? No. Dosas. They were dosas. All three of them untwinned, lonely, alone together" (Danticat 21). "Dosas" is an important start to *Everything Inside*. Although the story does not follow Elsie's personal journey from Haiti, it centers on Olivia and Blaise's deceit to get Elsie's money to travel to Haiti together. The story delves into the conflicted emotions behind the dangers presented in her motherland and her feelings of isolation in America. She is conflicted by her feelings of rage against the pair's actions and relief for their relative safety:

> Tears flowed down her face… She didn't want them to be tears of joy, but a few of them were. Her homeland seemed safer now. Her parents and brother… appeared to be less in danger of being kidnapped. Yet the tears kept flowing… She felt more alone now than before she'd met either Blaise or Olivia, lonelier than when she'd just arrived to this country having only one friend" (Danticat 32).

Although Elsie finds solace in Dédé, the friend Blaise also betrayed, both are left abandoned in an unfamiliar country, without the relative safety the community their group friendship provided them. As in other short stories, diasporic characters find the consolation of being "alone together", as they find themselves unable to connect with other people due to the cultural divide. "Dosas" introduces one of the most significant underlying themes of diaspora within the book: isolation.

Second Generation Disconnection:In the Old Days

"In the Old Days" directly addresses the diaspora of the second-generation Haitians. It follows Nadia, as she finds that her biological father who returned to Haiti and left her mother in America before she was born, is dying. She is deeply alienated from her Haitian heritage. This feeling of disconnection between her cultural heritage and her Haitian family is cemented by the death of her father – whom she was unable to meet before his passing. She is left to find her cultural heritage in the fading visage of a man she never fully knew: "If there was any territory to claim, it had to be on his face. I had to find myself in his drawn-out coppery skin, in the un-even rise of his forehead… the deep pockets beneath the hollow cheeks, his clenched jaw and gray fuzz on his chin" (Danticat 56). Nadia recollects that in Haitian culture, it is the daughter's duty to wail and scream for the loss of her parents, yet she finds herself unable to muster such emotion or to connect to that part of her culture due to its vital absence in her formative years.

She finds herself slighted by her father, the "Maurice who could convince people to change the course of their lives. [The] Maurice with a different last name than mine" (Danticat 50), especially when she discovers that he knew of her existence yet had "chosen not to get in touch. He had chosen a country over us, as my mother had said" (Danticat 52). Her pilgrimage to Haiti, a land she was not born in and that she never fully experienced before adulthood, is empty. She is unable to mend the social divide experienced as one divorced from her sense of identity as a second-generation diasporic Haitian and as an American citizen. This status of inbetweenness is further emphasized by the obligation to fulfill her familial responsibility. Nadia finds that she "suddenly wanted to hold my father's wife, and to let her hold me in a way that my mother could not… I began walking toward [her]… as though I was marching at the head of a king's funeral procession, with an entire village in my wake" (Danticat 62). Second-generation diasporic Haitians like Nadia experience a persistent duality. The isolation such Haitians face differs from that of the first-generation, as there is a desire to reconnect to their ethnic heritage yet a deep alienation from the cultures of their elders.

That which is left behind: "Without Inspection"

"Without Inspection" – the last story within the anthology – is a story about the end. Haitian refugee Arnold, who uses the alias Ernesto Fernandez while working, falls from the scaffolding of a high-end hotel during construction, free falling into a moving cement truck (Danticat 212). The story is comprised of Arnold's dramatic monologue, as he remembers his dangerous arrival to Miami by boat, from which he is saved by his soon-to-become lover, Darline. Arnold's story serves to illuminate the tragedy of some Haitian refugees. His introduction to America is traumatic, as he remembers watching some of his fellow boat people drown when they are forced to swim to shore. Those who survive are detained by U.S. immigration services; only Arnold escapes because of Darline's intervention. She scours the beach regularly to save fellow refugees who arrive (Danticat 202). In his reverie as he plunges, Arnold notes that "He did not want to be detained or returned. He wanted to stay. He needed to stay, and he was hoping to stay with her. She could have been anybody – whoever happened to be on the beach that morn-ing and was willing to help him" (Danticat 202).

"Without Inspection" is an impactful bookend to *Everything Inside*, as it exposes the cultural misconceptions held by those who immigrate and seek asylum. America is often seen as

an opportunity, and the social degradation found within larger cities often comes to diasporic Haitians as a shock. This is well illustrated in Arnold's observation of his neighborhood:

> What he had not foreseen about Miami, though, as the plethora of stories like his. He had also not realized that there would be homeless families sleeping under a bridge a few feet from the luxury hotel that he was helping to erect. The poor dead children he heard about in the news were also a shock to him, the ones who were randomly gunned down by the police or by one another, in schools, in their homes, while walking in the street, or playing in city parks. (Danticat 208)

Many diasporic Haitians originate in areas of political and social unrest, such as the violent necro-politics surrounding Haitian civilian life for most of the second half of the 20th century, yet diasporic Haitians are further traumatized by the violence of the American system. Diasporic Haitians are forced to contend with a country that does not want them; with the profound isolation of having severed ties with their homeland; with disconnection from their relationships both before and after their immigration; and finally with the realization that the land they struggled for and risked to reach may be also as socially corrupt as that which they left behind. Though the book ends with Arnold's devastating wish that his surviving wife Darline and their son Paris find safety and happiness, Arnold ironically dies surrounded by strangers, almost totally alone – surrounded by people who do not even know his real name.

Recognizing Diaspora in Literature

Healing the emotional and mental wounds of diaspora is never simple, for such wounds go beyond feelings of rejection and social exclusion, as "political, economic, and social ruptures have established insecurity as an ontological state of being in Haiti [and routines] of rupture have created conditions in which trauma has become an ongoing existential reality for many citizens" (James 357). Remedying feelings of isolation; cultural, familial, and romantic disconnection; and social and political exile must begin both internally and through shared cultural experiences. This remedy is provided in two parts in *Everything Inside*. Firstly, the presentation of uncommon points of view and narratives in American writing fosters empathy in citizens that misinterpret, misunderstand, or ignore the plight of the Haitian diaspora. Secondly, the writing allows those of the Haitian diaspora to find community and solidarity for the tumultuous emotions and struggles of affected characters. Danticat's literature dispels the notion

that American immigrants are merely sources of labor or disenfranchised people to be ignored (i.e. bottom-feeders). Danticat uses her characters to humanize the unfortunate stereotypes of Haitian and Caribbean immigrants in an effort to stoke the empathy of American readers to provoke action:

> [W]hen people are informed they are less complacent. So a place like Haiti would be harder to dismiss if people knew about it. When the images flash on the screen or the latest uproar or the latest disruption or the latest something, they wouldn't so easily say 'Oh, it's those Haitians they're fighting each other again.' So I think to have a context is very important, even if it's not going to lead to revolution, it would cause pause. (qtd. in Maribel 31)

Such narrative forms of knowledge predispose readers to experience deep emotions towards the characters' plights, which better illustrates the realities of those who suffer from America disenfranchisement and ignorance. In this way, ethnic literature enlightens the general populace, reminding citizens of issues that often fade into obscurity.

Danticat is certainly not alone in her belief towards the use of ethnic literature as a form of enlightenment. In her examination of Grenadian diaspora in light of Operation Urgent Fury (1983), the American-led invasion of Grenada, Schlund-Vials argues that "geographic dismissiveness with regard to [Caribbean and island nations] explicitly underscores a now-recognizable… American exceptionalism… evident in the court of public opinion and made tragically apparent on the battlefield" (Schlund-Vials 100). Schlund-Vials supports the importance of literature as a form of visibility and remembrance, arguing that "without articulation and in the absence of wide-spread remembrance, Grenada and Cambodia – as interlinked Cold War combat zones – could tragically fade from cultural view" (106). *Everything Inside*, while recognizing natural and political events within Haiti such as the 2010 Earthquake and the violent coup d'états, steers away from such concrete violence in favor of violence that often goes unnoticed or undenounced. Ed-widge Danticat focuses on the violence felt within diasporic individuals themselves – the violence of self-fragmentation, societal isolation, and loss.

Conclusion

Of her newest anthology *Everything Inside*, Danticat's "Dosas," "In the Old Days," and "Without Inspection" provide the best reflection of the societal pressures experienced by first-

and second-generation diasporic Haitians. Each story within the anthology presents a different diasporic theme at the forefront. “Dosas” expands upon the societal isolation indirectly experienced by those connected to diasporic individuals, in which diasporic Haitians find themselves “alone together,” attempting to define and categorize romantic and platonic relationships in societies where they feel physically or emotionally abandoned. “In the Old Days” addresses the disconnection experienced by second-generation Haitian youth who feel compelled to fulfill their familial responsibilities and to reestablish family ties, yet they are caught between two nations that do not fully claim them as their own. “Without Inspection” finishes the book with an exposé on the social lack of acceptance of first-generation diasporic Haitians by American society and the terrible revelation that the land of freedom once so desired may be just as dangerous as their homeland. Danticat deconstructs the isolation, division, and trauma of diasporic individuals, providing experiences that may better allow American citizens to empathize with their plight and that might provide solidarity and community for first- and second-generation Haitians struggling to exist within the historical challenges of transnational diasporic identities.

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Chris Chrobak

"Such Horrible Completeness": Modernity and Liminality in *The Secret Agent*

As the nineteenth century gave way to the twentieth, modernity was in full swing: market, industrial capitalism reigned; new technologies rapidly developed; and individualism, freedom, and globalization had generally superseded traditional ways of life. This process was nowhere more concentrated than in metropolitan cities. London, perhaps the modern imperial metropolis *par excellence* at the turn of the century, provides the ideal site for the sordid happenings of Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent*. To Conrad, modern life in London is not all opportunity and advancement, especially for his hapless characters, nearly all of whom exist and operate on the margins of society due to their occupational, political, or institutional affiliations. Though London, "built on the principle of individual liberal agency," strove to establish itself as the center for individual liberty and a participative body politic, it nevertheless required the "intervention of countless bureaucratic agencies" which would guarantee space for this "free" action (Robinson 196-197). These agencies, which constitute what Georg Simmel refers to as the "objective culture" and "structure" of metropolitan life, conflict with its focus on autonomous, individual agency, or "subjective culture" and "anti-structure"; thus, for Simmel, each individual is a boundary between the two competing cultures and structures (Simmel "Transcendent" 353). Conrad's boundary, or "threshold" characters therefore occupy liminal, or transitional, states—what Victor Turner deems "a period and area of ambiguity, a sort of social limbo," which serve as interstices between the structure and anti-structure of modern sociocultural life (Turner "Liminal" 57). Whether the Verloc family, members of the anarchist cell, or even the police, Conrad's downbeat city dwellers, are resistant to total absorption into the undifferentiated structure or "objective culture" of society, they are compromised in their "[creation of] a completed, personal self" by the very structures of society with which they are associated and by which their opportunities for individuation are delimited. To transcend their liminal states, Conrad's characters must commit

autonomous action to demonstrate their self-worth as a "completed" individual agent in modern life unconditioned, insofar as possible, by societal structures. Unfortunately for the lot in Conrad's London, which may or may not reflect Conrad's pessimism about his own cultural displacement at the time, this can only result in indefinite, unfulfilling stasis or death, both of which are best exemplified by Mr. Verloc.

First, it must be established how modernity contributes to personal, existential liminality. The characters of *The Secret Agent* embody what Simmel argues are "[t]he deepest problems of modern life," which "derive from the claim of the individual to preserve the autonomy and individuality of his existence in the face of overwhelming social forces, of historical heritage, of external culture, and of the technique of life" ("Metropolis" 182-183). Simmel contends that this is a uniquely modern problem, inescapable in the metropolis, as the metropolis is the "site of modernity, its characteristic and all-comprehending structure;" to him, the realization that an individual exists as a boundary between the self and society initiates a "dialectic of individual-society," which "for the first time in history [is] revealed fully as a root condition of human life" (Weinstein and Weinstein 54). This is not to say that, prior to the rapid progress of modernity, individuals did not struggle with questions of identity against contending forces of society, only that modernity's focus on rationalization and order has led to the creation of myriad intervening societal structures which seek to differentiate, classify, and eventually stabilize aspects of modern social life so that no element remains unaccounted. The pervasive presence of these structures account for much of modernity's complexity, which distinguishes it from past epochs. Mary Klages articulates this as "[t]he assumption … that creating more rationality is conducive to creating more order, and that the more ordered a society is, the better it will function (the more rationally it will function)"; she continues, "Thus modern societies rely on continually establishing a binary opposition between 'order' and 'disorder,' so that they can assert the superiority of 'order'" (168). These conditions of modern life instill within an individual a deep tension between one's social or individual "completion," each side with its own motives for fulfillment and enrichment. As a thoroughly modern predicament, this reveals that modernity is more than simply an era in history, it is the "self-revelation of the human condition" itself (Weinstein and Weinstein 54). Existing as threshold individuals in modern London, Conrad's characters' journeys of self- or social-completion are beset by their transitional statuses: for example, the Professor as both

anarchist and law-abiding citizen; Winnie as mother and sister to Stevie, as well as current imposture as "dutiful wife" and free woman; the Assistant Commissioner who abuses his position and uses police intel for personal gain; and Verloc—proprietor, anarchist, secret agent, and agent *provocateur*. Their respective provisional states, in the matrix of metropolitan London, elucidate the difficulty, and futility, in their processes of individuation.

This existential tug-of-war between authentic individuality and an identity contingent upon societal structures leaves one in a state of flux, a liminal zone of continual personal reinvention due to the "essential fluidity of [society's] boundaries" (Simmel "Transcendent" 355). The anthropological construction of liminality describes the state or period of disorientation and defamiliarization during rituals of passage when the subject has eschewed aspects of his/her pre-ritual state, but has not yet begun to transition into the status they will hold once the ritual concludes, when the subject will return to a "new, relatively stable, well-defined position in total society" (Turner "Liminal" 57). This second period in the tripartite construction of liminal experiences is marked by profound ambiguity and uncertainty of one's place in prevailing social order. Since the initial state of ritual, *separation*, requires the subject to leave something of him/herself behind by breaking from traditional routines, behavior, or understanding of identity, the liminal state is marked by destabilization in that the subject is no longer tethered, at least in the same fashion, to the social structures previously used to define, situate, or qualify itself. The success or failure of transcending the threshold as a "reaggregated" individual—the third, post-liminal phase of the structure (*incorporation*)—depends on one's ability to navigate their liminal experiences, mine new perspectives, unify these fragmented sensations, perceptions, and insights, and to reenter society as uniquely whole. Due to the disorientation inherent to liminal states, Turner notes that they cannot last infinitely; one eventually needs some sort of structure to support oneself.

In more modern formulations, however, liminality is typified by its own indefiniteness, as well as ubiquity; it has been more broadly construed to apply to post-industrial society as a whole[1]. According to Turner, liminal states in modern times are characterized by "withdrawal from normal modes of social action," the period of which serves for "scrutiny for central values

[1] In his article "The Uses and Meanings of Liminality," Bjørn Thomassen suggests that modernity can be considered an epoch of "permanent liminality" (17).

and axioms of the culture where it occurs;" during this state, traditional "limits to thought, self-understanding, and behavior are undone" ("Ritual" 155). This can be seen especially by the self-serving Assistant Commissioner who occupies the shifting space between the criminal world and society, and, to a lesser extent, Inspector Heat, who remarks that a police officer and burglar are not so dissimilar: "the mind and the instincts of a burglar are of the same kind as the mind and the instincts of a police officer. Both recognize the same conventions, and have a working knowledge of each other's methods and routine of their respective trades" (Conrad 86). Ludmilla Voitkovska and Zofia Voronstova interpret this well: "In this sense, the two worlds co-exist as mirror opposites, revealing the intrinsically complex nature of structure and anti-structure" (89). Considering this, liminality appears a necessary condition of modern life in one's quest for individuation, or self-completion, but one not made any easier by the realization that traditional binary oppositions are not as rigid as they may appear to be.

Although cases can be made for the liminality of all the major characters in *The Secret Agent*, Verloc serves an exceptional example of liminality at its most consequential. He is not only the novel's central character, but he also has a rich history with liminal experiences, which stretches far past the events of *The Secret Agent*. Close examination of Verloc's past and present elucidate how liminal experiences have shaped, and continue to shape, his identity until his death, and even Winnie's thereafter. Most evidently, Verloc's experience at the Embassy with Mr. Vladimir reads strikingly like a ritual of passage, never mind that it occurs at the "approach of spring," a transitional season (Conrad 31). In addition, as remarked by Voitkovska and Vorontsova, the Embassy itself bears "liminality's imprint … an institution governing relations between cultures and, legally, foreign territory on a national space" (86). Conrad even notes that, prior to arrival at the Embassy, the "[u]ndemonstrative" Verloc "might have been anything from a picture frame-maker to a locksmith," which provides Verloc an air of ambiguity from the very start as he metamorphoses from a "shady" proprietor to Embassy agent (Conrad 19). Readers soon discover that Verloc was a renowned secret agent who "had the power to change the schemes and the dates of royal, imperial, grand-ducal journeys, and sometimes cause them to be put off altogether!" (31). This former, more effective incarnation of Verloc, "never designated otherwise but by the symbol △, "the Greek character itself denoting "change," reveals two details with significant ramifications: first, to prove his commitment to his occupation as secret agent, Verloc had to

to relinquish his own name/identity, enacting the separation phase of the liminal construction; second, to establish Verloc's current "fanatical inertness" as a distinct change to his persona, emphasized by the strong contrast to his past potency (18). Conrad does not directly specify where Verloc was formerly stationed, but textual evidence suggests France. This is significant because, although Verloc claims his father was French and that he had learned French "having done his service in the French artillery," for Verloc, a natural-born British subject," to be a secret agent in a foreign country provides fertile ground for liminal experiences (25, 27). Further, Verloc was imprisoned in France for espionage, itself another state of suspended liminality. Despite this, Conrad suggests that Verloc had no problem in reaggregating, or *incorporating*, *himself* as a secret agent; his achievements, accorded by Mr. Vladimir, after all, testify to his success. It appears that Verloc's experiences of being jilted by a former lover and subsequent incarceration have destroyed, or significantly diminished at the very least, his previous acumen; he may have used to be the "celebrated agent △, " but now he is a husk of his former self, one who draws condescension and enmity from his employers instead of enthusiasm and trust. Granted, these observations do not necessarily take part in the drama of *The Secret Agent*, but they highlight the subtle dynamism of Verloc's evolution and his current indolent plight.

At the Embassy in the present, Verloc mirrors his former ritual of passage, though the details have changed. This time, he surrenders his illustrious past and anonymous moniker, which places him in an entirely new realm of liminality. As Mr. Vladimir goes so far as to threaten Verloc's position, Verloc's new status as a disgraced secret agent, whose job is in limbo, requires new methods of re-aggregating himself, methods of deeper commitment which would prove him steadfast to the profession. To redeem himself from his current unsavory reputation as lazy and unintelligent and reestablish himself as a "celebrated" agent, Verloc must obey Mr. Vladimir's demand for *action* ," '*What* we want now is activity—activity'" instead of words, "'Voice won't do. We have no use for your voice'" (27, 29). Until Verloc carries out the operation of bombing the Greenwich Observatory, his status as secret agent remains liminal.

For Verloc, reaggregation as an elevated secret agent would require incorporation into the Embassy. At this point, he could choose *not* to, but then he would need to incorporate himself into the "structure" of ordered society as a way out of liminality. On the flipside of Verloc's occupational/commercial continuum, however, lies only his sordid curios shop—itself a liminal space

due to its also being his home, not to mention its location in the marginal, seedy backstreets of London—but pornography, propaganda, and "wares of disreputable rubbish" hardly seem a wholesome, societally endorsed enterprise (41). (Conrad even characterizes the shop as *antisocial*, with its sleazy, secretive customers, cracked doorbell, and uninviting atmosphere). Ultimately, Verloc opts for neither.

Compromised by his various attachments, and occupying many worlds at once—anarchist, husband and family man/in-law, agent *provocateur*, double agent, and shady proprietor—Verloc relishes in passivity; he does not truly commit to any of these roles. His marked indolence consumes him so that he recruits Stevie to commit the very action that would re-aggregate himself. Verloc thus resists absorption into either the Embassy or society. When Verloc enlists Stevie, he does so without seeming to consider any familial ties with Stevie (and Winnie and Winnie's mother, by extension) or his marring of sociocultural etiquette by entrusting Stevie to do something so dangerous by virtue of Stevie's mental disability. It is as if Verloc were again surrendering parts of himself to undergo another status transformation, but into what remains unknown. He takes advantage of Stevie, a liminal character in his own right, caught between worlds of dependence/independence; manhood/childhood; sibling/"son,"who only wants to impress Verloc with his loyalty and be accepted, as Conrad writes, "Never had a sage a more attentive and admiring disciple. The submission and worship were ... apparent" (202). Unfortunately, for Verloc, he only becomes more displaced when he tasks Stevie, because, as Verloc clearly refrains from incor-porating himself into the Embassy, Verloc comes no closer to a "completed" self in any regard. His predicament grows only more destabilized; he can no longer seek work at the Embassy, nor can he reasonably expect to resituate himself domestically since he essentially sent Stevie to his death. Death, while likely unintentional on Stevie's behalf, nonetheless delivers Stevie from his liminal state. It is only a matter of time before it does likewise for Verloc and Winnie.

Winnie now finds herself stripped of her domestic ties, for Stevie was the fulcrum of her and Verloc's marriage of convenience: "She commanded her wits now ... It was all her own, because the bargain was at an end" (227). Despite an initial calm, the disorientation of her freedom causes Winnie to go "raving mad—murdering mad" and fatally stab Verloc (228). This decisive, individual action, however, does not end her liminality, but it does Verloc's. Having shown no potential for incorporation in his and Winnie's conversations, before and after he confesses

the bomb plot, Verloc would have likely persisted in his liminal state indefinitely and stagnated until his natural end. Winnie's act of murder, on the other hand, frees her from any domestic bond she may have previously held, and now thrusts her into a volatile, fevered liminality. Like Verloc, she was accustomed to passivity and indifference; but even Verloc had frames of reference in his liminal state, whereas Winnie has none. The unbearable solitariness, fear, and sheer abruptness of this state propels Winnie to find anyone who may console and assist her. After Ossipon, one of her only tangential associations, abandons her, she commits suicide, liberating herself from an incomprehensible, turbulent liminality.

While death removes the Verloc family from their respective liminal states, not one of them experiences any sense of finality. In the overarching structure of modern, metropolitan life, Conrad seems to suggest that any attempt at resisting liminal states can only lead to a proliferation of the state's disorientation, or possibly death itself, with no hope of re-entrance into society as a completed individual. The surviving characters do not seem to mind, but that disables them from ever concretely incorporating themselves into the structure, or even anti-structure, of society. While present, they are neither here nor there; the Professor, for example, will likely continue to live a contradictory life as anarchist, yet pub frequenter and man-about-town without effectively accomplishing anything. Furthermore, even his anarchism is impotent; the one failsafe action out his liminal state lies in his own self-detonation, which only furthers Conrad's suggestion that, despite its progress, modernity's numerous competing institutional and personal affiliations leave one nothing but fragments of identity to which one must cohere to preserve any sense of completed individuality; however, establishing this coherence is a process that may or may not cost one's life. This is a dismal, but sober portrayal of the necessary personal and social conflicts one must experience to establish oneself in the ever-increasing complexity and intellectualization of modern life. No doubt shocked by London after an eminent seafaring life, Conrad was perhaps compelled to present his analysis of metropolitan life in *The Secret Agent*, his first "city book." Nevertheless, as Conrad himself penned in an 1894 landbound letter, whether for himself or the grotesque characters, "One must drag the ball and chain of one's selfhood to the end" (Said 25).

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Natalie Hernandez

Gothic Literature Then and Now: A Literary Analysis of *The Twilight Saga* and *Interview with the Vampire*

The literary analysis to date of Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight Saga* and Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* uses gender to reveal the disparity between male and female vampire love interests. But the research around mother figures requires a critique of motherhood through an emotional, scientific, biological, and supernatural lens. Feminist theory and historical analysis of both the Gothic genre and Stephenie Meyer's Mormonism explain female vampire characters in their time periods. The literary analysis of vampire texts explains the physical and emotional connections that vampires share with each other, with humans, and they also explain the ethics of immortality that entice or plague a vampire character. The *Twilight Saga* replicates historic vampire plots of mating and uses Young Adult Literature conventions and Gothic genre characteristics but is set in the contemporary 2000s in Forks, Washington. Bella's narrative can be read as progressive for considering vampirism something she wants to achieve, but Stephenie Meyer's use of the Gothic genre in Bella's pregnancy narrative affects possible readings of the novels as feminist or progressive. The argument that the *Twilight Saga* is a veiled Mormon text is not completely convincing in that it does not reveal the culture beneath either. Rather, the *Twilight Saga* is replicative of vampire narratives. Conservative views featured in the *Twilight Saga* are potentially more influenced by literary theory than pop culture media understands. Stephenie Meyer's own explanation that the *Twilight Saga* originated from one of her dreams may be true, but Bella and Edward evolved into two characters experiencing vampire existentialism through the birth of their monstrous child, which is a literary plot device originated in the experience of Gothic authors.

The settings of *Interview with the Vampire* and *Breaking Dawn* occur in different time periods; the books were written within 17 years of each other. As a result of the Young Adult Literature boom of the 2010s, scholarly research focused on legitimizing female characters in

novels and films that came after the *Twilight Saga*. In an interview with *The Hollywood Reporter, Twilight* film director Catherine Hardwicke explained her thoughts on being a female director of a female-led film:

> [*Twilight*] also made people realize that movies with a female lead would be viable, for example, *Divergent* and *The Hunger Games*. All of those movies wouldn't have happened if we hadn't broken the mold and beat *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* at $29 million and proved that movies like this could be successful (Vanhecke, L., & Howell, L., 2018).

The financial success of the novels and film franchise led to more Young Adult Literature focusing on heroine leads.

The book *Hunting Girls* by Kelly Oliver describes this era of heroine films as partaking in the elevation of potentially feminist female characters with the need to depict the scenes of girls being hunted and killed (Oliver, 2016, p. 27). Therefore, the death and near-death experiences of heroines in Young Adult pop culture contribute to the life cycle of female vampires.

These Young Adult Literature female narratives feature female pain while their male counterparts watch and comment from the sidelines (for example, the potential love interests for each heroine). In vampire fiction, female death occurs in the birth of new vampires: birth is both biological and blood-sucking. When vampire birth is attributed to biting and sucking, vampire birth becomes an experience of female pain for both male and female characters involved in the transaction. Vampire children are born from female and male pain and conceived into violence inside and outside of the womb. This dependency on both vampires in the blood exchange is conceived as a limiting experience that requires nurturing as well. "Vampires, Breast-Feeding, and Anxiety" by Joan Copjec argues that vampires are creatures with child-like dependency on their victims. In *Breaking Dawn* and *Interview with the Vampire*, the trope literally exists in actual children. Through the analysis of vampire fetus and vampire child survival, female pain becomes the root of existential vampiric feelings within modern vampire tales.

Vampire ethics explain immortality, birth, and death. In the article "Who Do You Love? Anne Rice's Vampires and Their Moral Transition," K. Rout uncovers the issue of the ethics of immortality when immortality applies to newly-created vampires. Rout argues that *Interview with the Vampire* is an analysis of a human who struggles with his identity and calling to be

mindlessly evil because his survival depends on peaceful coexistence with humans (Rout, 2003, p. 478). Louis' perspective shows how conscience survives the transition from human to immortal and leaves unrelenting doubt in characters that are presented with a new lifestyle that requires a rejection of their former selves. When applied to the *Twilight Saga*, Meyer's characters also grapple with their immortality and the ethics surrounding their dependency on their family. Living co-dependently with a large family puts the human population at risk of bad vampires coming to town; it also threatens to expose their vampire lifestyle. The root of analysis for discarded female vampires lies in the hidden remorse and confliction that occur when vampire human characters come to the realization that their problems originate in their cohabitation in a family unit. The objection to the *Twilight Saga*'s potential feminist value centers on the knowledge that time has passed between classic narratives of domesticity. *Breaking Dawn* and *Interview with the Vampire* were written more than thirty years apart, so it is not unusual to see contrasting themes in the lives of the novels' leading ladies. Jarvis argues,

> It is initially difficult to understand why a saga that draws so consistently on tropes associated with female powerlessness should have become the most popular literature of the decade for today's young adult females, given the general assumption that the position of women and girls in society has radically improved. The answer may lie partially in understanding how girls are still expected to conform to rigid stereotypes of femininity even though they are now also expected to succeed at school and in careers (Jarvis, 2013, p. 102).

Despite the evolution of heroine-led novels over time, researchers still puzzle at the fact that a text as modern as the *Twilight Saga* relies so heavily on Bella as a weak woman. On the 10th year anniversary of the first Twilight release, *The Hollywood Reporter* published the article "How '*Twilight*' Sparked a YA Craze It Then Helped Destroy" to explain the ups and down of Young Adult Literature during the time of *Twilight*:

> …*Twilight*, and the subsequent chapters in the grandiloquently named *Twilight Saga* franchise, is an oversized pencil tracing arc of the beginning and the end of its niche; after its success turned "YA genre cinema" into an industry, its 2012 climax meant the gears levers driving that industry ground to a halt… Where audiences once craved the soap opera blueprint that made Meyer into an international literary titan (whether or not her

> books are your thing, you can't deny that they make a lot of people money), they have, and over time, moved on. Maybe that's the inevitability with YA material. As the young grow older, they gravitate toward new culture to invest themselves in: new music, new stories, new movies, new clothes and new ideologies […] It's not that YA movies aren't made in 2018; see *Love, Simon*, or *To All The Boys I've Loved Before* or *The Hate U Give*. But today's YA movies lean toward reality, focusing on social concerns of their day instead of the supernatural or science fictional (Crump, 2018).

Young Adult pop culture and the surge of heroine-led media around the time of the *Twilight Saga* is an undeniably powerful market that can often be revived with different themes. Scholarly research surrounding the *Twilight Saga* gives more depth to the critique of *Twilight*, updating its relevance to a post Young Adult fantasy and dystopian literary boom.

Twilight **Novels**

Many literary interpretations of the *Twilight* novels conceive of Bella Swan as a character who displays both feminist and anti-feminist qualities. Bella's demands to become immortal on her own terms are contrasted by her lack of power during her pregnancy and transition to vampire. Her infatuation with Edward Cullen depicts her as a girl excited by a brooding stranger. This supported heated critical arguments against the interpretation that Bella Swan was an ideal female character for young adult readers of the 2000s. In an article that compares the *Twilight Saga* to the fairy tale of "Beauty and the Beast," author Fleur Diamond argues,

> …Meyer's text rehearses may of the key aspects of the classic romance that disempower women and merely reinforce the heteronormative vision of desire. Bella is by no means a feminist character; she does not analyze her life in terms of gender politics and defers opportunities for a college education and career. Bella is positioned as a classic, passive romantic heroine… (Diamond, 2011, p. 47).

Bella's decision to go for a lifetime of vampirism is then an economic decision, the exact opposite of a middle-class human life (like the lives of her parents). Diamond argues that choosing wealth and marriage over independent humanity is considered less feminist than staying human. The controversy of immortal privilege over human independence and survival continues into her pregnancy, when her choice between life and death is also a feminist option. Edward sets up Bella for a shameful pregnancy when he spends all of *Eclipse* explaining why he will not have

sex with her, so there are many aspects of Bella's life that push her to what researchers would consider anti-feminist choices. It should be remembered that the biological conception of Renesmee was considered impossible until it happened, so the view of Bella as inherently anti-feminist is not completely true. She only yearns for immortality with Edward and never considers having children, therefore never needing to take into consideration her potential future role as a mother before she is turned into a vampire. By excluding motherhood from her human plans, Bella's choices to be a vampire wife are not rooted in the wellbeing of others, thus failing to categorize her instincts as inherently anti-feminist.

Rarely is *Twilight* taken into consideration as highbrow literature because of its cultural parameters, and yet it exists within the canon of vampire tales. What is often critiqued is Stephenie Meyer's identity as a Mormon. Research that analyzes religion and sexuality in the *Twilight Saga* focuses on the theme of abstinence in the series. In "Vampires, Desire, Girls and God: *Twilight* and the Spiritualities of Adolescent Girls," Mercer argues,

> Meyer's narratives stand replete with religious themes, wrapped in the figures of sympathetic vampires concerned with morality who worry about the souls of others even as they wonder about the possibilities of redemption for themselves. While the popular press gravitates to Meyer's theme of sexual abstinence outside of the marriage as THE signifier Mormon theology in *Twilight*, the books in fact spin out a rather elaborate Mormon worldview under the cover of fiction. For instance, in *Twilight*, relationships have a "fated" quality to them: not merely a matter of finding a willing mate, the LDS notion of an eternal marriage and family means that the stakes are high around finding a relation ship with the partner one is intended to be with forever (Mercer, 2010, p. 270).

While the theme of abstinence, one eternal mate, and the belief in heaven and hell do appear throughout the series and are contemplated by various characters, the popularity of the series is viewed as an indoctrination of young teenage girls into abstinence and conservative views; however, Meyer argues that the philosophical contemplation that Edward and Bella experience about life and death is more about the young relationship boundaries between them and less about the contemplation of philosophical ideas through a secret message within the text. In an interview with *Time Magazine*, Meyer explained that the message to gain from her plot of vampire marriage is the existence of vampire free will. She states, "It doesn't matter where

you're stuck in life or what you think you have to do; you can always choose something else. There's always a different path" (Grossman, 2008). But after four novels in the series, free will is a lens through which vampire existence can be deconstructed (specifically through Bella and Edward's daughter Renesmee). By using feminist theory, Bella's mother identity can be viewed as a decision between the human female and supernatural undead mother. The concept of "feminist mothering" by Andrea O'Reilly mirrors Bella's experience and outlook of pregnancy:

> …An oppositional discourse of motherhood, one that is constructed as a *negation* of patriarchal motherhood. A feminist practice/theory of mothering, therefore, functions as a counter narrative of motherhood: it seems to interrupt the master narrative of mother hood to imagine and implement a view of mothering that is *empowering* to women… Feminist mothering may refer to any practice of mothering that seeks to challenge and change various aspects of patriarchal motherhood that cause mothering to be limiting of oppressive to women (O'Reilly, 2007, p. 796).

Feminist mothering is about creating a motherly lifestyle that keeps mothers themselves as important as their children. Bella's experience becoming a mother begins with abortion discourse from Edward and evolves into a conclusion of sacrificial womanhood and virtue. Examining Bella's motherly instincts throughout her pregnancy, it is evident that Bella exists to combat historic vampire pregnancy culture that disregards the mother's wellbeing and focuses on the containment and survival of the monster offspring. While Bella is experiencing the turmoil of women in the Gothic genre, Stephenie Meyer employs the politics of menstruation, feminism, and what researchers consider the theme of "the missing mother" (Anolik, 2003). Bella's life-threatening fight to stay pregnancy, give birth, and protect her daughter continue the theme of women in Gothic literature, extending what was lost to the mothers of monsters in the past. Bella success-fully gives birth to her monster child and reverses the theory of the missing mother by surviving childbirth and participating in the vampire transition.

Interview with the Vampire

Anne Rice also introduces parental liberation in vampire characters. In *Interview with the Vampire*, Louis and Lestat go beyond regular parenting culture and deal with regret as parents of immortal descendants exclusively do. Analysis of Anne Rice's novel often takes a historical, geographical, and religious approach. The character Louis specifically addresses his remorse over being immortal, influencing the literary critique that supports the view that vampirism

fluctuates between opportunism and damnation of vampires. Despite the novel taking place in 1791, Anne Rice's background suggests that progressive themes in parenting and partnership are purposefully prominent. Writing Louis and Lestat as two men in a sexual relationship is not the most taboo theme in vampire literature. In an interview with Lambda Book Report, Anne Rice explained that "my characters always turn out to be bisexual. It just happens, and I'm very happy with it—I think it's what I see as an ideal" (Contemporary Authors Online, 2017). The theme of childbirth can still occur without a heterosexual plot or heterosexual characters. Both Meyer and Rice write characters experiencing agony together in the partnerships. Isolation becomes a solution for vampire family units as a way to solve their crisis and protect their children. While the *Twilight Saga* employs the Gothic theme of the missing, sacrificial mother, Anne Rice proposes through the queer pairing of Louis and Lestat that female mothers are not the only parental figures responsible for contributing to the issue of vampire remorse. Louis and Lestat's co-parenting is a progressive and parallel literary experience that uses the concept of feminist mothering as a way to valorizing both the parent's and the child's lives. Louis's fear and Lestat's violence toward Claudia may disqualify them both as feminist parents, but within the realm of Gothic parents of a monster, their care for Claudia in her early stages of vampirism counts as a nurturing experience that is a positive example of the social norm of the 1700s because their actions are not seen by humans as turning a child into a vampire, but as saving an orphaned child. Both childcare experiences in *Breaking Dawn* and *Interview with the Vampire* are contemporary examples of parenting and mothering laced with the modern discourse of feminist and gender theory. Renesmee and Claudia are vampire daughters born from unlikely circumstances and yet are important enough to change their text's narrative of mothering, pregnancy, childbirth, and parenting.

2000s Vampire Fiction

The success of *Twilight* books and films began the literary genre of young adult vampire novels. Series such as *Vampire Diaries* , *Vampire Academy* , *House of Night* and other heroine-led sequences dealing with other-worldly, often dystopian themes followed, including *The Hunger Games* film adaptations. Fans of the *Twilight Saga* became divided between Team Jacob and Team Edward (Bella's two love interests), which made readers take sides over vampire or werewolf lifestyles as lovers for Bella. Examining the social and literary parameters in which

vampirism exists is important to the proper genre categorization of novels that pander to young readers and evolve into texts used in literary criticism. The 2000s vampire literature puts the ethics of immortality in the scope of a reader's world. Teenage vampire narratives combine puberty, young love, and security with the threat of humanity and immortality. The plot of an unplanned pregnancy works in teen vampire fiction because it is a very real adolescent concern of young readers in many cultures.

While the *Twilight Saga* promises women the possibility of revenge, marriage, and unbreakable family unites (Silver, 2010, p. 122), *Interview with the Vampire* presents the negative aspects of immortality, childhood vampirism, the breaking of family ties, and unnatural death. Criticism surrounding *Interview with the Vampire* negates the idea that immortality and supernatural powers are more debilitating to former humans because vampires must deal with their new need to kill and drink human blood. Vampires in literature appear to exist in their own fantasy, but Rice and Meyer write very human experiences of life chaos for their immortal experiences.

Comparing Patterns in Literature

The Gothic genre's use of the supernatural pertains to the creation of beings by evil scientists, unknowing inventors, and expectant mothers. Gothic features of *Twilight* also include the Cullen's house, where Bella is confined for the duration of her pregnancy so her father does not see her gaunt, pregnant figure (Meyer, 2008, p. 159). The Cullen house is a hub for the global vampire network to meet in preparation for their battle with the Volturi, the vampire council (Meyer, 2008, p. 607). The Gothic setting keeps Bella shrouded in the mystery of her own body. Her physical state is baffling to the Cullens, who do not know how to deal with her while she is progressing in her pregnancy and dying simultaneously. The mystery surrounding Bella's human biology is very similar to the Gothic's writing of pregnancy and the social view of female anatomy as mysterious. Baumann and Mitchell write,

> Gothic revival included a turn against the Classical and Neoclassical and an embracing of the overgrown, the ruined, the dark, and all things belonging to some romanticized remote age of barbarity, sexual license, and belief in the supernatural. Most Gothic novels are set in the past (though often vague and historically questionable versions of the past), set in ruins, castles, or dark forests of countries other than England (often European Catholic

countries), and contain plots that revolve around ancestry, primogeniture, incest, and family crimes (Bauman & Mitchell, 2018, p. 65).

By applying dark themes to pregnant characters, the Gothic warps family life into unconventional occurrences that make protagonists question their humanity and the virtue of their existence. Horror in the Gothic genre uses the human discovery of science and technology to create mystery around natural human conception and human thought. Novels such as *Rosemary's Baby* and *Frankenstein* add a monstrous flair to the conception of life to haunt parental figures. Despite the shock value of the sex scenes in *Breaking Dawn*, Bella's pregnancy is heavily influenced by themes from Gothic literature. The context of the pregnancy that leaves the Cullen family worried that she will die is due to a combination of Meyer's fictionalized vampire history of the Volturi (vampire government), the lack of biological function in immortal vampires, and a fictionalized history of pregnant, supernatural beings that Meyer has Carlisle explain, as if Meyer herself were bringing forth the tradition of maternal dreams in Gothic literature. The history of female themes within the Gothic also spread misinformation about the science of pregnancy. Davis argues,

> The fact that Gothic novels were particularly concerned with women may of course have aided the continuity and amplified the significance of gynaecological text transmission. Scientific knowledge about conception and gestation was entangled with female secrecy and subjectivity and, because these were subjects so prominently explored in Gothic literature set in or associated with the medieval past, they were perceived to apply an anachronistic drag on scientific progress (Davis, 2018, p. 775-6).

Historic views of pregnancy influenced the Gothic's view of women and pregnancy. It was almost as if a call and response were created between women experiencing traumatic pregnancies and maternal dreams, while being affected by the society's view of pregnancy influenced by scientific advancements. It is important to understand the view of pregnancy as an "anachronistic drag," as Davis says, because of the perspective of science being required to evolve but women's bodies not evolving as if they were machines to be tuned. *Breaking Dawn* taps into this trope of a secret, unknowable pregnancy because of the characteristics of her supernatural pregnancy, such as her amniotic sac that modern medical technology cannot track.

The stories of Claudia and Renesmee in the two vampire novels employ the Gothic

examination of human nature to the offspring of human sexuality, borrowing tropes from vampire narratives and creating reproduction narratives of tormented wives and partners of vampires. What makes both *Breaking Dawn* and *Interview with the Vampire* unique is that vampire novels use parenting to change the boundary of the Gothic genre. The Gothic view of women, mothering, parenting narratives, and horror exposes the ethics of reproduction in unnatural circumstances.

Twelve years have passed since the first edition of *Breaking Dawn*. The *Twilight Saga* is an important marker in Young Adult Literary history because of the global infatuation it created. The tradition of sacrificial motherhood and maternal dreams in Gothic literature appears in Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight Saga* prominently. *Breaking Dawn* is a reflection of cultures clashing over a biological function that has occurred since the beginning of time. *Breaking Dawn* is also a reflection of evolving communities and generations with a supernatural twist. To watch literature evolve is to watch the passing of time. Readers can trace the history of Gothic literature in an extremely popular Young Adult novel.

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Cheryl Porter

Jazz, Blues, and Musical Rhythms in Between the Acts

In writing her final novel, *Between the Acts*, Virginia Woolf goes far beyond merely mentioning music as a backdrop; she fills the pages with the sights, sounds, and feel of music all the way to the finale. In her autobiographical essay " A Sketch of the Past," Woolf states, "we are the words; we are the music; we are the thing itself" (72). For Woolf, nearly everyone and everything has the potential to be expressed as music. So with music as her muse, she experiments with linguistic styles and plot structure that eliminates chapters, making it one, long jam session with various movements composed of cleverly manipulated language, both fragmented and whole, as metaphors for the musical traditions of Jazz, Blues, and melody, plus a nearly con-stant string of interwoven rhythmic beats to move the reader in a literary dance from one act to the next, creating a modernist novel that transcends the norm by *imitating* music.

The novel, set in pre-WWII England, is built around a play. But before the play even begins, the novel's curtain opens on one of the hosting family members, Lucy Swithin, who possesses an unusual connection to the Earth, its creatures, and their inherent sounds: "She had been waked by the birds. How they sang! attacking the dawn like so many choir boys attacking an iced cake" (This propensity for nature to stand in as music is not limited to Lucy's point of view. Throughout the book, Woolf endows various forms of nature with the ability to perform and contribute one musical element or another: "The breeze blew gaps between their words" (139); "From cow after cow came the same yearning bellow… the primeval voice sounding loud in the ear of the present moment… [they] filled the emptiness and continued the emotion" (140-41); "murmured by waves; breathed by restless elm trees; crooned by singing women" (155). Every part of Creation—weather, animals, people—has a note or score to add to the symphony.

In "The Talk of Sheep," Woolf writes about encountering the hapless creatures and imagining how they must feel and talk about issues of the day: "one is clearly exhorting the rest to save their souls from damnation—another… denounced some ovine education bill—a third

upholds the rights of the sheep [as] the intellectual equal of the ram…The universal tone of weariness—of hopeless regret which prevails in the babble makes me opine that the sheep themselves are aware why they still remain sheep" (197). Thus, years before writing *Between the Acts*, Woolf connects the thoughts and vocal sounds of animals with her fellow humans, whom she may also see as hapless sheep babbling through troubled times. In terms of the novel, in her article "Virginia Woolf's Last Words on Words: *Between the Acts* and 'Anon,'" Nora Eisenberg discusses Woolf's deliberate use of animals and other abstract concepts as uniquely unusual musical forms: "In *Between the Acts*, music comes to stand for a variety of non-verbal forms which [she] hopes might supplement a failing language. As the audience awaits a scene to be played a melody is heard, and then we are told of the 'melody' of the view, the 'melody' of the cows… as they move about in silence" (259). Likewise, Melba Cuddy-Keane notes Woolf's unusual construct of music in her essay "The Politics of Comic Modes in Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts*": "the language of music permits the integration of human with natural sound. Instead of focusing on the wind's disruption of verbal meaning, a revisionary perspective hears a new music created by the interpenetration of the human song with the sounds (or silences) of nature" (281). Rather than letting wind be wind, birds be birds, or even silence be its usual void, Woolf pulls them into the harmony by giving them signification.

In addition to allowing nature into the symphonic arena, Woolf also acts as conductor, calling forth each sound in very particular ways. In her article, "Virginia Woolf, Ethel Smyth, and Music: Listening as a Productive Mode of Social Interaction," Elicia Clements points out how "Woolf explicitly states that she conceptualizes her novels as music before she even writes a word" (61). She then weaves certain words and elements of nature into the text to create specific notes: "Onomatopoeic language and musical terms (humm, whizz, buzz, rhapsody, rapture, cacophony, discordantly) conjure an aural domain that… somehow produces the pulsating joy of life. The…devoured tree provides a visual splash [and] the sounds of the birds evoke the plucked strings of violins" (67). Thus, anything and everything has the potential to be musically meaningful with-in the play: ambience, conversations between characters, and even people's thoughts. Writing about the nature and power of music in her essay "Street Music," Woolf notes:

The whole of rhythm and harmony have been pressed… into the neatly divided scales,

> the tones and semitones of the pianoforte. [One] attribute of music – its tune – is taught, but rhythm, which is its soul, is allowed to escape like the winged creature it is… [and]though many are deaf to tune hardly any one is so coarsely organized as not to hear the rhythm of its own heart in words and music and movement… we can never silence music…; [it] has the strange and illimitable power of a natural force. (30)

Rhythm is the elusive key, the heartbeat that Woolf wants to bring to the text of this novel. Rhythm is internal. It is ingrained in every life-force. It determines our pulse, times our breath, dictates procreation. By bringing man's, nature's, and music's rhythms into the language and cadence of her words and syntax, she connects characters to their surroundings, surroundings to the play, and the play to its audience, creating a cohesive whole that somehow works.

Another reason Woolf brings music to the writing table is to try something new. In "Transforming Musical Sounds into Words: Narrative Method in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*," Clements argues that in *The Waves* and all her novels, "Woolf deliberately attempts to reconstitute novelistic methods by looking to the 'classical' tradition of music as a potential model" (160). Evidence of Woolf's fascination for classical music can be found in her own diaries and letters. However, in *Between the Acts*, she goes beyond classical modes by incorporating some very new, very hip, *American* modes. In '"The Bray of the Gramophones and the Voices of the Poets': Art and Political Crises in *Between the Acts*," Jane De Gay specifically connects Between the Acts with jazz, suggesting that Woolf uses "jazz music as a metaphor of a shift away from Romantic ideas about harmony… [and] in this way… becomes a metaphor for new forms of social order" (43). Jazz emerged from African American roots in the early 20th century. In the introduction for Jazz in *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, general editors Henry Louis Gates and Nellie McKay state that Jazz is like "the jam-session-like talk and song from the Harlems of America and from its southern roads… [with] black talk's flair for story-telling [and] dirty dozens understatement… braggadocio, whispery romance [and] loud-talk menace… All of that 'talking and testifying' and 'speaking and speechifying' [is in] this music, giving it great force and flavor" (55). Woolf recognizes music's force, and chooses to infuse her novel with it by incorporating a variety of written forms of jazz into her characters' narratives, internal dialogues, and fragmented chatter of the audience. In this way, she is doing what jazz singers did, "using their voices as if they were jazz instruments… voices imitating instruments that were imitating voices" (55-56). As a

form of the Blues, "Jazz proclaims the human will to keep on keeping on in spite of the troubles traditionally sung about in blues lyrics. Jazz swings, and stomps and laughs and finger snaps these blues troubles out of town for a while" (56). In *Between the Acts*, war is on the horizon. Danger is in the air. Everything is changing. Few things can be counted on. Despite all this, the characters "keep on keeping on" by showing up to the annual pageant, determined to metaphorically get "out of town for a while."

An example of this jazz-infused rallying spirit can be found during the intermission following act one of La Trobe's play. Bart Oliver, the family patriarch, is fussing in his library: "A great harvest the mind had reaped; but for all this, compared with his son, he did not care one damn. 'What's the use, what's the use,' he sank down into his chair muttering, 'O sister swallow, O sister swallow, of singing your song?" (BTA 116). He is so despondent, he must express it out loud, if only to the dog at his feet. To put this in perspective, Ralph Ellison is quoted in the *Norton* introduction for Blues with this definition: "The blues is an impulse to keep the painful detail and episodes of a brutal existence alive in one's aching consciousness, to finger its jagged grain, and to transcend it… by squeezing from it a near-tragic, near-comic lyricism… [it] is an autobiograph-ical chronicle of personal catastrophe expressed lyrically" (23). Bart is singing the blues. Yet jazz shares a lot with the blues: "jazz has a blueslike [sic] tragic dimension, too: it knows that life is a low-down dirty shame or that, as the bluesman Elmore James puts it, 'the sky is crying' [and] despite all hopes and efforts, things might not work out for the best" (*Norton* Jazz 56). This is where Bart is. He's come to the painful realization that things may not work out with his son the way he would like them to. But then sister Lucy comes bounding in, and a fresh wave of jazzy music suddenly pours through the open window to lighten the mood:

> Hark, hark, the dogs do bark, / The beggars are coming to town… / As they listened and looked— out into the garden— the trees tossing and the birds swirling seemed called out of their private lives, out of their separate avocations, and made to take part. The lamp of love burns high, over the dark cedar groves, / The lamp of love shines clear, clear as a star in the sky… / Old Bartholomew tapped his fingers on his knee in time to the tune. Leave your casement and come, lady, I love till I die, / … For all are dancing, retreating and advancing, / The moth and the dragon fly… (*BTA* 117)

In the middle of Bart's bluesy melancholy, the music of the trees, birds, instruments, and singers

all comes together to turn the blues into jazz, and it works. Bart is finger-snapping his troubles away, if only for a moment. Further along in the story, the "whispery romance [and] loud-talkmenace" of jazz is experienced by Isa. Reflecting on recent disturbances, she wanders too close to danger and encounters even more unsettling sounds, leading to hurtful confirmation: "'Al-ways I hear corrupt murmurs; the chink of gold and metal. Mad music…' More voices sounded… 'Hear not the frantic cries of the leaders… [or] London when I thrust the window open someone cries…' She had [come upon] the greenhouse. The door was kicked open. Out came Mrs. Manre-sa and Giles [her husband]" (156-7). Isa is not looking for trouble, yet unsettling jazz-like sounds in her head and in the surrounding air come crashing together with unavoidable force.

Another hallmark of jazz is its sound elements, which can include "vamps (or introducto-ry statements), breaks (or solos), riffs (repeated structural phrases), choruses (main themes), bridges (… connecting themes), call/response patterns, improvisations, syncopated cadences… other definitive structures— and the way in which they operate in the pages of a book" (*Norton* Jazz 56). Many of these sound elements appear in the pages of *Between the Acts*, further sug-gesting that Woolf intentionally built some of her linguistic and stylistic choices on the principles of this newly emerging modernist music from across the ocean. This makes sense, since "jazz (and much jazz-inflected black literature) expresses… the bittersweet bluesy knowledge that though we be dismembered every day, somehow still another day we rise" (57). Woolf under-stands all of Europe is being dismembered daily, yet still needs to know, and by extension, needs her characters to know, that they as a society and England as a nation will rise again. Decon-structing the novel, the jazz element of riffs can be seen early in the novel. The narrator de-scribes the dismal atmosphere of the estate library using treble word riffs: "the tortoiseshell but-terfly beat on the lower pane of the window; beat, beat, beat;… if no human being ever came, never, never, never, the books would be mouldy [sic], the fire out and the tortoiseshell butterfly dead on the pane" (BTA 17). No one is there, and yet nature itself is sending a bluesy, repeated, rhyming message to anyone willing to listen. This pattern is seen again a few pages later, when the possibility of rain arises: "Beyond that was blue, pure blue, black blue; blue that had never fell as sun, shadow, or rain upon the world… No flower felt it; no field; no garden" (23). Here, the repeated pattern includes types of blues, weather, and plant life— all

treble riffs, creating a distinct rhythm that can be felt as surely as any horn or piano riff. It appears again in a descrip-tion of the dining room: "Empty, empty, empty; silent, silent, silent. The room was a shell, sing-ing of what was before time was" (36). Further on, the returning audience is described usingfield; no garden" (23). Here, the repeated pattern includes types of blues, weather, and plant life— all treble riffs, creating a distinct rhythm that can be felt as surely as any horn or piano riff. It appears again in a description of the dining room: "Empty, empty, empty; silent, silent, silent. The room was a shell, singing of what was before time was" (36). Further on, the returning audi-ence is described using a slightly different riff pattern: "Scattered, shattered, hither thither sum-moned by the bell. 'Ping-ping-ping' that's the phone" (119). Even mechanical sounds are riffs, with the gramophone's "chuff, chuff, chuff" (151), and "tick, tick, tick" (154). Near the play's end, more riffs sound out La Trobe's internal agony: "She had forbidden music… Blood seemed to pour from her shoes. This is death, death, death… No one [saw] the cloud coming. There it was… Down it poured like all the people in the world weeping. Tears. Tears. Tears…" (180). Call and response, a jazz element found in music and church services, adds another lyrical layer of riffs to the novel. An excellent example of this is near the novel's end, after the guests have gone, when Isa murmurs, "This year, last year, next year, never," and Bartholomew responds with his own riff, "Tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor" (217). Like music itself, the number of ways for Woolf to insert jazz nuances seems infinite.

Another jazz element is syncopated cadence. In the Center for Jazz Studies Columbia University's Jazz Glossary, this element is defined as "a momentary disturbance of a regular rhythm" (Syncopation), pairing it with cross rhythm, "The simultaneous use of two or more different rhythmic patterns" (Cross Rhythm). Syncopation with cross rhythm is incorporated at least two ways in the novel. First, in the chatter of the audience as they await each act:

> 'They're not ready… I hear 'em laughing ... Dressing up. That's the great thing, dressing up…. That's one good the war brought us—longer days… Where did we leave off? D'you remember?... D'you think people change? Their clothes of course… But I meant our selves… I found my father's old top hat…. But ourselves—do we change?… It's the wives that make the trouble… And what about the Jews? The refugees… People like ourselves, beginning life again… My old mother, who's over eighty, can remember… Now they're com ing… No, that's nothing… I'd make it penal, leaving litter.' (120-21)

understand that while both her chattering audience and a sample of instrumental jazz cross rhythm may fail to make sense, they both have the power to convey emotion and mood. The other way in which Woolf uses syncopation is by inserting it into the play as music:

> The tune changed; snapped; broke; jagged. Fox-trot, was it? Jazz?... Anyhow the rhythm kicked, reared, snapped short. What a jangle and a jingle... What a cackle, a cacophony! Nothing ended. So abrupt. And corrupt. Such an outrage; such an insult... not plain. Very up to date... What is her game? To disrupt?... O the irreverence of the generation... The young, who can't make, but only break; shiver into splinters the old vision; smash to atoms what was whole. (183)

Again, Woolf uses a fragmented sentence structure, but this time includes treble riffs and rhyme such as "Nothing ended. So abrupt. And corrupt," and "The young, who can't make, but only break." According to the audience, this *may* be jazz, but is deemed a disturbing insult created by youth to break up the old order, and not received well at all.

In "Jazz Criticism: Its Development and Ideologies," John Gennari says that one of the defining features of jazz "has been its role as a progenitor of new forms, an inventor of new languages [and] new ways to express meaning. The blue notes, microtones, [and] polyrhythms of jazz constitute a musical vocabulary and grammar that cannot be accurately represented by the standard notational systems of Western music" (449). This is precisely what Woolf is going for in *Between the Acts*, a new form, a new non-standard way of using language and even grammar. In keeping with the times in which this novel is set, Gennari states that "Responding to the incessant, vibrating flux of European and American society-urbanization, industrialization, immigration, a devastating world war—artists sought to capture the sense of uncertainty, irresolution, ambivalence, and paradox inherent in their changing cultural condition" (462). As an artist, Woolf is herself responding to all these same things in her own way, with jazz at the forefront of her approach to narrative style in *Between the Acts*. In fact, her previously quoted reference to youth and their penchant for jazz and disruption is confirmed by Gennari, when he says of 1930s young jazz writers, "they viewed jazz as the touchstone of a new belief system; a new way of life far more spontaneous and life-affirming than that of their parents; a new culture far more authentic than the one propagated in the churches, universities, and corporations" (474). Like Woolf, the youth of the 30s and 40s were looking for something new,

whether they were writing about jazz, performing it, or just listening to it.

Jazz and the blues dominate most of the novel, but there are some parts that reflect other forms of music. One form that is clearly represented on a lesser scale is melody. In "Melody: Some Basics," Jack Perricone says, "The melody is usually the most memorable aspect of a song, the one the listener remembers and is able to perform… a melodic phrase usually defines itself by resting or holding or coming to some point of resolution." One section of the novel that stands out as being written in the form of a melody is a memorable scene within the play. For several restful pages, Lady H. H. and Sir S. L. bicker over a humorously failing romantic arrangement (*BTA* 126-133), creating an extended moment of entertainment which, unlike the novel's main plotline, ends with a definite resolution. This melodic interlude cannot be sung, but is linear enough to be easily recounted or retold from memory. In addition to more substantial movements of jazz, blues, and melody, Woolf also liberally layers in a labyrinth of smaller connecting moments of musicality here and there throughout the novel. One example of this is right before the play begins, when Mrs. Manresa asks, "Are they going to act?" and Giles answers, "Act; dance; sing; a little bit of everything" (58). Another is when Isa is wondering in the garden and muses, "That was the burden… laid on me in the cradle; murmured by waves; breathed by restless elm trees; crooned by signing women; what we must remember; what we would forget" (155). Thus, in effect, Woolf's novel *is* music. Supporting this assessment, in her article "Waves and Fragments: Linguistic Construction as Subject Formation in Virginia Woolf," Julie Vandivere pulls from Woolf's diary: "she described the novel's prose as 'quite distinct… the rhythm of the notes is far freer and looser'… Rather than as language, with words and meaning, Woolf here figures Between the Acts as music, with notes and rhythms… [she] links music with language to explore the aesthetics of language, using music to empty language of its ability to gesture to something outside of itself" (226-7). So, with music as her model and driving force, Woolf approaches this final novel as an experimental foray into an art form where music *becomes* the language by which to write.

Between the Acts is a rhythmic feast. Its words, language, and syntax imitate and emulate emerging turn-of-the-century art forms such as jazz and blues, plus an array of musical moments, creating a wild and wonderful beat that not only expresses the sorrows and joys of its characters, but also of England's pre-war uncertainties and the feelings of a society on edge,

struggling to keep up appearances and traditions. *Between the Acts* is not simply a novel; it is its own art form, a symphonic jazz session of enduring notes still lingering on today.

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Caitlin Wolf

Living Death and the Confined Spaces of George Lamming's *The Emigrants*

George Lamming's three early novels are preoccupied with the development and definition of the colonized psyche as it moves through the significant physical spaces of empire. *The Emigrants* , as the transitional piece in this trilogy of colonial psychology, offers insight into the dismantling of the colonized individual's identity under the scrutiny of the imperial center. Lamming presents the failure of self-identification and self-projection in a setting where the individual's very right to claim status as a sovereign subject is negated. Though they have repositioned themselves geographically, these West Indian emigrants are unable to escape the symbolic and spatial confinements of the colony. These small spaces, which the emigrants unknowingly transport within their own bodies, are analogous to the kinds of "death-worlds" proposed by Achille Mbembe in his works on necropolitics. Gradually, Lamming's West Indians become the "living-dead," bodies stripped of subject identity and inscribed with otherness by the objectifying gaze of the English.

Historically, sovereign power has been defined by the ability to dictate who may live and who must die (Mbembe "Necropolitics" 11). Traditionally the practical exercise of sovereignty, expressed by a head of state's authority over his or her subjects, was weighted toward the "must die" side of that dualism. According to Michel Foucault, modernity saw a movement towards the democratization and diffusion of sovereign power into the body politic. As subjects became the vessels of power, their longevity and health became intrinsically linked to the perpetuation and strength of power itself. Control over who "may live" became the new privileged expression of power. Foucault argues that, aided by the advancement of biological sciences in the 18th cen-tury, modern sovereign power "exerts a positive influence on life, that endeavors to administer, optimize, and multiply it, subjecting it to precise controls and comprehensive regulations," what he terms "bio-power" (Foucault *Reader* 259). Politics

developed into "bio-politics," and fixated on things like healthcare, population control, and sanitation among the subject bodies of a given state. Contrastingly, Foucault also noted that the 20th century saw a profound escalation in the exercise of the sovereign right to kill, as unprecedented world wars and genocides claimed millions of lives (Foucault *Reader* 259). If advancing life at a species level is the credo of modern power systems, there would appear to be a proportional advance in death, an increase in the subjugation and disposal of lives deemed lesser, hostile, or expendable.

Paradoxically, this surplus of biological death equates to a decrease of power, "in-sofar as [death] is the end of life, the term, the limit, or the end of power," ("Biopower" 1445). In response to this problem, Achille Mbembe proposes that power systems create environments where the symbolic exercise of death might be carried out on living bodies. Complicating and expanding on Foucault, Mbembe offers "necropower" to account for the way power systems impose "extreme forms of human life, death-worlds, forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life that confer upon them the status of living dead" (Mbembe "Necropolitics" 1). Since the Western concept of "life" is especially linked to the symbolic endowment of sovereign status, and sovereignty relies on the existence of free individuals who are "full subjects capable of self-understanding, self-consciousness, and self-representation" (Mbembe "Necropolitics" 13), death might be envisioned as a symbolic reversal or negation of that status of sovereign life. In these "death-worlds," humans are stripped of their sovereign identity and reduced to objects for the elevation of a separate people group.

Though he is careful to preserve the agency of colonized peoples, Mbembe considers the colony as a key example of place inhabited by these "living dead". *The Emigrants'* depiction of colonized people offers a confirmation of Mbembe's theories. Though "West Indian islanders shared a common citizenship with the British population and enjoyed a right of residence," their symbolic political reality as members of the colony evokes the substrate status of the conquered, subjected, and demoted identity (Ellis 213). In the colony, "sovereignty meant occupation, and occupation meant relegating the colonized into a third zone between subjecthood and objecthood" and defining "who matters and who does not, who is disposable and who is not" (Mbembe "Necropolitics" 27). The multiple protagonists of Lamming's novel are the products of this colonized space and gradually come to the identity-rupturing understanding that their role in the empire is not as sovereign English subjects, but rather as banner-bearers of a place of negation, a non-subjectivity necessary to sustain the colonial power structure.

In his article on the novel, David Ellis states that "colonial discourse had provided what Homi Bhabha has called a 'differentiating order of otherness' that endowed the subjects of empire with a range of highly recognizable and ontologically inferior characteristics" (214). The emigrants carry the colony with them, its manifold meanings inscribed on their otherwise meaningless bodies by the gaze of the British. Mbembe notes that the race-based gaze is a fundamental requirement of power, part of Foucault's technologies of knowledge that enable the codification and division of the human species. These scientifically legitimized categories create a "biological caesura between the ones and the others," and facilitate the "distribution of death" toward those groups deemed disposable ("Necropolitics" 17). The British gaze divests the individual emigrants of any semblance of sovereign singularity, grouping them by the truly "skin-deep" common color of their bodies, then furthering this careless categorizing by tying those bodies to the larger body of colonial myth and history.

This type of race-based labeling is abundantly evident in the train section of the novel, as the emigrants are introduced to both the British landscape and the color-based definition and dehumanization that will come to define their stay in England. One emigrant is introduced to the derogatory term, "spade", by a more experienced resident: "That's me, an' you. Spades. Same color as the card" (113). Likewise, a British man offers two of the emigrant train passengers a pint; a friendly gesture undercut by his refusal to use the travelers' given names, preferring the generic and racialized "John" and "darkie" (112). In both cases these emigrants are pushed into a racial community through identity-degrading labeling, and are awoken to the communality of color that overrides any other affiliations that they previously considered part of their identity. Later, a woman collapses the Afro-Caribbean emigrants and Africans in a mildly infantilizing manner: "my sister's a missionary in Africa, says it's a nice place, and your people very good people. She adores Africans" (116). The comment points to both the European disregard for distinct people groups and cultures and the British bias to see black bodies as those once colonized. Ellis notes that the emigrants' conception of themselves as equal British citizens collapses

Indeed, the emigrants begin to rewrite their own identities in accordance with the way they are perceived as they are made aware of the still rigid colonial dynamics at play in London. This self-rewriting is perhaps nowhere more evident than in Collis' experiences. His intimate brush with the negative gaze of Mr. Pearson at an otherwise innocuous dinner demonstrates

the way that the emigrants “start to see each other through the eyes of the British as a foreign presence” (Ellis 216). Collis’ status as an aspiring writer makes him something more than an “ordinary fellow” and he even has the benefit of a personal introduction from Mrs. Pearson’s brother, who is working in Collis’ native Trinidad (Lamming 207). The dinner party proceeds with acceptable civility until Pearson receives a call from work, apparently informing him that a recently hired West Indian emigrant has committed some small-scale crime. His attitude toward Collis immediately shifts as he barrages Collis with questions about “natives” and why so many of “his people” come to England. Collis observes that Mr. Pearson was one who “quickly defined the other” and that at that moment, Collis “understood that he did not then exist for Mr. Pearson, and he understood too that Mr. Pearson didn’t exist for himself” (142). Here, Collis has come to signify this encroachment of colonial “savagery” into the pristine lawfulness of Mr. Pearson’s regulated existence, a threat to his livelihood and quality of life. For his part, Collis identifies Mr. Pearson as a kind of functionary of that power that seeks to define him as other. Both men fail to recognize each other as subjects; instead, they embody the dualism between regulated biopower and negating necropower, between colonizer and colonized.

Lamming fashions the tension of this scene in a symbolic tableau: Collis, aspiring (or encroaching) West Indian writer, stands pinned by the evaluative gaze of Mr. Pearson against a bookcase filled by the great writers of the age of Britain’s colonial expansion. Under the disintegrating pressure of this scrutiny, Collis retreats, breaking the tension by asking for the lavatory. Later in the evening, left alone with a photograph of Mr. Pearson, Collis gets “the feeling that if Mr. Pearson were present, he [Collis] would commit some act of violence […] only violence could make Mr. Pearson feel” (147). Collis seems to feel that the only method of communication he has under this British gaze is the one that Mr. Pearson already expects him to employ: that of savagery or violence. Collis ties himself to the individual from the telephone call in the same way that Mr. Pearson had previously, seeing that he is unintelligible to the British man outside this preconfigured definition. He has begun the process of rewriting his own identity to conform to the one that British society seeks to impose upon him. As Sandra Pouchet Paquet observes,“both the emigrants and the English are trapped by inherited colonial attitudes and postures, and the result is invariably destructive to the emigrant psyche” (40).

Thus, the emigrants recognize and capitulate to the British interpretation of their bodies as the dominion of the colonized, or the living-dead. They are the symbolic ghosts and the bodily hosts of colony in the imperial center. Consequently, they also recognize that "being visible is going to materially affect [their] existence," which Ellis contends they combat through "self-exclusion" (219). After Collis's experience at the Pearsons', most of the emigrant's interactions take place in secluded, otherized spaces, instead of in places that, like the Pearsons, are so clearly British. This is a continuation of the work of colonization, a writing "on the ground a new set of social and spatial relations," which "entails first and foremost a division of space into compartments" (Mbembe "Necropolitics" 25-6). These compartments create a spatial category where those subjected to the negative biological categorization of necropower may be confined for the "safety" of the dominant group. These are death-worlds to Mbembe, places of imprisonment, where the economic and political purchase afforded by full sovereignty are suspended.

Newly landed in England, these emigrants are quickly initiated into the physical death-worlds where their colonized bodies are to be sequestered. These spaces are almost always represented as in some way "below the surface" of British public life. As Paquet observes, there is an established "theme of an underground that is both prison and hell" in the novel (37). The very first locations frequented by the emigrants are a subterranean barbershop and an unlicensed hairdresser, places either literally or figuratively "underground." In these spaces, the men and women are able to converse about their lives and philosophies, yet Ellis adds that in these meeting places, outside and underneath British life, the emigrants "not only exclude themselves from society, they also confirm their status as a distinct and foreign social group, cut off from the British population" (220).

Notably, both the hairdressers and the barbershop are penetrated by what would appear to be a functionary of sovereign control. A policeman enters the barbershop ostensibly looking for information on Higgins (about whom Pearson receive the telephone call) while concurrently bringing awareness to the men in the shop that the British power system is monitoring these underground congregating places. When the Jamaican observes that "they think there is some black underground connecting every one of us," the policeman answers, "well, it's only natural,

[…] we feel that you're all together, you're likely to know something about one another" (Lamming 163). This seemingly off-hand response is imbued with both the biological categorization of racism ("only natural"), the state surveillance of secluded and collected black emigrants ("we feel that you're all together"), and the impetus for self-surveillance ("you're likely to know something about one another").

As Mbembe argues, within these kinds of colonial death-worlds "surveillance is both inward and outward-oriented, the eye acting as weapon and vice versa […] it is also tantamount to seclusion" ("Necropolitics" 28). Ellis too sees the barbershop and hairdresser as places where "the emigrants can speak, but never be heard […] the emigrants cannot see, but they can be surveyed" (220). The natural effusions of sovereignty—visual evaluation and meaningful utterance— are reversed and confounded in these places. Assertions of will are futile, bouncing against confining walls, and power may at any moment (and does) pierce through to observe and in-scribe these selves with a subjugated status.

Mbembe's assertion that sovereignty is "a twofold process of *self-institution* and *self-limitation*" (Mbembe "Necropolitics" 13¬) is negatively mirrored in the way these death-worlds force the emigrants into "an exercise in self-policing, in self-confinement" (Ellis 221). Indeed, the first adumbrations of this confinement happen while the emigrants are still aboard the *Golden Image.* The transitional space offered by the ship allows passengers to voice hopes and affect ownership over their bodies and past and future identities; however, Lamming undercuts any of his characters' expressions of sovereignty with reminders of the impossibility of their situation. Their form of existence on the *Golden Image* is confined to the below-deck conversations about plans, futures, and identity-forming pasts, which the Strange Man wryly observes are formulations made without confronting the fact that they are on their way to "live in a place where dere's powers all over yuh head" (61).

Likewise, the below-deck calypso, which at first feels like an unleashing of freedom, is complicated by the narrator's contradicting language. Within the dance, the narrator notes that the emigrants' bodies are "regulated, informed, nourished and dictated […] by some pervasive,measureless source of being that was its own logic of receptivity and transmission, […] in its definition absolute, free, itself" (93). Here, the passengers are able to transform the corporeality of their bodies, and ascend to a place of sovereign supremacy over the other; "the other had

been annihilated" in this place (93) and what remains is parallel to Mbembe's "self-instituting, self-limiting" freedom of sovereignty. Unfortunately, this freedom is short-lived: the narrator concludes that, though the body is free, it is also

> subject to the compulsion of its freedom, strained beyond the limit of its resources. Its form, shape, movement, the physical discharge of itself constituted an open secret which everyone saw but could not read. Its perfection was its contradiction. In the harsh glaring closeness of the dining hall it knocked here and there. Bright and quivering it stood showing itself, each for and through the other, and then exhausted and broken by its own desire, it fell. (Lamming 93-4)

Only in the "glaring closeness" of this confined space are these bodies allowed this transcendence of objecthood into subjecthood, a "perfection" of the individual in a community of individuals. Yet, the "open secret" of this perfection is its contradiction—freedom is something beyond the resources of these passengers, held by the "powers all over" their heads. It is a fleeting, false freedom, and an above-deck announcement squashes the ecstasy of this below-deck emancipation. The Governor reveals to the crowd that the seat of power is now visible: the lights of Plymouth are in view.

The dampening of this announcement is amplified by the identity-corroding effects of exposure that Lamming has already planted in the mind of his readers. In an earlier scene on the *Golden Image*, Collis, Higgins, and Tornado have fallen asleep on the deck while sunbathing. Above-deck, and under the relenting exposure of that unsetting sun, the narrator illustrates the dissolution of identity and the process of dying that will soon come to underscore the emigrants' experiences in England. Death and objectification are unified under the gaze of narrator and reader: the motionless bodies of the men are unable to defend their subjectivity, paralyzed by exhaustion and the heat of the sun. In this state, the narrator muses that it would be "possible to convert them into objects;" murdering one of the men would be merely "interrupting a process which made them other than what they seemed" (82). This process, the process of living, is a moving away from that object-state of death, the same state occupied by the living dead inhabitants of Mbembe's death-worlds. The narrator asserts that death is only "that change which deprived the object of its history, making it a new thing, almost unknown, since all the attributes of presence would be destroyed, leaving what was once a thing with certain fixed references, a

kind of blank" (82). This is the change that the emigrants are undergoing and will continue to undergo under the eyes of the British: their histories, attributes, and references are upended and erased to be filled "with scripts of foreignness" (Ellis 219).

The emigrants carry the reality of colony, a place where "even a certain kind of Death was called life" too near the imperial metropolis, and find themselves relegated to a death-world that they carry in their own bodies (Lamming 56). Though they bring with themselves their own histories, conceptions of justice, power, and agency, the pervasive and overhauling gaze of the British proves too much. Their identities are bleached, expunged of any sovereign subjectivity, only to be written over with the darkness of their own skin, itself infused with a meaning imposed by the colonial power. So categorized as the living dead, stripped of their sovereign right to live, they flee and are forced into confined, prison-like places which, though removed from scrutiny, are closely surveilled. These places, the death-worlds of colony, are disrupting and fracturing, physically excluding the other while psychologically rending what the emigrants had perceived as their birthright, the British sovereignty as "sons of empire".

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Camille Bradshaw

Between, Through, and Across: The Voices of the Diaspora. Review of Edwidge Danticat's *Everything Inside*. *Stories*. Knopf, 2019. 223 pages.

Edwidge Danticat's newest collection of short stories, *Everything Inside*, weaves past, present, and future generations into a cohesive reflection on the qualities, emotions, and experiences that bring people together. Eight stories, published in August of 2019, showcase failed marriages, budding romances, life-altering secrets, and missed opportunities. Additionally, a multitude of richly developed characters connect with each other and, in varying degrees, with the roots that supply their cultural identity. Danticat's stories go beyond the particular relationships between the country and the people of Haiti to move readers to explore the universal connections found in the human experience.

Danticat has shifted into fresh territory with these stories that mainly focus on the plight of second generation Haitian-American immigrants. Settings like Little Haiti, Miami, and an allegorical island take readers from the soil of Danticat's homeland to more recently uncovered challenges for Haitians today. The characters are invariably in search of inner peace, and the lenses through which they view themselves in the in-between of cultures are ever-evolving. These are the stories of the Haitian diaspora.

The Greek term, diaspora, has many etymological meanings: "I scatter," "I spread about," and most poignantly, "between, through, across" (Liddell). This concept is especially apparent in the short story "Hot-Air Balloons." The main characters, Neah and Lucy, are college roommates who come from very different backgrounds. Lucy—a second-generation Haitian-American who is struggling to pursue the American Dream is contrasted with Neah—the more sheltered daughter of economically affluent Caribbean parents. Danticat artfully portrays the individual challenges the two women face through a friendship that is tested by Neah's life-changing experience as a volunteer for a non-profit in Haiti. Vivid flashbacks and a developing awareness of the

communal suffering in the story display the characters' growth from adolescence to adulthood reader. This personal growth through shared trauma further emphasizes Danticat's message of a collective need for belonging.

Danticat tackles two different sides of the diaspora: the first generation that fled Haiti and has created a life of sacrifice for themselves and the more recently displaced second generation, who are much less sure of where they fall on the continuum of identity. Lucy is just one of many protagonists in Danticat's collection who is searching for answers in the society she is current-ly living in. She thinks, "I was afraid that people would link that girl's bruised face to mine, as someone who, though I was not born [in Haiti], considered myself [a] 'left side of the hyphen' Haitian" (Danticat, 114). This theme is revisited in "Sunrise, Sunset." Here, Danticat examines the complicated generational divide amongst members of a family who clearly lack the shared experiences of natural disasters, dictatorships, and poverty in Haiti as well as the challenges of emigration to America. Everything Inside concludes with the far-reaching story entitled "Without Inspection," the dramatic monologue of an illegal Haitian immigrant that touches upon the uncertainties, the dreams, and the hopes of future generations.

Unlike Danticat's previous short story collections, this one does not seem to be as concerned with tight thematic echoes among the stories, characters do not make appearances in more than one story, and there is no obvious overarching plot. Instead, *Everything Inside* requires readers to listen very closely and dig deeply for the subtle messages of human connection amidst the characters. Danticat has created an engaging collection that explores the tensions of the diaspora, the contradictions faced by those torn between Haiti and America. Readers can expect to discover a better understanding of what displaced people everywhere experience as they labor to locate inklings of themselves in the written voices of those existing in-between, through, and across two worlds.

Clayton Dudley

A Riveting and Wild Ride: Review of Stafford Betty's *The War for Islam*. Roundfire Books, 2019. 232 pages.

The War for Islam, written by CSUB Professor of Religious Studies Stafford Betty, is a dystopian novel set in a future world under siege by a radicalized version of Islam, calling itself the Caliphate. The violent tactics of the Caliphate are terrorizing the world, in particular New York City. Three characters are the focus of the story. Silas, a progressive Christian professor of religion, joins forces with two reformist Muslim visionaries, Layla and Saira, to take back Islam from the Caliphate and bring it into harmony with the world's other major religions, in particular Christianity.

Silas, Layla, and Saira are the right people for the job. Hired away from his job at NYU as a professor, Silas writes articles on the "religion question" for *The New York Times*. He risks alienating Muslims with his reformist views. His expertise on religion helps establish his reputation as a peacemaker who knows how to reconcile opposing camps, but it is his eventual mixed marriage to Saira that convinces many Muslims he can be trusted as an objective observer. His influence grows until, eventually, he becomes New York's mayor. From that point on his reputation grows.

Layla, a devout Muslim with progressive views about what Islam can evolve into, is a graduate student in theology and gains fame with her "deep shame" speech condemning the Caliphate's arrogant claim that God despises every religion except Islam. Many years later she leads her Muslim university students in a protest against violence against Brooklyn's Jewish community. Eventually she will be regarded as a sage.

Then there is Saira, the equally devout, 19-year-old second wife and "sex toy" to a middle-aged Muslim man when we first meet her. She eventually emerges as the true hero of the story. What Layla started, Saira takes up and runs with. Saira shows her fearlessness and cunning by stopping at nothing in her fight to take down the Caliphate, earning *fatwas* along

the way.

The book's central message is that "Islamism" must be denounced by all Muslims and a more progressive Islam must be embraced. The reader is in for a wild and suspenseful ride throughout the story, with danger lurking around every corner.

All the characters are lovable, but I would have to say that Saira was my favorite. She didn't accept her humble, beaten down circumstances as a sex toy when little more than a child. Instead she took the initiative to change her destiny, and that destiny is the story's climax.

As the story developed, I naturally found myself rooting for Saira but worrying that the dark forces she confronted might destroy her. I especially enjoyed the way she and Silas were so cunning in the face of danger. I can only imagine I would freeze in those moments and not be able to think straight. Fearless, intelligent, funny, devoted, and bold are words that describe her.

There were also quiet, philosophical moments in the book, including a conversation on the subject of Christian doctrine. And there are quite a few light moments, as when Saira and Silas's precautious daughter, Izzy, tells her parents how "easy" it would be for Muslims and Christians to get along. But for me, by no means an "avid reader," it was the suspenseful, danger-filled scenes that kept me turning the pages.

The War for Islam deals with danger, oppression, love, heartache, trials, and triumphs. The book's central events and subplots make the story interesting. This novel of ideas seems especially appealing to readers who enjoy seeing people brought closer following a great struggle between opposing forces. The story reflects real life, the life we all know so well when people try to change ingrained ways, even if what they are pushing for is logical and just. Also, anyone who has a dream to make the world better would appreciate the great lengths and perseverance that Saira, Layla, and Silas go through to realize it.

Jovana Espinoza

Alluring to Children and Adults Alike. Review of Junot Díaz's *Islandborn/Lola*. Dial Books, 2018. 48 pages.

Dominican-American writer and Pulitzer-Prize winner Junot Díaz dabbled in a new genre with the publication of his first children's book, *Islandborn*, in 2018. In collaboration with Colombian illustrator Leo Espinosa, Díaz presents the picturesque narrative of Lola, a young girl born on an unspecified island of which she has no recollection. Following a school assignment, Lola pieces together and reconstructs her birthplace with the help of neighbors, family members, and friends. This endeavor leads Lola on an unexpected path of self-discovery and history.

The most outstanding quality of the book is its language. Díaz utilizes hyperboles to capture the occasional inaccuracy of memory, thus creating a story full of poetry, with images that appeal directly to the imagination and are removed from reality. Memory is a complex function proven to be, in countless studies, unreliable—especially when feelings of nostalgia and longing interfere with the conjuring of a particular recollection. Although the neighbors' and family members' accounts of the ambiguous island Lola collects are embellished and somewhat whimsical—they include "blanket bats" and the fact that "there is more music than air" on the island—it is precisely this charming detail that creates a fascinating story. Overstatements appeal to adult readers because they conjure poetic scenarios, and they also transform ordinary events into fantasies likely to fascinate children.

Language is equally important to the Spanish version of *Islandborn*, entitled *Lola*, which was translated from English by Teresa Mlawer. With the launching of Lola's "bilingual" story, three different audiences of the diaspora are instantly reached: a young audience who speak and read primarily English and sprinkle their language with a handful of Spanish words; an older audience who understands some English but is comfortable in Spanish; and a general audience who speak and write both languages fluently. Lola's "bilingual" story allows parents, guardians, and children to immerse themselves in the two linguistic worlds that constitute their hybrid

identity. Offering both versions promotes the appreciation of two cultures. Mlawer's Spanish translation is often not literal, but it manages to convey feelings with similar poetic imagery to the one Díaz used in English. For instance, a group of exiled islanders at the neighborhood barbershop vividly recalls the various shades of skin color of the inhabitants of the island: "Incluso la gente es como un gran arcoíris, todos los colores del mundo." People's skins are like a rainbow, the Spanish version says, encompassing every color. The sentence in English is slightly different, but it captures the same feeling of rich inclusivity.

Another surprisingly refreshing aspect of the book is the way in which both versions reach a young audience. Díaz breaks with the widely accepted notion that children are not cognitively prepared or equipped to comprehend and process delicate information. Instead of coddling them or underestimating their mental capabilities, he chooses to introduce themes of identity, race, belonging, and loss—tough themes Díaz tackled in previous works like *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao, Drown, and This is How You Lose Her*—in an easily relatable plot which speaks to children and adults. Lola's quest to gather concrete details of her homeland from the memories of those in her neighborhood means that she is uncovering her origins, and, by extension, constructing a racial identity. Although knowledge of her rich heritage and her past are essential to finding herself, she is also introduced to loss and pain. The veiled allusion to the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo (1930-1961) is introduced by Espinosa, who depicts the tyrant as a giant bat-like monster that is about to engulf the island. In this way, historical fact is made subtly available by the children's trope of a dreaded monster in an age-appropriate manner. But details are not all fear-inducing. Sharing space with the monster are three smiling women who clearly evoke the Mirabal sisters—the symbols of resistance dramatized in Julia Alvarez's *In the Time of the Butterflies*. They were the unlikely heroes that hover over the monster they helped to defeat.

Not only is the plot of *Islandborn* intriguing, Espinosa's illustrations are as gripping and appealing as the story itself. They engage and maintain the interest of young and adult readers alike, contributing to the setting of the story through careful selection of color and image placement. For example, the vibrant colors of the pages in which Lola's grandmother shares what she misses most—the island beaches depicted centrally with warm colors—pinks, oranges, and yellows—blend with cooler colors, the blues and purples in the upper half of the page. They create a sense of peace and tranquility. Moreover, well-centered palm trees reinforce this

balance to by visually providing equilibrium. Another instance of the success in triggering a specific emotion is when the horrific bat-like monster is presented: he had been initially depicted as black, but Díaz wanted to sever the association between evil and black, so he decided to change the color to green—the color of greed and jealousy. The monster is placed on the right side of the page to emphasize the instability of the island under Trujillo's regime.

Islandborn is an excellent addition to the library of children's books. It tackles complicated themes with sublety. Most importantly, it may allow children who face turmoil and disorientation due to their position between two cultures to relate to Lola's experience. It may also grant children who are unfamiliar with the internal struggle of living between two distinct cultures the opportunity to view this issue from the perspective of those who grapple with the feeling daily. All in all, the combination of language and visual artistry are enough to entice readers to crack *Islandborn*/*Lola* open and immerse themselves in a world of marvel and wonder.

Ray Dean

Promises Unfulfilled – A Review of Louis Erdrich's *LaRose*. 2016. 372 pp. Harper Perennial.

Louis Erdrich's novel *LaRose*, winner of the 2016 National Book Critic's Circle for fiction, perhaps works best as an audiobook. The third book in a loosely connected trilogy consisting of *The Plague of Doves* and *The Round House* is the story of two Ojibwe families struggling with the aftermath of a tragic hunting accident that claims the life of five-year-old Dusty Ravich. Recovering addict and expert hunter Landreaux Iron mistakes his nephew for a deer. In an extreme act of atonement, Landreaux gives his youngest child, his son LaRose, to the Ravich family. The unfolding tragedy sends Landreaux's and the Ravich family spinning into a spiral of darkness, doubt, and searches for redemption that are immediately gripping, heartbreaking, and that keeps the reader turning pages—at least for the most part. But reading *LaRose* is also an exercise in frustration.

LaRose is strikingly void of the use of quotation marks. Conscious deliberate concentration is required of the reader due to the lack of differentiation between dialogue, inner voices, and narrative prose. Stylistically, Erdrich's novel is a bit stream of consciousness, especially in the nonlinear sequences that tell the stories of other individuals that have borne the name LaRose throughout history. The style is a deliberate choice, although it does come off a little pretentious. It is easy to get lost wondering which character is saying what or if he or she is speaking, thinking, or thinking aloud even. Quotation marks aside, the first four-fifths of the story are very engaging, lending credence to an argument that may favor listening to Erdrich's story rather than reading it. Experiencing the narrative in this manner may allow one to perceive the story in a more traditional manner—that of the Native American Indian oral tradition. Such a method of delivery would render Erdrich's punctuation choice irrelevant, strengthen the nonlinear structure, and shed better light on the unsatisfying conclusion.

Erdrich parades an intriguingly large cast of characters before the reader. Half-sisters

Emmaline Iron and Nola Ravich, Snow, Josette, and Maggie are cousins who become like sisters. Peter Ravich, Wolfred, and Mackinnon are all examples with varying degrees of page space of interesting and well-developed characters. However, they seem to simply fade from memory once the blasé ending is complete. Romeo, Landreaux's literary doppelganger, is one such character. Both pitied and despised at the same time, he plays a role that is integral to the story; however, his character's arc takes a drastic turn that seems to come out of left field in the end. In the span of two paragraphs in the final scene, the reader witnesses a disconnect in the character of Romeo. He starts by pining for the old traditional ways, bemoaning the manner the modern Ojibwe lives:

> "[. . .] that is our home, he thought, where we came from. And now we are living high on the hog. And our young boys are once again fighting for what used to be the enemy flag. Don't have to scramble for irony, or meat. There's Crock-Pots full, and all that other food" (Erdrich 366).

In the next breath and in an unmistaken Christian allusion, Romeo relishes in his *rising from the dead* after throwing himself from the church steps. It comes off as forced writing and less than genuine, especially after taking Father Travis's inconspicuous parish reassignment and absence from the end of story party into account. Travis is another character who after much development and weaving into the lives of the community is simply forgotten at the end of the story. In written form, the end comes off as piecemeal, rushed, and forgettable. It resembles more of the sunshine, rainbows, and goodwill of a Hallmark card than the tough, gritty situations Erdrich sets up. It is as if Erdrich wrote herself into a corner and simply looked for an easy way out. Unfortunately, the promises Erdrich gives in the beginning are unfulfilled in the end.

The American story is a frustrating amalgam of the factual and the fictional. Columbus did lead three Spanish ships west in 1492, although he did not *find* a new world. The western lands Columbus and many others anchored off were not lost. Numerous people with distinct and complex cultures populated them. The American story is incomplete without the stories of the native peoples who occupied these lands. Sadly, the stories of the Native American Indian do not have many satisfying conclusions. Historic initiatives that followed the European settlements such as the establishment of the United States of America, Andrew Jackson's *Indian Removal Act*, or the

Native American boarding schools of the nineteenth century dramatically altered the structure of native culture, families, and identity, subsequently, changing the course of their story forever. Promises and treaties were all too commonly broken and reneged.

Balancing themes of loss, redemption, and reclamation, Erdrich's *LaRose* is told against this historic backdrop of the Native American story. While set on an Ojibwe reservation during the hysteria of Y2K and subsequent post-9/11 Iraq War, it grapples with Native American community and identity in contemporary America. Erdrich weaves a complex, densely layered narrative that grips and pulls at the reader's emotions, but ultimately falls short in payoff. However, in a twist of art imitating life, this might be the true beauty of Erdrich's novel. *LaRose* opens with so much promise and so little payoff. It serves as an allegory of the historical situations Native American Indians they are too familiar with. *LaRose* is worthy of 3 out 5 stars.

Kelsey McJanet

When Policies and Laws Aren't Enough: A Review of J.D. Vance's *Hillbilly Elegy*. Harper Collins Publishers, 2016. 257 pages.

As idealistic as it may sound, the liberal concept of governmental assistance as a panacea to individual suffering is not practical in the real world. One cannot write a law to change how ordinary men or women view their circumstances in life, or how they are meant to improve them.

In his debut autobiographical memoir, J. D. Vance takes the reader on the ride of a life-time – his own – through a childhood drowning in drug-using classmates and pill-popping family members, up to his college years at a prestigious university, where his peers led privileged lives, free from the suffering he had known all his life. He remains brutally honest about the cloudy memories surrounding his youth, and the struggles with substance abuse that almost destroyed him and his family. With this book he is reaching his own catharsis, coming to terms with his past and the circumstances that shaped him into the man he is today. While the book is not steeped in politics, Vance makes no effort to hide his political views on the war-on-drugs, or the pitifully failed drug-related policies and programs implemented to redress it. His is a personal view of the war's progression in the United States – coming from the Kentucky Appalachian region of the infamous Bible Belt, where opioids are recklessly prescribed. His descriptions are powerful and graphically raw. He uses his personal experience as a window into the world of working class, white America, the most ravaged victim of this war. The best way to find a better solution for this crisis, Vance argues, lies in the very people it controls the most, and his memoir is one of the best lenses to see these people's lives through. It is certainly worthy of a reader's time and attention.

While this synopsis sheds a generally positive light, this memoir is not without faults. This piece is treated as an autobiographical memoir, and as such not many readers are interested in personal stories of people they have never met. Unless the writer is some sort of celebrity, or

someone with a devoted public following prior to publication, a memoir does not work as a debut piece. In addition, there is strong bias of the book. The debate around this topic has become increasingly polarized over the decades, especially in the last five years. To use this theme so openly in a work, a writer runs the risk of overwhelmingly negative feedback, not just on the book itself, but on the writer. Another issue arises from the fact that Vance's point of view is the only one told here. If there had been other testimonies, other viewpoints, there would have been a much clearer and more objective picture of the issues at hand. By telling only his side and often admitting that his memory may be unreliable, Vance leaves too many variables open. We cannot form an objective picture of a multi-faceted problem if the presentation is one-sided.

Even taking these objections into account, Vance's memoir is still worth a read. The first-person, intimate account Vance gives us makes this work feel extremely personal, pushing us to make an emotional investment rarely seen in literature today. Part of the beauty in this work is the honesty that Vance displays to the audience. He doesn't shy away from the deeper topics that would make any reader squirm: racism, mental illness, and lack of opportunity. He doesn't hold back when discussing his family members' addictions and shortcomings, nor does he blame them for circumstances they could not control. In this way, he is showing us just how deep our own humanity can go if we let it. He even has the decency to admit his own character flaws, and acknowledges that he does not quite know everything there is to know about solving the mounting challenges his Appalachian hometown has faced. Yet his writing shows heart and gives the reader the same feelings of hope and determination that he holds.

If we were to cast aside the politics and so-called 'expertise' that has been at the core of this drugged-out battlefield, we will find at the center of it all a group of people who simply want a better life for themselves and their families. This book goes beyond government influence, surpasses policies and programs weakly created, and practically towers over the issue of it being from only one perspective. It is a work that means to reach into the hearts of men and women of all creeds and show them just how deeply human the issue of drug-use has become in American society, and how the answers are rooted within all of us, if only we look inside. Vance instills humanity into the discussion, where it should have always been, and his memoir is highly recommended to any reader that has been affected, in any way, by this very war.

Jett Williams

A Lamentation of Southern Black America: A Review of Jesmyn Ward's *Sing, Unburied, Sing*. Charles Scribner's Sons, 285 pages.

Jesmyn Ward's *Sing, Unburied, Sing* presents a harrowing journey of an interracial Mississippi family, magnifying the past and present forms of American racism to their highest degrees. For Ward, her inclination to write stems from her desire to "tell the truth about the place" that she lives in. True to her word, the novel is set in a small town modeled after her own rural hometown of De Lisle, Mississippi. It centers on a young biracial boy confronting the South's racial legacy.

Two primary narratives form the bulk of Ward's story; about halfway through they intersect. The main narrative accounts the long journey of Leonie, and her children Kayla and Jojo, who travel to pick up Michael, Leonie's white lover and father of her children. He has just finished a jail sentence for drug trafficking and is awaiting his return to Bois Sauvage. Structurally, this portion of the narrative resembles a type of journey that is archetypal of "the odyssey". Along the way, they encounter a myriad of difficulties, including a dodgy police encounter, a "pitstop" at a meth house, and Kayla's recurring sickness, among other trials. The other narrative involves Jojo, who sees visions of ghosts Richie and Given. Appearing as beacons of the South's hateful past, their stories are interconnected between Jojo's family circle. Collectively, these figures embody the story's themes of racism and death. Their hardships stem from the town that they live in, which is marred by its dysfunctional community, history, and oppressive structures. In particular, the locale of Parchman Penitentiary (a literary reimagining of Mississippi State Penitentiary) exemplifies the worst aspects of their society.

Altogether, the horrifying accounts of Jojo, his family, and the ghosts represent a history of the shifting arrangements of American racism from past to present. In other words, the myriad of narrative voices helps to reveal the historical vicissitudes of black people in America. Ward's novel *Sing, Unburied, Sing* begins with a young boy, Jojo, making a bold claim: "I like to

think I know what death is." His life in particular is complicated by the people and places in his family's history; the story's ominous presence of death magnifies the atrocities of the fictional Mississippi town that surround him. The impressive depth of Ward's story, which includes voices from mul-tiple generations, is vital towards emulating a type of racist community that is particular to the deep South—a community that Ward herself metaphorically grew up in.

Sing, Unburied, Sing is successful in portraying the brutal verities of the postbellum South. The novel is dense with regards to its subject matter, symbolism, and historical allusions, so it may prove to be a difficult or slow read for some. However, if one is patient enough, the novel proves to be a rewarding read. Even if the plot seems muddled at times, the story is otherwise effective in depicting the intricacies of race relations. It serves as a sort of "review" of America's racist history, particularly in the deep south. Ward manages to blend the fictional with the realistic to create a wholly original story; it serves to remind us that although the dynamics of racism may have changed over time, the principles remain the same. The road trip to Parchman is the narrative center of the book, and the prison farm is the foul realm at the heart of the story. The whips and rifles, the dogs, the men being worked to death and hunted all serve as a backdrop to the odious side of American history. For Jojo, his family, and numerous other black Southerners, Parchman represents a bloody and enduring architecture of control—an insidious recreation of slavery that happens to be equally dark.

Ward's writing is laced with compassion, and a dedication to document, or at least emu-late, the troublesome history of her black ancestors, and the particular nature of the racism that runs rampant in her own hometown. The wonder is that she can find room in her novel to fit all of it in. It's a road-trip odyssey complicated by hunger, sickness, and the murderous racism that infects the town. Set in Bois Sauvage, the story is a convolution of overlapping family ties, vio-lent histories, and ever-present racism, which affects the lives of everyone involved. With *Sing, Unburied, Sing*, Ward essentially asks, ''Why not sing for the generations of black Southerners undone by racism and history, lynched, raped, enslaved, shot, and imprisoned?'' It is an attempt to give a voice to past figures that have been muted through time. More than anything, however, the novel serves a dual purpose: not only is it a snapshot of the present, but it is also Ward's platform to mourn the dead, both buried and unburied.