

# The Criterion

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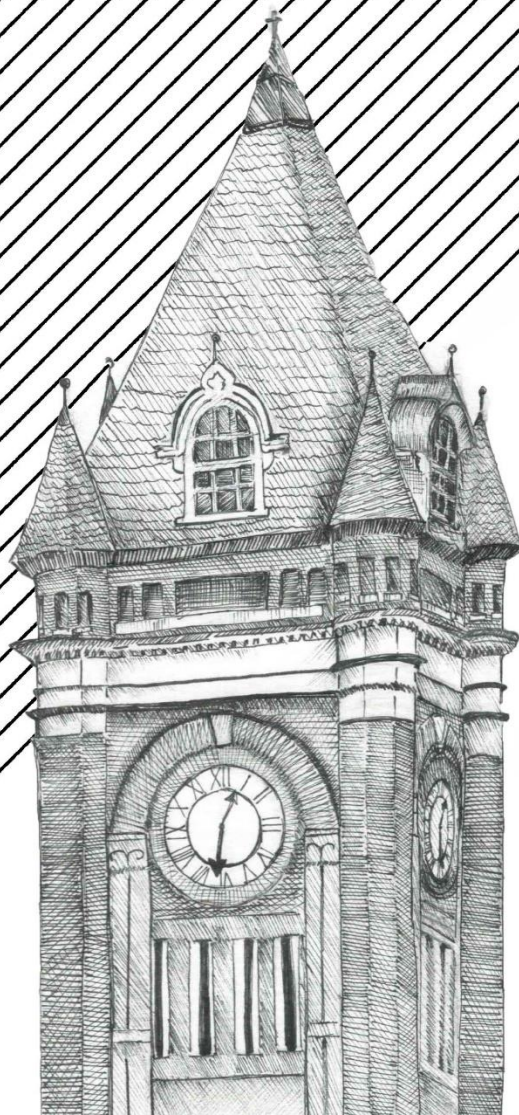
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The  
**Criterion**

An Undergraduate Journal of Literary Criticism

2019-2020



**Department of  
English**  
College of the Holy  
Cross

# **The Criterion**

**An Undergraduate Journal of Literary Criticism  
The 2019–2020 Academic Year**

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# The Criterion

## Acknowledgements

*The Criterion* is a small journal, open to all English majors and published following the spring semester of the Academic year. Although the topic and style of all the essays vary, each essay was written by English majors within English classes. The editorial board is staffed by English students who are members of the Nu Chi chapter of the Sigma Tau Delta honor society. But, as with most endeavors, publishing this journal would have been impossible without the help of many people.

In particular, we extend our thanks to Professor Stanbury and Professor Sweeney for ensuring that the journal continued for another year. We also thank all the professors of the English Department, who not only continually foster an environment of excellence and academic inquiry, but who encouraged students to submit their essays to *The Criterion* as well. Even in such an unprecedented year, their tireless guidance and support ensured that English students could produce works of quality, which consequently made the process of selecting entries such a hard task. We are also grateful for Elise Saad, who advertised the publication within the department. We also extend our thanks to all the students who submitted work this year, without whom, this journal would not exist.

Additionally, we thank Lisa Villa of Dinand Library for all her help in uploading the journal onto CrossWorks, allowing the journal to be published, even when print publication was not a possibility.

— The Editors

# The Criterion

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## Abstracts

### **The Battle for Love Under the Governance of Strict Social Codes**

**Nina Masin-Moyer**

*College of the Holy Cross Class of 2022*

Geoffrey Chaucer's "The Knight's Tale" presents a grand, romantic, and heroic story between Palamon and Emily, who pray to Roman deities that represent the values and qualities that were important to men and women of that time. Conversely, "The Rape of the Lock" by Alexander Pope is a mockery of this heroic style and tells a satirical tale of Belinda and Baron, each of whom pray to the powers of mystical creatures and trinkets, which are tangible manifestations of the rules that govern a gendered social order. Although Pope's story is a satire of tales such as Chaucer's, both comment upon the lack of control people have within the confines of gender norms and the social rules that dictate one's life. Specifically, Palamon and Baron prove that male desire and social expectations supersede the virtues of women such as Emily and Belinda. Through differences in genre, time, and geography, "The Knight's Tale" and "The Rape of the Lock" both comment upon the transcendent themes of individual autonomy within strict and binding social norms.

### **Examining Fatherhood Through Historical Empathy in *Tristram Shandy***

**MaryGrace King**

*College of the Holy Cross Class of 2020*

Laurence Sterne's eighteenth-century novel *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* follows the tangential musings of Tristram Shandy — musings so roundabout and convoluted that they force modern readers either to eyerolls of frustration or to a reconceived sense of humor. Within this essay, I explore the character of Tristram's father, Walter Shandy, through a lens of historical empathy. To twenty-first century standards, Walter's fatherhood is lacking and

distant, even uncaring; yet when viewed through the lens of an eighteenth-century perspective, Walter's motivations and eccentricities begin to make sense in the context of eighteenth-century mortality rates. I explore his unorthodox response to death in his family and the self-bequeathed duties he places upon himself as a father alongside his pressing desire to continue his lineage in the face of mortality. His focus on his duties to future posterity almost excludes his affection for his wife and son, although his expression of love to his immediate family presents itself in ways that might not resonate with modern-day readers. With this historical perspective in place, I attempt to clarify and contextualize the less-sympathetic aspects of Walter's relationship to his family in light of Walter's understanding of success in life and his aspirations for future generations of the Shandy line.

### **Interiority and Narrative Temporality in Jane Austen's *Persuasion***

**Margaret Flaherty**

*College of the Holy Cross Class of 2020*

Jane Austen's last completed work, *Persuasion*, explores protagonist Anne Elliot's female agency through use of free indirect discourse and time shifts. In the novel, published in 1817, Austen mediates between different time periods — the present day and seven years prior — to demonstrate Anne's maturity and the evolved perspective of a woman's status in society. Anne's shifting interiority reflects what it means to be a woman in the Regency era, and, perhaps, across time, as she breaks out of the mediated and subjective perceptions placed upon her by herself and other characters. The result is a revolutionary conception of marriage for Austen's 1817 audience and modern audiences alike; Anne's reunion with her past love Captain Wentworth is a result of their newfound intersubjectivity and reconciliation of the past. Austen's last completed work, therefore, uses point of view and temporal shifts to celebrate female agency and redefine the understanding of a partnership.

## Light and Darkness in the Epiphanies of Henry James' Heroines

**Rose Grosskopf**

*College of the Holy Cross Class of 2020*

The famed author Henry James, who lived from 1843 to 1916, occupies a middle-ground between the romantic authors of the nineteenth century and the modernists of the twentieth. Two of his novels, *The Portrait of a Lady* and *Washington Square*, demonstrate his evolving sensibilities, as he bridges the traditional and the modern by marrying romantic stories with unconventional conclusions. His technique is present in his use of light symbolism, which, due to an etymological connection from the era of Enlightenment, has accompanied moments of learning and understanding. Through his symbolic and literary gestures, James explores a nuanced definition of “brightness,” and its evolution to symbolize wealth and success as much as wit. Analyzing the heroines of these two texts reveals that they, as much as their author, acknowledge the changing world that surrounds them. Their epiphanies occur in a photographic style. And through both light and darkness, this process of exposure subverts literary convention to expose both harsh realities and the true nature of the men in their lives. The resulting portraiture of the heroines and the culture that surrounds them does not render the caricatures of fairytales nor the impressionistic paintings of novels, but instead depicts the photographic reality of a modernizing and unromantic world.

## The Many Paths of Thoreau's Writing: A Response to Buranelli's Critique

**Stephen Conde**

*College of the Holy Cross Class of 2020*

Henry David Thoreau, a transcendentalist famous for his writings and poetry, lived and wrote during the mid-nineteenth century. Some of his most enduring works include his memoir-like book *Walden*, which documents his experience living remotely in nature as well as his essay *Civil Disobedience*, which



offers his critiques of society and the government. The scholar Vincent Buranelli, who lived roughly a century after Thoreau, wrote “The Case Against Thoreau” in 1957. His essay criticized, among other aspects, the hyperbole and complexity in Thoreau’s writing and his anarchistic urgings. However, analyzing Thoreau’s works and their context, and consulting the works of other scholars, offers a defense of Thoreau. Such an informed reading reveals Thoreau to value three things in his life, individualism, nature, and writing, all of which drive his works. While his writings might not appeal to every reader, one should not approach his works without the context of his life and values. And though his writing might be complex, he writes in a style that is as complex as the nature he observed and the inner self he analyzed.

### **Narrator’s Attitudes Toward Slavery in *Oroonoko* and *Robinson Crusoe***

**Meghan Gavis**

*College of the Holy Cross Class of 2022*

*Oroonoko* by Aphra Behn and *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe are narrated by speakers encountering enslaved people in South America during English imperialism. The narrators’ respective sentimental and practical voices are manifested through the details of their narratives: Behn’s speaker tends to dwell on romantic points, like Oroonoko’s relationship with his lover, while Crusoe favors pragmatic details, like the quantification of supplies. The narrators’ perspectives color their relationships with enslaved individuals. Behn’s narrator’s relationship with Oroonoko is filtered through her romantic lens, enabling a dynamic and communicative relationship with the Prince that exhibits her sympathy towards his enslavement. In contrast, Crusoe assesses Friday upon his usefulness and ease with which he can assimilate to his “Master’s” preferences, seeking to convert Friday to Christianity and constantly maintaining the native’s inferiority. While Behn’s narrator redeemed Oroonoko from slavery, her sentimentality does not extend to other slaves, revealing that both narrators accept the general practice of slavery with a practical outlook and harbor beliefs of racial hierarchies. Consequently, the narrators’ attitudes toward slavery indicate the limitations of human sympathy and highlight the social hierarchies underlying even the most sentimental perspectives.

**“Oceania is Us:” An Intimate Portrait of CHamoru Identity and Transpacific Solidarity in *from unincorporated territory: [lukao]***

**Maressa Park**

*College of the Holy Cross Class of 2022*

Guåhan’s history of Spanish colonization and inflicted genocide, Japanese occupancy, and American militarization poses profound effects on CHamoru land, rights, physical health, and language survival. These include instances of “celebration colonialism” such as Liberation Day, in which CHamorus celebrate the date that the United States dropped 124 tons of bombs on Guåhan to liberate them from the Japanese ([*lukao*] 44). Through an analysis of his 2017 anthology *from unincorporated territory: [lukao]*, this essay examines how Dr. Craig Santos Perez casts light on the complex inheritance of native CHamorus via an intimate portrait of diasporic CHamoru identity. Furthermore, I argue that Perez’s view of Pacific Islands as an interconnected *unit* — in the same vein as Tongan-Fijian writer Epeli Hau’ofa’s idea of a “sea of islands” — furthers the anthology’s alternate function as an inclusive call for justice on behalf of *all* transpacific peoples affected by American militarization and colonization, bound together both by the “communion” of the ocean and by the shared fallout of nuclear activity in the Pacific (Hau’ofa 152; “Praise Song for Oceania”). Ultimately, despite widespread CHamoru migration and the forewarned danger of language extinction, Perez has confidence in CHamoru language and culture: he expresses certainty that Guåhan and Oceania are constant and unfailing; as for the increasing number of “off-island” CHamorus, Perez assures, “... home is not simply a house, village, or island; home is an archipelago of belonging” (Perez, Skype Interview 2019, “Off-Island Chamorros” 1).

## **Sex, Lies, and Murder: Feminized Detective Fiction and the English Estate Novel**

**Meaghan Lanctot**

*College of the Holy Cross Class of 2021*

In Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* and Ian McEwan's *Atonement*, the protagonists unravel the events of egregious crimes and their own complicity with the central tragedies. Set against the backdrop of crumbling English estates, the crimes highlight the erosion of the British ruling class at the onset of the 20th century. The unnamed narrator of *Rebecca* and Briony, the narrator of *Atonement*, are bound by their youth, age, and gender in their respective investigations into the sinister events that plague the history of Manderley and the Tallis estate, respectively. We see how the English estate is a hotbed of illicit affairs, sexual predation, and the grisly demise of its inhabitants through the eyes of our naive narrators. This stark contrast of naivete and immorality subverts the traditional image of the country estate as a place of restraint and virtue within English literature. This essay argues that Du Maurier and McEwan infuse their versions of the English estate novel genre with the elements of detective fiction to destabilize the traditional idealization of the English aristocracy within literature.

## **Song: The Emotional Storyteller in the Tales of Edgar Allan Poe**

**Sadie O'Connor**

*College of the Holy Cross class of 2022*

Edgar Allan Poe argues in his *Marginalia* column that “indefiniteness is an element ... of the true musical expression.” Music is a powerful device for expression because of its intangible yet deeply rooted connection to human emotion; it captures ideas that cannot always be put into words. In a similar way, we can never truly “hear” music if it is only described on a page. Poe used this phenomenon on a literary level to illustrate a character's deep, almost indescribable longing for something that they would rarely reveal to the other people in their stories. The references to instrumental music and song in two

of Poe's most iconic short stories, "The Fall of the House of Usher" and "Ligeia," reflect the inner emotional and psychological workings of the stories' mysterious titular characters. In turn, the fixations of Roderick Usher and Lady Ligeia, given voice through their songs (metaphorical poems interpolated into the drama by Poe after the stories were already finished), inform the larger themes of each narrative. However, neither the song nor the message exists only on the page. Poe's utilization of both "indefinite" music and textual detail encourages us to take part in deciphering the greater emotional complexity of the work — to take part in finishing the song.

## The Battle for Love Under the Governance of Strict Social Codes

**Nina Masin-Moyer**

*College of the Holy Cross Class of 2022*

In both Geoffrey Chaucer's "The Knight's Tale" and Alexander Pope's "The Rape of the Lock," strict social rules upheld by higher beings dictate the actions of men and women. Characters in both stories build shrines and pray to the powers of virtues to grant them their romantic wishes, all in the context of preparing for battle, either real or metaphorical. The parallel circumstances of Palamon seeking Emily and the Baron longing for Belinda (and her hair) reflect the control that social codes exert on the lives of all people. No cosmic power, however, can protect a woman from the rules that grant men dominance over them. While "The Knight's Tale" portrays such themes in a grand, romantic style, "The Rape of the Lock" presents similar ideas in a satirical, mock epic mode. Despite the opposite methods of storytelling and commenting on the norms of different time periods, both stories effectively convey similar ideas regarding a lack of human control within the strict confines of social rules that determine all people's destinies.

In the world of the "The Knight's Tale," one social tradition is the worship of love. Palamon's all-consuming chivalric love motivates him to marry Emily. The gods grant him his wish to do so because of his romantic motives and honorable spirit, which align with the code of chivalry that ruled the world of romance during the Knight's time period. Chivalry, honor, and courtly love were the most important codes for noblemen to follow. Chaucer recreates these structures in an ancient story that reflects his own values. The night before the tournament that will decide whether Palamon or Arcite will win the hand of Emily, Palamon prays at the temple of Venus, the goddess of love. The temple is decorated with all the facets of love, from, "[t]he broken slepes, and sikes colde" and "[t]he firy strokes of the desiryng," to the "Plesance and Hope, Desir, Foolhardynesse," (Chaucer l. 1920, 1922, 1925). Venus encompasses all the joys and pains of love that Palamon has experienced in his quest to win Emily. Palamon calls on all these forces in hopes that he will be victorious in winning Emily. The Knight also reveals the dominance of love over all other powers in describing the temple of Venus. He describes how, "[t]hus may ye seen that wysdom ne richesse, / Beautee ne sleight, strengthe ne hardynesse, / Ne may wiht Venus holde champartie" (l. 1947-9). Romance is the most powerful force and therefore Venus, its cosmic embodiment, controls fate like no other force can. Unlike Arcite, who prays to Mars, the god of war, Palamon

fighters not simply to win a tournament or to prove his cunning, but with the sole intent to marry Emily as the driving force behind all his actions. His choice of praying to Venus leads to his eventual triumph and marriage to Emily.

Palamon proves his adherence to courtly romantic values when he prays to Venus herself. He confesses how distraught his inability to have Emily has rendered him, telling Venus, “I am so confus that I kan noight seye” (Chaucer l. 2230). Palamon reveals how love and heartbreak have debilitated him beyond words, proving his dedication to the will of love. He goes on to explain that he asks not “for armes for to yelpe,” nor “tomorwe to have victorie,” nor “[o]f pris of armes blowen up and down” (l. 2238-9, 2241). Rather, he tells Venus that his only desire is that “I wole have fully possessioun / Of Emelye, and dye in thy servyse” (l. 2242-3). Palamon proves that he has no want for glory, fame, or military victory; he only needs Emily, and he is willing to die for her. He also promises that he will “holden werre alwey with chastitee” because his lust and desire overrule Emily’s, or any woman’s, wish for chastity (l. 2236). The only war he wishes to win is fighting for love against purity. Venus acknowledges his prayer through the shaking of her temple. Palamon, through a series of victories and losses, wins Emily because of his complete dedication to the cause of love above all else, unlike Arcite’s prayers to Mars for glory and victory. Palamon’s loyalty to the chivalrous promotion of love, which was considered the most important purpose for a man, allows him to prevail. His victory comes not from his own skills or Emily’s reciprocated love (or lack thereof), but from the gods who willed it to happen because he followed the right code of honor, a code aligning with the world in which the storytelling Knight lived.

Contrarily, Emily is governed by both chastity and marriage, so she goes to the temple of Diana, the goddess of chastity, before the night of the tournament. The temple of Diana is decorated “[o]f huntyng and shamefast chastitee” and depicts the scene in which “Attheon an hert ymaked, / For vengeance that he saugh Diane al naked” (Chaucer l. 2055, 2065-2066). In stark contrast to Palamon, praying before the lustful scenes in Venus’ temple, Emily worships a goddess that has the power to defend female purity, a value important both to her and the society of courtly romance that the Knight telling the tale lives in. The distinction that the Knight as a narrator raises between the temples of Venus and Diana creates a dichotomy between the ideal values that were expected of men and women.

Just as Palamon calls upon the pity of Venus, Emily also asks Diana to prove her adherence to the social norm of female chastity and her intense desire to remain loyal to that vow. Emily admits to Diana that she has had a “[d]esire to ben a mayden al my lyf” (Chaucer l. 2305). Emily also recognizes Diana’s great power when she tells her “[n]ow help me, lady, sith ye may and kan,” and, pledging her fealty, promises that if her prayer is answered that “whil I lyve, a mayde I wol thee serve” (l. 2312, 2230). Diana and her chastity are powerful forces in this romantic structure, yet Emily seems to know that her power is

limited because she asks that if she must marry one of the two men, that Diana will “[a]s sende me hym that moost desireth me” (l. 2325). Although Emily appears to have strong convictions for the personal and societal importance of chastity, she recognizes the power of men’s passion.

Regardless of Emily’s complete devotion to Diana, her prayer cannot be granted by the will of gods who value male honor and romance above female virginity. Diana appears at the pyre where Emily is weeping and declares that “[a]mong the goddes hye it is affermed, / And by eterne word writen and confermed, / Thou shalt ben wedded” (Chaucer l. 2349-51). Diana confesses to Emily that her marriage to either Palamon or Arcite is cosmically determined because there are forces greater than her that decide her fate. Diana continues, saying, “[t]hou shalt ben wedded unto oon of tho / That han for thee so muchel care and wo” (l. 2351-2). According to the social norms, the pain that the men have felt and the happiness they will get upon marrying Emily is greater and more important than Emily’s pain at losing her chastity and joy that she would feel remaining a maiden. The love that Palamon has for Emily is a force stronger than her desire for chastity because the romantic ideals of men are valued above the virginal desires of women in their society. Emily acknowledges the unbalanced power of men when she cries out, “I putte me in thy proteccioun, / Dyane, and in thy disposicioun” (l. 2363-4). Just as Palamon laid himself out before the will of Venus, Emily devoted herself to a vow of chastity and belief in the power of Diana. Despite her convictions, all her hope was destroyed by powers greater than her. No matter how chaste and pure Emily worked to become, her fate was sealed by the masculine powers of romance dictating the rules of courtly love.

Transitively, Alexander Pope’s “The Rape of the Lock” mocks the romantic storytelling style of “The Knight’s Tale” through an over-exaggeration of trivial issues and a mirroring of form. Both “The Knight’s Tale” and “The Rape of the Lock” reflect the power that societal roles hold over romantic gestures, but “The Rape of the Lack” employs a satirical form. Like in Palamon’s world, honor is the controlling force behind men’s actions. The Baron uses mementos from his past romantic conquests to build a shrine calling upon the powers he has over women in order to get a lock of Belinda’s hair. To build this shrine, the Baron collects “... three garters, half a pair of gloves, / And all the trophies of his former loves” (Pope l. 39-40). In this society, the Baron values his romantic experiences based on the material trophies (gloves and garters) of his relationships. While Palamon sees Emily as a distant, almost mythical entity to pursue, the Baron has a more intimate relationship with women and seeks to directly seduce Belinda so he can get her hair. By calling the elements of his shrine “trophies,” the Baron labels his past relationships as victories and conquests; though they are metaphorical battles, they are similar to the actual tournament Palamon must fight to win Emily. Instead of praying at a shrine built

on the grand, emotional aspects of love, the Baron builds a temple to the visual side of love, marking a shift over time in the social operations of courtship.

As the Baron continues to build the shrine, he fuels it with the passionate fire of romance to pray in the hope of obtaining Belinda's hair. The Baron employs tangible expressions of love in his shrine, "[w]ith tender billet-doux he lights the pyre, / And breathes three am'rous sighs to raise the fire" (Pope l. 41-2). The Baron specifically blows on the pyre three times, a highly symbolic number perhaps representing his prayer to the forces controlling his love as one might pray to the trinity. Though a less tangible but still evident show of love, the temple is lit by the affectionate words of love letters and the sighs of longing, thus fueling a fire representative of his lust for Belinda. Similar to the way in which the walls of Venus' temple are adorned with images of the many facets of love, the Baron's temple to the more general concept of love is built on the foundation of physical manifestations of love, and then is lit aflame with the language and communication of romance pertinent to the time period. The Baron constructs a shrine to love out of the elements of romance appropriate to the period in order to appeal to whatever forces control female adoration.

Similar to Palamon's confession of lovesickness and petitions to Venus to hear his prayer, so too does the Baron, "[t]hen prostrate falls, and begs with ardent eyes, / Soon to obtain, and long possess the prize" (Pope l. 43-4). By putting himself in the vulnerable position of literally laying down and pleading to have the woman he desires, the Baron is, like Palamon, showing his utter commitment to love. The Baron pledges his commitment to abide by whatever deities or forces control the world of romance. By following such rules, he eventually succeeds in cutting off a lock of Belinda's hair. However, he once again refers to Belinda's hair, and therefore Belinda herself, as a "prize," which explains why "[t]he pow'rs gave ear, and granted half his prayer, / The rest the winds dispersed in empty air" (l. 45-6). The Baron has not entirely pleased the "pow'rs" that he prayed to, failing to fully follow the virtue of honor that guides men. His reference to Belinda as a conquest shows that love may not be the Baron's only motivator. Like Arcite, he is driven by a desire for victory in a (metaphorical) battle. While the Baron may have shown his commitment to love and romance through the building of his shrine, his intention to cut off Belinda's hair as a "prize" is not an honorable act despite being driven by love, indicating Pope's mock heroic at work. Therefore, both Palamon and the Baron live within a societal structure that values romance and honor above all other virtues. When both men are vying for women, they pray at a shrine to forces of love within their respective social norms. Palamon prays with the promise of upholding grand acts of courtly romance and the victory of love above chastity, while the Baron sacrifices various objects of love in his promise to win Belinda. Both men seek to conquer the affections of women and are only able to do so by appealing to the social forces and the cosmic manifestations that control the framework in which the world of romance operates.



Just as the Baron's desire for Belinda is much more materialistically lustful than the grandeur of Palamon's love for Emily, so too are Belinda's actions controlled by materialistic sylphs guiding her to value her outward beauty and ladylike behavior. Instead of worshipping an independent deity, Belinda worships her own appearance which, unbeknownst to her, is controlled by the powers of sylphs who represent the social norms of womanhood. On her vanity, she has "[e]ach silver vase in mystic order laid" as if on an altar (Pope l. 122). By describing her "vases" as "mystic," Pope insinuates that her cosmetic products have some sort of higher power in the making of her appearance, suggesting the possibility of a deity's involvement. Belinda is then described as being "[f]irst, robed in white, the nymph intent adores, / With head uncovered, the cosmetic powers" (l. 123-4). Just as chastity is valued by Emily's society, Belinda also shows the importance of innocence and recalls the ritualism of ancient religions by dressing in a white robe, thus implying purity. She leaves her head exposed to show off her beautiful hair, an important feature in a woman's appearance. She is getting ready to employ "cosmetic powers," creating her appearance for the day, which sounds like a play on the word cosmic. Just as her containers are "mystic," so too is there a spiritual quality to Belinda's makeup. Although both Emily and Belinda appear to value purity, the initial description of Belinda's vanity reflects her devotion to appearance rather than ideological values.

Consequently, as a result of the unspoken rules of her society, Belinda worships her physical beauty, which is why the Baron's love is so closely tied to materialism. Unlike Emily, who is seen as a distant and passive figure of longing and characterized only by her chastity, Belinda is a physical being emphasized by the importance of her outward appearance. Looking in a mirror, "[a] heavenly image in the glass appears, / To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears" (Pope l. 125-6). Instead of the "heavenly image" being the figure of the goddess Diana or Venus, Belinda worships her own face in the mirror. She yields to the desire of having a beautiful face and molds herself to be pleasing to the eyes of men. While Belinda appears to be worshipping herself, she is really pledging herself to the ideals of beauty and romance that her society has set for women. Emily's social norms require her to be faithful to virtues like chastity and purity; Belinda is going through a similar process, but her society demands that she attend to her own appearance. Consequently, the two worlds operate on ideals of female desirability for men. Although opposite in these two stories, both women worship ideals that will attract men to them, regardless of their own desires. Though Belinda believes that she is independently choosing to create her image in this way, she is not aware of the influence of the sylphs that dictate her actions to follow the social code.

Belinda spends her morning going through the ritualistic process of putting together her hair, makeup, and clothing so "[t]h' inferior priestess, at her altar's side, / Trembling begins the sacred rites of pride" (Pope l. 127-8). Belinda's maid helps her, though she is trembling because she realizes how crucial it is for

Belinda's hair, face, and clothing to be perfect. As she begins to amplify her appearance with combs and jewelry, Pope describes how "[t]he various offerings of the world appear" (l. 130), as if the universe is worshipping Belinda herself as a goddess. However, Belinda worshipping herself and her having others fawn over her because of the way she looks is a result of the materialistic society that she occupies. Pope, in using language like "priestess," "altar," and "sacred rites," recalls old romantic tales such as "The Knight's Tale," thus satirizing the importance of getting ready in the morning by comparing it to religious rituals. Taking a step back, the importance of appearance seems almost ridiculous, but women put immense time and effort into it anyway because of unspoken social norms. The ideas that govern society have the power to make the absurd seem like life and death. The process shows women's prayers to the virtue of pride, reflecting outward beauty's importance to women in 18th century society, no matter how trivial it may seem compared to grander ideas of Emily's chastity or Palamon's lust.

Furthermore, just as the gods in "The Knight's Tale" and the virtues they represent control the outcome of the tournament, social constructs also control the situation in which Belinda's hair is cut, which is dramatized to feel as important as a fight to the death. Belinda putting on her perfect appearance is thus compared to going into battle. After an extensive list of the various exotic and expensive accessories Belinda uses to elevate her appearance, Pope describes that "[n]ow awful beauty puts on all its arms ... and calls forth all the wonders of her face" (l. 139-42). In preparation of the day to come, Belinda uses her accessories and beauty as armour to protect herself and allow herself to take part in the world of men. Just as Emily has Diana as a protector against impurity, Belinda wields her beauty as armor to shield her from the desires of men. However, Pope reveals that it is not Belinda, nor even her maid, who puts up these protections of beauty, but the mystical sylphs who "surround their darling care; / These set the head, and those divide the hair" (l.145-6). Belinda is unaware of the sylphs' aid because she is "praised for labours not her own" (l.148). Unlike Emily, who prays directly to the manifestation of her dearest value, Belinda worships the work of the sylphs by proxy of herself. They are in control of assuring that Belinda's appearance falls in line with what the world expects of her.

Despite Belinda's being the object of perfect adoration on account of her beauty and the hard work of the sylphs to make her adhere to those expectations, these qualities are not enough against the power of the Baron and his masculine forces of love. The sylphs are able to see that "... black omens threat the brightest fair. That e'er deserved a watchful spirit's care" (Pope l.102-3). Belinda has perfectly followed societal expectations, but the sylphs know that something dangerous is coming. Despite all their efforts to prepare, they are not strong enough to prevent the Baron from cutting Belinda's hair. His desire for her beauty outweighs the powers of her appearance, despite her adherence to

societal standards. No matter how hard Belinda or the sylphs tried to maintain her charm, the Baron had the power to destroy her critical feature, her hair, because their society valued his desires the most. Despite being separated by time and culture, Belinda's situation parallels Emily's because both societies force men and women to follow strict rules but always prioritize the virtues of men above women if they come in conflict with each other.

Therefore, in both "The Knight's Tale" and "The Rape of the Lock," affection is a battle to be won when the desires of men clash with the values of women. Palamon, with the power of chivalric love on his side, fights in a tournament to win Emily's hand in marriage. The Baron, calling upon the forces of previous relationships, steals a lock of Belinda's hair to win her love, causing a satirical battle to ensue. Both Palamon and the Baron use their power as men to pray to higher powers and use the influence of social male dominance to win the woman of their dreams. Emily and Belinda, however, pray to virtues that are important to them and the social status of women at the time, but their prayers prove fruitless in their efforts to combat the wills of men. All four of these characters occupy worlds that force them to follow strict social codes and they believe that adherence to those rules will give them success. For the men, their worshipping of the code of honor allows them to be successful, and those prayers surpass the wishes that the women make. For women, the lack of control over their fates despite complete devotion to social constructs transcends time, space, and social norms. Consequently, men follow codes that will get them any woman they desire, whereas women are devoted to rituals that make them desirable to men.

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## Examining Fatherhood Through Historical Empathy in *Tristram Shandy*

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Reading novels from a vastly different time period comes with a host of challenges. Not only do present-day readers have to learn to read the prose in such a way as to make the stylistic differences intelligible, but there also remains the fact that the characters and experiences depicted in the novel come from a hugely different context than that of the present day. To surmount this challenge, when we read novels from earlier centuries, we must try to read with “historical empathy;” that is, we must immerse ourselves in that time period’s mindset in order to understand the actions and choices of characters in the novel. Of course, historical empathy can never be true empathy since our present-day context disallows us much shared experience with the eighteenth-century context. However, the core of the idea points to how we should orient our reading of the novel as readers who attempt to resonate with the novel’s cultural context. Reading a novel from a current-day perspective allows us to see patterns in history as well as to get a feel for the difference between the things that change over time and the things that are timeless. However, if we begin to blame a novel’s characters for not measuring up to present-day expectations, we run the risk of missing an important nuance or aspect of a character or situation.

This dynamic exists especially with Walter Shandy in the eighteenth-century novel *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* by Laurence Sterne. It becomes all too easy to blame Walter Shandy for being a bad father. Among other things, he ignores his wife’s wishes during her pregnancy, he appears absentminded and unsympathetic to her while she is in labor, and he receives his son’s birth with more disappointment than joy. By twenty-first century standards, he presents himself as a selfish and critical father, and by our present-day standards, we may be right about that. However, the concept of historical empathy may lead readers to different conclusions, allowing for a more sympathetic reading of Walter Shandy. When we consider the importance of family lineage or the dangers associated with childbirth through the historically empathetic lens, we can understand why mortality might raise the unstated anxiety that affects his fatherhood. In this sense, his expression of fatherhood is not so much about his emotional connection with his family but rather his intention to pass on all the wisdom he gains in life to the next generation. His fatherhood is his desperate attempt to exert some control over life and death: by “passing on” wisdom and life to his bloodline, he fulfills his definition of a life well-lived and can defy the

anxiety of passing into the unknown. I will explore alternate readings to Walter's "unsympathetic" actions by exploring the connections between Walter's Tristrapaedia and the death of his barely-mentioned son Bobby'. I also want to explore, through the lens of historical empathy, how Walter's expression of his fatherhood role results in behavior that reveals his anxiety regarding mortality.

The manner in which Walter Shandy deals with his wife's false pregnancy reveals his anxiety concerning the next generation of Shandys. At the time of the false pregnancy, Walter's first son Bobby has been born and Tristram has not yet been born. Bobby occupies a very peripheral space in *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*. In fact, Sterne writes Bobby's name only ten times in the whole novel, and the moment at which Bobby is mentioned the most is a moment that intersects the scene of Mrs. Shandy's false pregnancy. It is interesting to think that, at the time preceding the false pregnancy, Walter already prepares for Bobby's death but seems so sure that the second child will be a son. When Mrs. Shandy's false pregnancy occurs and the couple realizes there are no children, he expresses as much disappointment as if a child had actually died, mostly because he had already convinced himself of the certainty of another child:

[f]or the next two whole stages, no subject would go down, but the heavy blow he had sustain'd from the loss of a son, whom it seems he had fully reckon'd upon in his mind, and register'd down in his pocket-book, as a second staff for his old age, in case Bobby should fail him. The disappointment of this, he said, was ten times more to a wise man, than all the money which the journey, etc., had cost him, put together, —rot the hundred and twenty pounds, —he did not mind it a rush. (Sterne 69)

This passage shows how Walter's disappointment concerning the false pregnancy does not arise from the sadness of a lost emotional connection with a child of his own. Rather, he feels disappointment when he "fully reckon'd upon" this false pregnancy birthing a baby who would be a back-up heir of sorts in the next generation of the Shandy line. Walter explaining his actions as being done "in case Bobby should fail him" is just another way of saying Walter wants the security of multiple potential heirs to inherit the Shandy line and keep it going if the eldest should die. Walter does not mourn the loss of a child. Instead, he mourns the loss of the security he had for a while when he was so sure of his wife birthing him a son that he "register'd [it] down in his pocket-book."

This loss of security may seem extremely solipsistic if read from today's perspective. The phrase "if Bobby should fail *him*" defines Bobby only in relation to Walter Shandy, which shows that Walter sees his son as a function in his own life instead of a separate, autonomous individual. However, we can see that Walter's pragmatic outlook stems from a fear that has several implications. First of all, the "second staff in his old age" indicates that Walter intends to rely on his posterity to take care of him in his old age, so the thought of the next generation dying before he does arouses the practical fear that no one will take care of him in his elder years. The second implication is more existential. The "heavy blow" is the very real anxiety that, if Bobby dies at this point (after Mrs.

Shandy's false pregnancy and before she conceives Tristram), then the Shandy line ends with Walter. If the Shandy line ends with Walter, then everything the family *is* simply dissolves. The property, the knowledge, and both material and immaterial expressions of what it means to be "the Shandy family" all disappear. The entire history of the family would become irrelevant to society, and the Shandy line would pass away, forgotten.

Perhaps we cannot understand this anxiety in today's world, when in some cultures family ancestry seems more like an interesting anecdote than a facet of identity. But when we consider how one might define oneself today versus in the eighteenth century, we realize how much we focus on individualistic achievements today; instead, for someone like Walter, his own self-worth depends on him fulfilling his responsibility to perpetuate the Shandy line. Considering the importance of lineage from a perspective of historical empathy makes Walter's fear of not continuing the Shandy line all the more pressing. The false pregnancy leads him to expect not only another son but another potential inheritor and perpetuator of the family, which would bring about relief, a sense of security, and even an increase in self-esteem, since he would be fulfilling his definition of success in life. The news that he and Mrs. Shandy beget no child at all must shake him to the core. Reading with an eye towards Walter's definition of success in life — that he fulfills his duty for the Shandy family — enables readers to sympathize with his anxiety that he might, in fact, not be living up to his own standard of a life well-lived.

The event of the false pregnancy foreshadows Bobby's death around the age of twenty. The scenario of "in case Bobby should fail him" does come true for Walter when a messenger comes with a letter reading that Bobby has unexpectedly died just as Walter chooses whether to send Bobby (now a young adult) on a European tour or to enclose more land for the Shandy estate. This moment illustrates again the difference between what looks heartless from today's perspective and what might actually be a more nuanced form of understanding Walter from his historical context. He does not cry when he receives news of his son's death, and instead he finds it a relief that he can be free to choose the pasture enclosure now that funding a trip to Europe would be irrelevant. Tristram, writing about his father's reaction, reports:

[i]t is an irresistible and natural passion to weep for the loss of our friends or children—and Seneca (I'm positive) tells us somewhere, that such griefs evacuate themselves best by that particular channel—And accordingly we find, that David wept for his son Absalom—Adrian for his Antinous— ... My father managed his affliction otherwise; and indeed differently from most men either ancient or modern; for he neither wept it away, as the Hebrews and the Romans—or slept it off, as the Laplanders—or hanged it, as the English, or drowned it, as the Germans—nor did he curse it, or damn it, or excommunicate it, or rhyme it, or lillabullero it. — — — He got rid of it, however. (347)

Tristram takes time to expound on many epic moments of heroes throughout the ages grieving for their dead loved ones. However, he also juxtaposes his father's lack of tears against these grand situations. Walter does not succumb to the poetic "irresistible and natural passion" of grief but rather "managed his affliction otherwise." This second statement sounds like it has all the sensitive sterility of a business conflict resolution or a medical report, and some might argue that Walter demonstrates nothing more than heartlessness by not crying for Bobby's death. Yet I believe some sentimentality hides in the quote and comes to light when one looks at the pauses, represented by dashes. The pauses could indicate silence between thoughts, and in this case, they could also indicate Walter struggling to process the shocking news of his firstborn son's death or Tristram's meditation on his father's reaction as Tristram writes about it. Even if Sterne meant to convey no sentimentality in the pauses that illustrate this episode, at least we still hear that Walter suffers an "affliction" of grief, which means he does feel something when his son dies, even if he successfully "manages" it. Perhaps Walter does not express it in the glorious and noteworthy way of the epic heroes (no weeping, cursing, damning, or excommunicating for Walter), but he does deal with this shock in his own way.

And how exactly does he deal with the shock? He sits down to write down everything he knows in a book for his remaining son and only heir, Tristram. Walter writes what he calls the *Tristra-paedia* to pass along all his knowledge and wisdom for Tristram to absorb as he grows up. This gesture not only represents a way of dealing with grief but also of dealing with the inevitable fact that Walter himself will one day die and that he accepts that Tristram will be the one to carry on his legacy. Walter goes about writing the *Tristra-paedia* shortly after news of Bobby's death arrives:

[t]he first thing which entered my father's head, after affairs were a little settled in the family ... was to sit down coolly, after the example of Xenophon, and write a *Tristra-paedia*, or system of education for me; collecting first for that purpose his own scattered thoughts, counsels, and notions; and binding them together, so as to form an institute for the government of my childhood and adolescence. (366)

In typical Walter Shandy fashion, Walter assigns himself a task "coolly" and devotes himself to this passion of transcribing all the knowledge he possesses and passing it on in written form to Tristram. Walter over-intellectualizes his grief, turning the loss of his firstborn son into motivation to assist the remaining son. However, despite how this narrowly directed intellectual passion might seem insensitive and unfeeling to present-day readers, the *Tristra-paedia* proves that Walter Shandy truly does care about his family. He cares that Tristram grows up to live out the Shandy title as an informed inheritor of Walter's words, ideas, and intellectual ramblings, and we can see Walter's attempt to organize his writings into something official and structured through the *Tristra-paedia*'s description as an "institute for the government of [Tristram's] childhood and adolescence."

The muted emotion, the practical description of his endeavor, and the informational nature of the *Tristra-paedia* itself all lend themselves to Walter's concern with the future of the Shandy family. The *Tristra-paedia* offers closure for Walter as he experiences the loss of his first-born son through intellectual rather than emotional passion, since the quiet study suits Walter more than the wailing burial grounds. While today we might regard such abrupt closure to be heartless, we could regard Walter's response as it connects to his disappointment in the case of the false pregnancy. This time, he has learned enough to not let the disappointment of a lost child cut him so deeply, and instead he manages it through reason. Perhaps Walter feels no need to waste time and energy weeping. Instead, these resources go towards providing as much as possible for his only remaining heir, Tristram, and we do see a depth of passion here in Tristram's lines:

I was my father's last stake—he had lost my brother Bobby entirely ... there was but this one [son] left; and accordingly my father gave himself up to it with as much devotion as ever my uncle Toby had done to his doctrine of projectils. (366)

The death of the first child motivates Walter to offer the second son as many resources as possible, and the qualification of "much devotion" illustrates how Walter really does care very deeply in his own way. By focusing on this writing endeavor as a response to the mortality that suddenly encroaches upon the Shandy family, Walter assuages his anxiety in the face of this fear by ensuring some piece of him can transcend his own death and pass on to assist the next generation through the *Tristra-paedia*.

Walter values legacy over affection. Walter's definition of success lies not in personal achievement or social connection, but rather in the fact that the family line continues, and that each member of the family does his part to perpetuate the line. The last time Bobby's name appears in the entire work happens right as Walter begins to write the *Tristra-paedia*, which may indicate that Walter habitually moves on from aspects of the past that he views as failures and instead focuses only on what he can consider successes. It certainly seems less painful for Walter to forget rather than to remember the sources of his disappointment. We see many instances in which Walter finds himself incapacitated and utterly overwhelmed when aspects of life do not end up fitting into his very rigid scheme of how things should go. Upon Tristram's birth, for example, Walter works himself into such a state over the injury of his newborn son's nose:

[n]o doubt, the breaking down of the bridge of a child's nose, by the edge of a pair of forceps—however scientifically applied—would vex any man in the world, who was at so much pains in begetting a child, as my father was—yet it will not account for the extravagance of his affliction, nor will it justify the unchristian manner he abandoned and surrendered him self up to. To explain this, I must leave him upon the bed for half an hour—and my uncle Toby in his old fringed chair sitting beside him. (24)



Walter, whose epithet could include such phrases as “the most regular man in everything he did,” and “wayward intellect,” suddenly has a terrible “extravagance of his affliction” when he discovers that his son’s nose has been crushed by the doctor’s forceps. His mild manner disappears, and we can understand through this scene that his passion runs quite deep when it comes to the physical and mental wellbeing of his offspring. At this point, too, it is important to note that Walter and Mrs. Shandy have already experienced one false pregnancy. The second disappointment to Walter comes in the form of the bad luck surrounding Tristram’s birth; finally, by the third stroke of bad luck in Bobby’s death, Walter processes his grief in a much more rational and distanced manner, as we see when he begins to write the *Tristra-paedia*. However, his obsession with providing for Tristram with the *Tristra-paedia* shows that this anxiety about the death of himself or his family has not disappeared. Instead, he pours it out into intellectual pursuits, and in this manner, he expresses his fatherhood not through affection but through the only support he knows how to offer: all his random tidbits of information, bound together in one book for his remaining son.

If we could return these ideas to the scene of Bobby’s death, we might find some new connections to make with these new ideas. The scene of Tristram’s birth (and crushed nose, and misfortunate name, etc.) takes place between the false pregnancy and Bobby’s death, and in this scene Walter reacts to what is beyond his control by lying prostrate and refusing to respond to those around him. This detached response intermediates his outbursts in the false pregnancy scene and his response to Bobby’s death, because in the case of Bobby’s death, he spins so far into his intellectual philosophizing that he actually forgets about his son’s death for the space of a conversation:

[t]is better in battle than in bed, said my uncle *Toby*.—Take away its hereses, its mutes, and its mourning,—its plumes, scutcheons, and other mechanic aids—What is it?—*Better in battle!* continued my father, smiling, for he had absolutely forgot my brother *Bobby*—’tis terrible no way—for consider, brother *Toby*,—when we *are*—death is *not*;—and when death *is*—we are *not*. My uncle *Toby* laid down his pipe to consider the proposition; my father’s eloquence was too rapid to stay for any man—away it went,—and hurried my uncle *Toby*’s ideas along with it.— (351-352)

This episode of philosophizing begins with Walter’s addressing the news of his son’s death by quipping some of his philosophical phrases concerning mortality. However, what begins as a halting eulogy ends in a spirited jousting of wits between Walter and his brother Toby. Walter clearly relishes the chance to debate with his brother, but most people might think it would be impossible to forget about the news of one’s son’s death mere moments after the news is delivered. However, Walter Shandy, wayward as always, somehow manages to do just that. He starts talking about death as a way to deal with Bobby’s death and ends up forgetting his son completely in the philosophy of it all, which some might think inexcusable. As baffled as I am by Walter, and as hard to argue this

point might be, I still think the best way I can respond to his oversight is to simply smile sadly at the merriment in the time of death. I think it is especially important to note that Walter has been through a lot by this stage in terms of receiving blows to his deepest obsession. His bloodline still remains his primary focus, but by this point, news of an eldest son's death hits so hard that it passes right through him, at first. True, he does go on to write the Tristra-paedia in response to the death of Bobby. But the lack of tears and even the instance of forgetting about his own son's death come first, and it is important not to write these moments off as character flaws but rather to accept them as part of a deeper response to prolonged suffering than initially seems apparent.

So how do we leave Walter in *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*? Is he the distracted and oblivious male presence in the Shandy household? Or is he the gatekeeper to the family honor and the one most concerned with passing on all he can to the next generation? Perhaps he is a bit of both. Walter's theories and foibles do create an interesting character, but he is also the one who cares deeply about the family's continuation, to the point that the anxiety of death (and the fear of *not* passing on the inheritance) influences quite a large portion of his behavior. Walter Shandy certainly is an enigma, but he does seem to be a well-meaning man rather than a malicious one. The next question to ask addresses his son Tristram's legacy: would Walter be proud of his son, even though he does not marry and pass on the Shandy name to a new generation? If Walter defines a well-lived life as one that does the Shandy bloodline duty, Tristram does not seem to live up to this standard. However, he and his father do have their own obsessions that might arise from parallel origins: Walter Shandy writes his Tristra-paedia in order that he might pass on his knowledge to the next generation, and Tristram Shandy writes his *Life and Opinions* to memorialize the thoughts and musings of the last generation of the Shandy line. In terms of historical empathy, it seems like Tristram (or, shall we say, Sterne) is doing the best he can to offer modern audiences with something to ponder over and interpret. At least in writing, the Shandys live on, and hopefully Walter's anxiety about passing into the void may be assuaged with the knowledge that yes, the family's odd anecdotes and bits of stories still live on in the form of Tristram's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*.

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## Interiority and Narrative Temporality in Jane Austen's *Persuasion*

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In Jane Austen's final completed novel *Persuasion*, which was published posthumously in 1818, Austen mediates between levels of temporality and subjectivity to demonstrate the psychological and emotional growth of the text's protagonist, Anne Elliot. Austen's use of free indirect discourse creates an intimate conception of Anne's consciousness; the rhetorical technique situates the narrative, and the audience's understanding of Anne, in a present moment that is both imbued with and consumed by regret for past decisions. Anne is plagued both by the return of Captain Frederick Wentworth, a man with whom she was persuaded to end her engagement when she was nineteen, and by her initial inability to move beyond her history, yet she changes as the novel progresses. Austen reflects this through narrative temporality — in a narrative that is cognizant of the events of the past yet still hopeful for the future — and Anne's interiority. Anne's identity exists in flux as she both forgives herself, accepting decisions she made eight years prior, and positions her consciousness in the present moment. Anne and Wentworth's subjective realities evolve as they recognize and understand each other more fully. Their eventual intersubjectivity culminates in a revolutionary conception of marriage, centered around both understanding increased female agency and interiority to be necessary parts of a partnership. Anne's interiority is mediated through the conscious subjectivity of the characters and the temporality of the narrative. Anne's shifting interiority reflects what it means to be a woman in the Regency era, and, perhaps, across time — she breaks out of the mediated and subjective perceptions placed upon her by other characters and frees herself from her spiraling inward perceptions of herself, to find interiority and agency in a time when women's roles were confined to specific expectations.

Time is subjective, and, by extension, mediated perceptions of reality are subjective as well. Anne's consciousness is reflected in her free indirect discourse, but it is also refracted through the perceptions of the characters that surround her. Marilyn Butler affirms the importance of subjective perceptions within the novel, as "[t]he action and most of the characters in *Persuasion* seem meaningful primarily in terms of the impression they make on Anne." At first Anne's subjectivity is defined by the mediations of other characters; she does not allow herself to self-narrate until she has a new understanding of the decision she made eight and a half years ago in which she allowed herself to be persuaded by others.

Sir Walter Elliot, Anne's father, is obsessed with his imagined worth — his mediation on narrative temporality is attached to his title and social status. Sir Walter's limited history is linked to his egotistical perception of his own value. The novel opens with his subjective perspective, and thus frames the novel in its exploration of subjective realities and mediated consciousness. In his world, his class standing as an aristocrat still possesses significant value, and, because of that, Anne's disinterest in material goods and amusements gives her no value. It is no wonder that Anne's focus is so inward at the beginning of the novel — Anne's consciousness is refracted by Sir Walter's characterization of her when he so bluntly asserts that, "[h]er word had no weight ... she was only Anne" (Austen 5). The audience is aware that the aristocracy is slowly becoming an artifact of the past. Kellynch Hall is entrenched in its own history, and its inhabitants are, too. Thus it is Sir Walter's words that actually do not "carry any weight" (5). Sir Walter's lack of interiority reflects Anne's conscious state of solitude and isolation in the opening of the novel, but it does not wholly define her.

Like her father, however, Anne also fixates on a subjective version of reality at the novel's outset. Her rejection of Wentworth still bothers her, and she dwells on the repercussions that occasion had on her character. In the Regency era, a woman's space was defined by the men who occupied it. In Anne's case, she is suffocated by the opinions of her Father, as well as those of her sister Elizabeth, leaving her silent and misunderstood. It is their opinions that contributed to her decision in the past, and it is their opinions that still crowd the declining Kellynch Hall. Anne's solitude at Kellynch is emphasized by her silence in the beginning of the novel. Interestingly, Anne does not speak until Chapter Three. Until then, our understanding of Anne derives solely from other character's subjective understandings of her and the narrator's interjections. Rebecca Posusta explains that it is the "predilection toward subjectivity and isolation in the Romantic style which perpetuates [Anne's] loneliness and rejection in this place [Kellynch Hall]" (84). When Anne eventually speaks in Chapter Three, she speaks only in relation to the past that haunts her. She defends the Navy, thus indirectly defending Wentworth's profession; she segues into conversations about Admiral Croft, Wentworth's brother-in-law; and, when her father and Mr. Shepherd cannot remember his name, reminds them that they must "mean Mr. Wentworth, I suppose" (Austen 23). Wentworth is a distant figure, almost ghostlike in his haunting relation to the past. This is the first instance he is mentioned. Therefore, the first instance where Anne's consciousness is projected outward is also a subjective mediation and reminder of her history. Anne's consciousness is mediated through free indirect discourse, and it is not until the end of the novel that she uses elongated reported speech because so much of her own interiority dwells in the past.

As Anne moves beyond the bubble of Kellynch Hall, her subjectivity moves outward; in this way, Austen situates the narrative in a reality contingent on and

independent of not only the past, but of Kellynch Hall as well. As her physical self moves outward, her emotional and psychological perception of herself matures. She frees herself from her father and her sister, both of whom are forever bound to the past and stuck in histories that have already begun to progress without them. When Anne leaves Kellynch and travels to visit her sister at Uppercross, she begins to become mediated in the narrative as something more than “only Anne.” Emily Rohrbach contends that the narrative temporality and temporal subjectivity of *Persuasion* defines the subjectivity of the characters, especially in the case of Anne Elliot; her interiority, and its link to the past, drives the plot. Rohrbach argues that narrative temporality “frees Austen to explore female independence” (Johnson qtd. in Rohrbach 742). However, it also frees her to explore the complexities and boundaries of female interiority and agency in a time where female independence was limited. The narratorial perspective moves from a man who “never took up any book but the *Baronetage*” (Austen 3) to enter into the depth of Anne’s consciousness, which is reflected through her free indirect discourse. Anne is aware of her own “elegant and cultivated mind” in relation to the Musgrove girls, but she still exists to some extent on the social periphery at Uppercross (Austen 39). Anne’s consciousness continues to be mediated through the perspectives of other characters, but Uppercross is the first step toward moving from solitude at Kellynch to becoming a more active member of her social circle. From this point forth, most of the novel is filtered through free indirect discourse of Anne’s consciousness.

Our intimate encounter with Anne, through free indirect discourse, helps us understand her and her representation of herself. Anne’s subjective reality is refracted through the subjective experience of her reality, particularly in anticipation of her reunion with Wentworth at Uppercross. She perpetuates the grief that consumes her by fixating her value in the past and the things she wishes she had done differently. She muses,

[h]ow eloquent could Anne Elliot have been, — how eloquent, at least, were her wishes on the side of an early warm attachment, and a cheerful confidence in futurity, against that over-anxious caution which seems to insult exertion and distrust Providence! (Austen 29)

In this moment, Anne believes that she would have made a different decision, given the wisdom she has gained in the last eight years. However, her refusal to move beyond the past denies the possibility for maturation; she only gains interiority once she allows herself to progress forward into the future while accepting the decision she made. Here, her understanding of herself is still mediated through the events of the past and the lack of value that other characters impose on her. We enter into the depth of Anne’s consciousness throughout the entire narrative, but that consciousness is finally revealed outward when she begins to speak “eloquently” about her inner character.

Anne has increased opportunities to engage with the outer world at Uppercross compared to her solitary life at Kellynch Hall. Her conscious peace

is also quickly broken by the immediate physicality of Wentworth. He is no longer a painful memory, but an all-too-familiar presence:

time had softened down so much, perhaps all of a particular attachment to him, — but she had been too dependent on time alone; no aid had been given in change of place ... or any novelty or enlargement of society. — No one had ever come within the Kellynch circle, who could bear a comparison with Frederick Wentworth, as he stood in her memory. (Austen 27)

Situating the narrative in shifting temporalities, and now shifting spaces, offers further insight into Anne's psyche. It was easy to situate her interiority in the past when she was solitary and "only Anne" at Kellynch. It was easy for Anne to understand her past when nothing — no subjective reality, temporal or physical — challenged her perceptions. Despite expanding her "circle" in Uppercross, Anne still remains passive in interactions. She is surrounded by people but remains solitary. Posusta argues that Austen is playing with the subjectivity of space as well as that of temporality, articulating that,

[h]er physical spaces are not only used to illustrate the dichotomy between public and private interaction, but also to demonstrate the contrast between her heroine's psychological place on one hand and her physical situation on the other. (Posusta 78)

Anne's consciousness is reflected in her decision to be a passive participant in society at Uppercross, especially regarding her interactions with Captain Wentworth. However, her decisions evolve with each different location that enlarges the "Kellynch circle" that bound her in her past and her regret over losing Wentworth.

Wentworth emphasizes Anne's subjectivity and consciousness throughout the narrative: he and Anne understand each other through mediated conversations, physical interactions, and their conception of the past. Free indirect discourse allows the reader to observe an intimate — and visceral — experience of Anne and Wentworth's first reunion. Their first reunion challenged Anne's obsession with the past and how the past affects each character's present interactions. Anne refuses to situate herself in the present moment, and her subjective experience exists only to rush the interaction, expressing that, "it would soon be over. And it was soon over" (Austen 57). Anne's conscious experience of the interaction is a blur, and that is reflected in her "half-meet[ing]" Wentworth's eye, and the quickened pace of the narrative temporality. The moment ends before it is mediated. Afterward, Anne returns to her anxious interiority in an attempt to quell her thoughts and her understanding of the moment:

eight years, almost eight years had passed, since all had been given up. How absurd to be resuming the agitation which such interval had banished into distance and indistinctness. (57)

Anne cannot escape, nor can she think away, the emotions that are emphasized in seeing Wentworth again. She reflects upon the notion of time eroding constant attachment; she dwells on her anxiety, because time and distance should

have “banished” her feelings for Wentworth into “indistinctness.” Anne’s interactions with Wentworth mark her shifting consciousness as she allows herself more and more space within the narrative’s present moment, and more opportunities to reframe her subjective past.

In Anne and Wentworth’s first meeting while nearly alone, Wentworth relinquishes Anne’s nephew Walter from pestering her. Anne’s interiority is again refracted in her passive consciousness of the moment:

[i]n another moment, however, she found herself in the state of being released from him; some one was taking him from her, though he had bent down her head so much, that his little sturdy hands were unfastened from her neck, and he was resolutely borne away, before he knew that Captain Wentworth had done it ... She was ashamed of herself, quite ashamed of being so nervous, so overcome by such a trifle; but so it was; and it required a long application of solitude and reflection to recover her. (Austen 77)

It is notable that the interaction with Wentworth is also described in the past, further emphasizing Anne’s passive consciousness. It also reflects her current state of interiority — she exists insofar of outward mediations of herself. It is the first time she and Wentworth touch since the events eight years prior. She cannot be present in the moment to thank Wentworth because she does not have the interiority to comprehend his compassion. That notion does not cohere with her understanding of the past. She longs to return to solitude to reflect upon the moment with shame and anxiety, just as she has done with many of her past decisions. Although Anne’s subjective reality does not allow her to realize this, Wentworth’s decision to help her is his own way of progressing beyond the past as well. Whereas Anne is plagued by grief for the past, he is bitter. As John Wiltshire asserts, “[h]is release of the boy thus figures as an initial movement toward his own relinquishment of a disabling psychological attitude” (79). Only when Anne and Wentworth reunite do their subjective temporalities evolve. Anne’s consciousness is acknowledged, valued, and fully realized within Wentworth; his assistance with her troublesome nephew is the first instance of this.

Interactions with Wentworth continue to mediate the transformation and evolution of Anne’s interiority and subjectivity. Butter considers that, in the beginning of the novel, “[t]he world of her consciousness is so all-absorbing that it is not clear whether the outer world has objective existence or not” (Butter). Anne is similarly passive when Captain Wentworth assists her into the carriage later in the narrative, but she is more aware of his subjectivity this time. Just as he recognized her discomfort with her nephew, he recognized Anne’s fatigue after their walk. Anne, again, depicts the moment as a passive experience in the past, “Yes, he had done it. She was in the carriage, she felt that he had placed her there, that his will and his hands had done it” (Austen 87). However, this time, she allows herself to indulge the question of why he did it:

[s]till, he could not see her suffer, without the desire of giving her relief. It was a remainder of former sentiment; it was an impulse of pure, though

unacknowledged friendship; it was proof of his own warmth and amiable heart, which she could not contemplate without emotions so compounded of pleasure and pain, that she knew not which prevailed. (87)

This scene functions as a foil to the earlier scene with Anne's nephew. Wentworth's touch reflects his enduring compassion for Anne, even before he realizes her power over him. These interactions allow Anne to play a more active role in her fate. She becomes a more active author of her own subjective reality when she realizes the way her consciousness is mediated through Wentworth.

At Lyme, the hazelnut analogy and Louisa's fall are turning points of the narrative, in terms of both the shift from an over-mediated, over-subjective consciousness and the relationship between Wentworth and Anne. When walking with the party at Lyme, Anne resigns herself to solitude once more. Her conscious desire is to "stay out of the way of everybody," but she has difficulty doing so when Wentworth is tantalizingly in earshot (Austen 80). She cannot help but try to glean insight into Wentworth's consciousness as reflected in his conversations with the Musgrove sisters. Regardless, she stumbles on the hazelnut conversation ostensibly by accident. She hears his opinion of her mediated through his analogy of a perfectly intact hazelnut. He values strong will, fortitude, and unyielding character. His bitter conception of the past refuses himself to imagine Anne in this way. Although Louisa does not know Wentworth's object of the analogy, his consciousness is mediated to Anne through eavesdropping on his conversation:

[s]he had so much to recover from, before she could move. The listeners proverbial fate was not absolutely hers; she had heard no evil of herself, — but she had heard a great deal of very painful import. She saw how her own character was considered by Captain Wentworth; and there had seen just that degree of feeling and curiosity about her in his manner, which must give her extreme agitation. (85)

The Hazelnut conversation represents Wentworth's "ideologically mistaken" individualism, and again shows how Anne's character is mediated through the perceptions of other characters (Butter). However, because we are privy to Anne's consciousness — we are aware that the qualities Wentworth values in the hazelnut are Anne's. Anne's realization that Wentworth is also mediating an interpretation of the past helps her begin to move forward to the present and prove that her character is more similar to the hazelnut than he thinks.

When Louisa Musgrove is injured in Cobb, Anne speaks for one of the first times of the novel without being directly addressed. She is fully present in the moment. Her agency turns outward. Anne is the only one with the patience and fortitude to respond to the situation:

Anne, attending with all the strength and zeal, and thought, which instinct supplied, to Henrietta, still tried, at intervals, to suggest comfort to the others, tried to comfort Mary, to animate Charles, to assuage the feelings of Captain Wentworth. (Austen 106)



In that moment, she also resembles the strength of the hazelnut. After the incident, Anne sees this shift reflected in Wentworth's opinion as she eavesdrops on him again. Anne's utility in Cobb "almost restor[ed] the past" with Wentworth, and with Anne's own interiority. Anne overhears him say, "but, if Anne will stay, no one so proper, so capable as Anne!" She paused a moment to recover from the emotion of hearing herself so spoken of" (109). Wentworth continues when Anne enters the room, saying "[y]ou will stay, I am sure; you will stay and nurse her," cried he, turning to her and speaking with a glow, and yet a gentleness, which seemed almost restoring the past" (109). Anne's value, both internal and external, is starting to change.

At Bath, Anne's interiority is fully realized as she becomes comfortable in her expanded social circle. Compared to her silence in the opening of the novel, this marks a full-circle shift in her character. Anne's active participation in society at Bath further emphasizes this: she "make[s] yet a little advance, she instantly spoke" to Wentworth when he arrives at the theater. In this interaction with Wentworth, time is similarly sped up like in their reunion, but for opposite reasons. In the first instance, time was sped up because of their separate subjectivities. This instance, time is rushed because of the hopeful potential for intersubjectivity once again:

in spite of all the various noises of the room, the almost ceaseless slam of the door, and ceaseless buzz of persons walking through, had distinguished every word, was struck, gratified, and confused, and beginning to breathe very quick, and feel a hundred things in a moment. (Austen 173)

Anne's subjectivity, and even her interpretation of the past, is notably different than what it was in the beginning of the novel. At the theater, Anne tells Wentworth, "when pain is over, the remembrance of it often becomes a pleasure" (173). Free indirect discourse allows the reader into Anne's consciousness for the majority of the book — the audience is not fooled into believing that this mediation on pain is an enduring philosophy of Anne's. So much of the remembrance of pain formerly hindered her from any action. This sentiment proves that interiority can shift. This interaction marks Anne's profound growth and maturity. As Thomas Wolfe states:

Anne changes when the meaning of the past changes ... Jane [Austen's] sense of the variously tender and painful past the self can summon up to inform and enrich the life of the present. (700)

Wentworth evolves as well, and this change is mediated through Anne's understanding of him: "[h]e had a heart returning to her at least; that anger, resentment, avoidance, were no more; and that they were succeeded ... by the tenderness of the past" (Austen 175). The past no longer has painful connotations for Anne and Wentworth. Instead, it is a reminder of their enduring connection and the potential for their union.

Anne's unfiltered consciousness and the transformation it has on her interiority also have reverberating effects on her physical presence. Anne's renewed agency is manifested in the return of her "bloom," a sentiment repeated

throughout the novel. In the beginning of the novel, Sir Elliot describes Anne, explaining that, “a few years before [she] had been a very pretty girl, but her bloom had vanished early” (Austen 5). Anne describes this loss of bloom within herself as well, reflecting that,

her attachment and regrets had, for a long time, clouded every enjoyment of youth, and an early loss of bloom and spirits had been their lasting effect. (27)

Anne’s lack of “bloom” physically represents her loss of Wentworth, her stifled interiority, and her entrenchment in the subjective past. Her bloom slowly returns as the novel progresses because her subjectivity shifts. In Lyme, the “fine wind” restores her bloom. She and Wentworth exchange a glance that Anne interprets to be his way of saying “I, at this moment, see something like Anne Elliot again” (100). She slowly starts to redefine her consciousness as well as the way she is mediated to other people. In Bath, Anne’s bloom fully returns when she realizes Wentworth’s constancy,

Anne saw nothing, thought nothing, of the brilliancy of the room. Her happiness was from within. Her eyes were bright, and her cheeks glowed — but she knew nothing about it. She was thinking only of the last half hour. (175)

Anne is mediating a past conversation, but this time with no regret for the past. It is because she mediates Wentworth’s consciousness as proof of his enduring emotions that she allows herself to redefine the meaning of her past. After Anne’s “bloom” is restored, she noticeably exists more consciously within the present moment.

Anne’s interiority is fully articulated at the end of the novel in her conversation with Captain Harville. Anne’s eloquent discussion of the constancy of female attachment harkens back to her earlier wish which she expresses when she muses, “how eloquent Anne Elliot could have been” (Austen 29)! Before, she was relieved that only three people knew about her relationship with Wentworth, in fact,

she rejoiced anew over the conviction which had always been most grateful to her, of the past being known to those three only among her connexions.” (29)

Anne speaks with Harville, albeit indirectly, about how her love endures despite the passage of time (5). She speaks from personal experience and her reconciliation with the past when she tells Harville that, “[a]ll the privilege I claim for my own sex is that of loving longest, when existence or when hope is gone” (222). She is no longer ashamed of her enduring love, but instead considers it to be a source of pride. Instead of conforming to the perception that her willingness to be persuaded was a fault of character, she articulates it as a testament to the strength of her love and faith. Like the narrator tells us, Harville values Anne as “any [person] of real understanding would” at the beginning of the novel (5). Not only does Anne no longer reside on the periphery of social interaction, but she is more comfortable within her role in society. She embraces her interiority and articulates it to others and is respected for it. Eavesdropping — a repeated

narrative device of mediation — is flipped when Wentworth drops his pen at an opportune moment of Anne's speech. Wentworth's sound spurs the narrative out of Anne's consciousness to allude to, however briefly, the thoughts of his own consciousness.

Wentworth's consciousness is both mediated and documented in his letter. The letter itself is a direct insight into Wentworth's consciousness without free indirect discourse. The letter both mediates his feelings in the present moment — "I can listen no longer in silence" to Anne and Harville's conversation — but when read mediates a moment that occurred in the past. Wentworth's letter transcends temporality. His use of the verb "love" in a transitive context reconciles the past, present, and future, when he reveals that, "I have loved none but you" (Austen 223). His letter fixes his love in a constant, enduring document. In this way, Wentworth changes the past and allows himself to exist in the present moment, while also articulating hope for the future.

Anne and Wentworth's reunion is a hallmark of a constant, enduring love. Wallace articulates that, "Anne sees her feeling for Wentworth as permanent and independent of time, place, or outcome" (100). Wentworth articulates this sentiment as well in his letter, in which he writes, "[u]njust I may have been, weak and resentful I have been, but never inconstant" (Austen 223). Yet the love shared between Anne and Wentworth could not exist if the nature of their attachment did not change. Perhaps their sentiments were constant, but their consciousness of the people supporting them was not. That is why their relationship strengthens during their reunion. Anne and Wentworth's intersubjective understanding of their own consciousness and the other's consciousness changes throughout the narrative to allow their romantic reunion. Charles Rzepka observes that,

[i]n *Persuasion*, Austen seems to have anticipated, and to a considerable extent accepted as "natural," these historically conditioned developments in the ideological construction of gender, even as she attempted to shape a vision of marriage that would mitigate their more restrictive effects on women's freedom. (107)

Austen pushes the boundaries in order to make a point - she can only say so much and still be heard.

Austen makes it clear, however, that Anne's initial forfeit of the engagement was the correct choice. This too is discovered in a blend of temporal rhetoric and interiority. Their first match was situated in a "cheerful confidence in futurity" (Austen 29), without acknowledging the problems the match faced in the present; Anne and Wentworth remained regretfully or bitterly stuck in the past in the middle of the narrative, but toward the end the two are present in the moment, have given new meaning to the past, and await the future:

[t]here they exchanged again those feelings and those promises which had once before seemed to secure everything, but which had been followed by so many, many years of division and estrangement. There they returned again into the past, more exquisitely happy, perhaps, in their re-union, than when

it had been first projected; more tender, more tried, more fixed in a knowledge of each other's character, truth, and attachment; more equal to act, more justified in acting. (227)

A successful marriage, like Anne and Wentworth's union or the Crofts' marriage, re-creates the traditional understanding of Regency marriage and forces every reader of any era to consider their own interiority within their own relationships. Of Anne and Wentworth, Kay Young asserts that,

[t]he moment that they see each other, they exist purely in the moment: it's not mediated. It's not reflected as a past recollection. It's the only purely present moment in the novel, as he or she loved, and how each feels now that the acknowledgement has been made. (Young 79)

The aforementioned are the proposed "ideal" marriage — in both, there is more freedom and integration of the genders. This is actualized in Admiral and Mrs. Croft's handling of the carriage:

[b]ut by coolly giving the reins a better direction herself, they happily passed the danger; and by once afterwards judiciously putting out her hand, they neither fell into a rut, nor ran foul. (Austen 88)

Anne and Wentworth's marriage implies more than the resolution and reconciliation of the past. While their love might be constant, their experiences reaching intersubjectivity are different. Wentworth and Anne's changing interiority throughout the narrative culminates and is proven in their union.

Anne finds a way to narrate her own story when her individuality is impossible. Her subjective temporality evolves throughout the novel. The Anne at the conclusion of the narrative is no longer plagued with regret or relegated to spinsterhood by her refusal to move forward. Anne takes ownership of her past decisions, regardless of existing in a society that denies female agency. As she herself asserts,

I have been thinking over the past ... and I must believe that I was right, as much as I suffered from it ... I was right in submitting to her, and that if I had done otherwise, I should have suffered more in continuing the engagement than I did even in giving it up, because I should have suffered my conscience. (Austen 232)

Her decisions drew her closer to a stronger sense of her own moral character and fortitude. As a result, the narrative temporality that structures the novel is imperative to the understanding of how Anne's interiority develops over time. The way Anne's consciousness is mediated throughout the narrative, first through other characters and then outwardly articulated by her, reflects the growth and eventual reformation of Anne's own subjective history. She allows herself to surpass both her previous understanding of herself and the understanding of herself as imposed upon her by others.

Anne learns to forgive herself and take ownership of both her decisions and her choices in a way that society rarely allows of a woman. She acknowledges that:

men have had every advantage of us in telling their own story. Education has been theirs in so much higher a degree; the pen has been in their hands.  
(Austen 221)

Free indirect discourse puts the “pen” of interiority in women. At the end of the narrative, Anne’s ideas are valued by her society, and emphasized in her romantic partnership with Wentworth. As a result, Anne herself acknowledges a change in herself and allows her consciousness full externality. Her subjectivity finds its home in Wentworth, but this was only possible by rectifying her conception of herself. Her reclamation of individuality, and her redefinition of her temporality, is not only present in her marriage with Wentworth but also within the characterization of herself throughout the novel. Thus, Austen creates a world where a woman can embrace her interiority and be celebrated for it, despite the boundaries imposed on her by society.

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## Light and Darkness in the Epiphanies of Henry James' Heroines

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Long after the age of Enlightenment illumed Europe, light continues to symbolize the attainment of internal illumination. In keeping with such a dominant cultural and literary conceit, Henry James illuminates moments of recognition with images of light, an effect which achieves literary parallelism in his novels *Washington Square* and *The Portrait of a Lady*. Both texts feature heroines who live in worlds that esteem the qualities of brightness and who experience realizations revealed by the presence — and even the absence — of light. Yet, by revealing that light and brightness symbolize more than knowledge, James renders nuanced and unconventional epiphanies that emphasize the abnormality of the two modern women whose stories resist literary convention.

Henry James establishes the America of *Washington Square* as a land literally and figuratively illuminated by the light of knowledge. Introducing Dr. Sloper, he writes that,

[the healing art] is touched by the light of science — a merit appreciated in a community in which the love of knowledge has not always been accompanied by leisure and opportunity. (*Washington* 138)

Already the reader understands that the society in which Dr. Sloper practices medicine links light with intelligence. The concept of science can be used almost interchangeably with knowledge and intelligence, as the word “science” derives from the Latin root *sciare* — to know. In fact, the inclusion of the term “the light of science” reveals that light itself represents knowledge. As light is a visual phenomenon, an energy which illuminates human vision, light allows us to perceive and know the world. In this opening gesture, James establishes a world familiar to the one that he and his contemporary readers inhabit. In both reality and this fictional realm, knowledge is likened to light in a symbolic wordplay on the concept of enlightenment.

James soon clarifies, however, that *Washington Square's* America is not merely enlightened, but is populated by those who value enlightenment. The text's narrator explains that Dr. Sloper's New York social circle was “fond of boasting that it possessed the ‘brightest’ doctor in the country” (*Washington* 138). James emphasizes the descriptor “brightest” with in-text quotations, highlighting the word itself and suggesting that it is directly quoted from the mouths of those who praise him. It is the only word distinguished in such a way, and this emphasis attracts the reader's attention. Already the reader wonders, how does the narrator know that this specific word applies to Sloper's reputation, whereas all other

words — whether praise, gossip, or hearsay — are spoken indirectly? Perhaps this specific quality of brightness is what resonates within Dr. Sloper's mind; perhaps it is the word with which he describes himself. However, the narrator quickly answers the reader's question, clarifying that this comment is "attributed to him by the popular voice" (138). Clearly this quality of "brightness" refers to his intelligence, as the narrator remarks that he is known to be "witty" and a "clever man" (138). But, regardless of this accolade's source, James intends the reader to initially identify Dr. Sloper with his being "bright."

Dr. Sloper himself primarily understands the concept of "bright[ness]" to reference mental acumen. He views himself as a man of Enlightenment era interests, being both a "philosopher" (*Washington* 138) and a doctor and believes his intelligence to be innate. Considering himself "an observer," or so the narrator believes, "to be bright was so natural him, and (as the popular voice said) came so easily" (138). But again, it is the "popular voice" that heralds his praises. Since the quality of brightness defines his self-perception, Dr. Sloper assigns value to others, specifically his daughter, based on the brightness which he perceives within them. However, the concept of brightness is nuanced, and to understand his intents in using the term first requires understanding the term's various meanings.

While Dr. Sloper considers the quality of brightness to refer to his "witty" intelligence and "clever mind," the word itself possesses a range of different connotations both within the text and throughout the English language. The *Oxford English Dictionary* acknowledges the term "brightness" as describing "the quality of being intelligent and quick-witted," but also connotes status and popularity, defining another usage as "glory, renown, [and] illustriousness" (OED). These are qualities that James' introduction reveals Sloper to have. Yet the fact that it is the "popular voice" that considers Dr. Sloper to be the "brightest" suggests that brightness is a quality bestowed on account of one's popularity and popular approval rather than knowledge. In fact, James specifies that Dr. Sloper is not so much smart as perceived to be smart. His reputation as a talented and intelligent doctor, one who always leaves behind "an inscrutable prescription," dazzles New York society (*Washington* 137). Additionally, Dr. Sloper's brightness may refer to another aspect of his life, his financial success, or what the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines as, "[h]appiness, success, or prosperity, esp[ecially] as a likely future prospect" (OED). His marriage to the beautiful Catherine Harrington guaranteed him lifelong "prosperity and happiness" through the "solid dowry" (138) which she brought into the union. The narrator, as if quoting from the *Dictionary's* definition of "brightness," explains that Dr. Sloper "found the path to prosperity very soft to his tread" (138). Dr. Sloper is "bright" not merely because of his intelligence, but because of his "prosperity" — his wealth, as well as his success, and the admiration he evokes in others. Perhaps while commenting on Dr. Sloper, James uses the

vague word “bright” in a superficial sense, emphasizing the precedence of societal approval above all else, even knowledge.

Clearly, Dr. Sloper desires that his daughter possesses all possible connotations of “brightness” to better reflect his own brilliance to the public. Although he was “never dazzled by his sister’s intellectual luster,” he still desires that she — Mrs. Penniman — tutor Catherine to “try and make a clever woman of her” (*Washington* 142, 143). Mrs. Penniman, though not “brilliant” like his deceased wife, shines with a certain societal brightness, perhaps derived from the familial bond that connects her to her brother (142). While Catherine appears to be likeable, albeit extremely insecure, she lives “very much afraid” (145) of her father. He is as much a father as he is a patriarchal god, and she marvels at his “great faculties” and their “luminous vagueness” (147). Unfortunately, Catherine greatly disappoints her father’s ambitions, as she “was extremely modest [and] had no desire to shine” (145). As such, Dr. Sloper even directly asserts that “my daughter is not brilliant” (171). Just as Dr. Sloper repeatedly compares her to her late mother’s “brilliance” and his reputation as society’s “brightest,” so too does the narrator relay that her “rigorous critics” called her a “dull, plain girl” (142, 148). One gets the sense that these “critics” are actually her father, who “almost never addressed [her] save in the ironical form” (159). He certainly praises her appearance at Ms. Almond’s ball, but his commentary on her gold-fringed dress’ “magnificence” reveals his joking irony (160). He fears that those observing her will see the gold of her inheritance reflected in the glimmers of her gown. Even Catherine herself discerns her father’s disappointment in her lack of intelligence, acknowledging that her mother was “very, very brilliant,” while lamenting that she herself “is not at all like her” (290). While the young heiress of *The Portrait of a Lady* is heralded as bright by those around her, she too suffers from the influence of controlling men, just as Catherine does.

Isabel Archer, the self-proclaimed heroine of *The Portrait of a Lady*, also lives in a world where the indeterminately vague qualities of “brightness” — intelligence, wealth, and popular approval — are valued commodities represented by light imagery. And like Catherine in *Washington Square*, Isabel is often associated with light, in *Portrait*. Even Isabel’s last name “Archer” connects her with the virginal moon goddesses, Artemis in Greek mythology, and Diana in the Roman tradition, both of whom are depicted as archers. Like the moon guiding lost sailors across a dark sea, Isabel remains a source of brightness to many wandering men. When Isabel arrives at Gardencourt, “her eye lighted,” before she instantly attracts the gazes of Ralph Touchett and Lord Warburton as they stroll the lawns of Gardencourt (*Portrait* 28). Certainly, her powers of attraction may have to do with her beauty and her “flame-like spirit,” to which many men fly like moths. Additionally, she certainly possesses a bright mind. She is noted for her intelligence, passing for a “young woman of extraordinary profundity,” and is considered to be a “prodigy of learning” (54, 53). Yet



brightness is also a quality that denotes wealth and prosperity in *Portrait*, given that her inheritance also attracts men.

However, while Isabel attracts others with her bright spirit and wit, she is not all-knowing with regards to the realities of the world. In this regard, Isabel resembles Catherine. She is “seated alone with a book” in the house’s office when her aunt arrives to bring promises of an exciting new life in England (*Portrait* 31). The office in which she sits, the narrator remarks,

was the most depressed of [the house’s] scenes. She had never opened the bolted door nor removed the green paper (renewed by other hands) from its side-lights; she had never assured herself that the vulgar street lay beyond. A cruel, cold rain fell heavily. (33)

Within the room, Isabel is separated from the rest of the world, which itself is darkened by “cruel, cold rain” (33). The windows are covered with paper that obscures the external light and no internal light illuminates this “depressed” room. While her eventual departure from this dark room foreshadows Isabel’s escape to the lighted lawns of Gardencourt, the darkness also highlights the room’s symbolic tension. Within the room exists the paradoxical presence of both darkness and intelligence. This juxtaposition reinforces the darkness of her cloistered upbringing and her need to become enlightened in the ways of the world. She sits in an office, a place of education and knowledge, yet still reads in unenlightened darkness. The knowledge that she attains in this room from the books she reads does not bring her true enlightenment. Clearly, she requires time to mature from a naive and sheltered girl who then considered the world outside to be “vulgar.” But her naivete continues to trouble her throughout the novel, leading her to trust Madame Merle and marry Osmond. Specifically, it is her reliance on and belief in fairy tales that cause her to wed such a dubious man. She has been influenced by fiction all her life; for example, upon being introduced to Lord Warburton, she exclaims, “[o]h, I hoped there would be a lord; it’s just like a novel!” (27). As such, she trusts that her life will resolve into a happy ending, even when marrying Osmond. Her ignorance is not lifted by traditional means, whether by books or enlightening encounters, but instead is only be lifted by the light of an epiphany.

Regardless of her intelligence, Isabel is undoubtedly a beacon of brightness, if one remembers that brightness denotes not only illumination but “[h]appiness, success, or prosperity, esp[ecially] as a likely future prospect” (OED). Indeed, it is Isabel’s large inheritance that attracts the shadowy widower Gilbert Osmond, with its promise of the prosperity that he hopes to attract for himself. Not only does Osmond’s middle-class status contrast with the refined brightness that Isabel offers him, he is the opposite of bright, even admitting aloud that he has “neither fortune nor fame” (*Portrait* 264). Others share this opinion as well, for Ralph Touchett finds Osmond quite in contrast to Isabel’s desire to go “soaring and sailing” in life, perceiving Osmond to instead be very “small” (291). Osmond’s “grave and dark” (217) house is as shadowy as he is, being “artificial, not open” (197). Every aspect of his villa and his life is a carefully constructed

artifice. Yet to Osmond, Isabel's wealth and brightness has made him "brighter" (296). He views his success in marrying her to be quite "brilliant a blaze" (295) and so promises her a successful marriage, one that will be a "long summer afternoon ... with a golden haze and the shadows just lengthening," a parody of the summer day at Gardencourt when Isabel arrived to enjoy that "eternity of pleasure" (297, 17). But this promise of a pleasing medley of light and shadow resembling Gardencourt is a false one. It merely reveals that Osmond has the wealth of Gardencourt on his mind. Although he assures Isabel that he is not marrying her for her inheritance, the amber glow of her wealth completely transfixes his parasitic heart. Just as the moon reflects the brightness of the sun, so too does Osmond want Isabel, merely so that she might reflect his own intelligence and acquired affluence. He seeks in his marriage a "fanciful mind which saved one's repetitions and reflected one's thought on a polished, elegant surface" (296). To him, his wife's "intelligence" had a "decorative quality" which appealed to him merely because its brightness would help him dazzle the "world's curiosity," which he constantly sought to excite (296, 331). Just like Dr. Sloper, Osmond desires brightness, that is, the luminescent aesthetic quality that fascinates society.

During his marriage, Osmond seeks to dim Isabel's brightness until it exists merely to magnify his own ambition. Her illumination then reflects the richly ornate and baroque gilding of his tasteless extravagance. While visiting the Osmonds' villa to meet with Pansy, Edmund Rosier is captivated by Isabel's brilliance. He sees her "[f]ramed in the gilded doorway, [and] she struck our young man as the picture of a gracious lady" (*Portrait* 310). Isabel appears in black velvet, "radiantly gentle," while dazzling the party with a "luster beyond any recorded losing or rediscovering" (309). Yet this gleaming moment is but a thin golden veneer concealing Isabel's now dimmed spirit. For if she once existed in the light, she has since been darkened by Osmond's perverse influence. Ralph remarks,

[o]f old she had been curious, now she was indifferent ... what perversity had bitten her? ... the free, keen girl had become quite another person; what he saw was the fine lady who was supposed to represent something. What did Isabel represent? ... she represented Gilbert Osmond. (331)

Isabel now "represent[s]" Gilbert Osmond, who, like his house, reflects everything dark. While she had been "curious," "free, [and] keen," she has now become the opposite, the opposite being Gilbert Osmond. She no longer possesses her own brightness but reflects and "represents" the qualities which Osmond considers to be bright.

Similarly, Catherine mistakes the advances of a fortune seeker, Morris Townshend, for love. Her quiet epiphany occurs as she realizes that he never loved her, nor will he ever return to her. Catherine closes herself up in a room, [a]nd then she sat there, staring before her, while the room grew darker. She said to herself that perhaps he would come back to tell her he had not meant what he said; and she listened for his ring at the door trying to believe that

this was probable. A long time passed, but Morris remained absent; the shadows gathered; the evening settled down on the meagre elegance of the light, clear-coloured room; the fire went out. When it had grown dark, Catherine went to the window and looked out. (*Washington* 310-311)

With the fire's sudden extinguishing so too does her hope die. Rather than being illuminated by a sudden bright light, the sudden darkness of the room prompts her to move to the window. Only after this reflection does Catherine acknowledge the reality that Townshend will not return. Prior to this moment she had trusted him unreservedly. The room, once described as "light," has grown "darker," and accumulates shadows for two reasons. First, the day is waning into evening darkness. Second, the fire, a source of illumination that is as unnatural and artificial as Catherine's trust in Townshend, has gone out. Together, the loss of these two lights causes her poetic descent into gloomy sadness. And outside the door waits Mrs. Penniman, anxious to enlighten her niece with the knowledge she garnered from her last conversation with Townshend. Viewing ignorance and sadness as darkness, she waits for her niece to confide in her, wishing that "[p]erhaps she should be able to explain certain things that now seemed dark" (314). The reader can see tradition's mark upon the scene as Mrs. Penniman believes herself to be an illuminating force. She believes that her knowledge will provide enlightenment and explain the "certain things that now seemed dark." However, Catherine has already achieved her primary epiphany, the emotional understanding that Townshend will not return, and Mrs. Penniman's revelations are merely secondary. The primary epiphany reveals itself in darkness; the unusual manner by which it occurs highlights its unconventional nature and portends the story's unhappy and similarly unconventional ending. The story concludes with Catherine neither marrying Townshend nor achieving the marital bliss expected of a woman of her era.

Just as Catherine reaches an epiphany as she sits in darkness, so too does Isabel experience a revelation during a nocturnal vigil. Isabel sits by the fire in the drawing room and reflects on her husband's words, which bring her to an "unexpected recognition" (*Portrait* 354). In order to achieve this "recognition," she first requires the illumination of physical light. When "a servant came in to attend to the fire ... she bade him bring fresh candles" (354). With the presence of this new light "she saw the answer" (354), as only through light's illumination can she see the world and perceive its deeper realities. She requires this illumination because she has not yet questioned Warburton's continuing relationship with her. On pondering whether Warburton has "a susceptibility, on his part, to approval, a desire to do what would please her," Isabel realizes that she,

had hitherto not asked herself the question, because she had not been forced; but now that it was directly presented to her she saw the answer and the answer frightened her. (354)

The firelight first reveals to her an understanding that, "[y]es, there was something — something on Warburton's part" and that "she had a definite

influence on Lord Warburton” (354). In this solitary moment, his interest in her and her persuasive power over him “frightens her” (354). This fear contrasts with the intoxicating rush of power Isabel enjoyed when Warburton first proposed to her.

But Isabel’s complex epiphany occurs in two parts. Like her first epiphany in the drawing room, Isabel’s second moment of “recognition” is intricately linked with light. In her first realization, Isabel requires illumination and so she asks the servant to “bring fresh candles,” but her acknowledgement of the relationship between her husband and Madame Merle requires the “sudden flicker of light” that shines from a recollected memory (*Portrait* 354, 342). This metaphorical flicker occurred when Isabel had witnessed Madame Merle and Osmond in an intimate discussion, or rather in a moment of pause, in which they had the “freedom of old friends who sometimes exchange ideas without uttering them” (343). In that moment, Isabel “received an impression,” as “the thing made an image, lasting only a moment, like a sudden flicker of light” (342, 343). She dismisses the image from her mind for several hours but recalls it at the end of her vigil:

[w]hen the clock struck four she got up; she was going to bed at last, for the lamp had long since gone out and the candles burned down to their sockets. But even then she stopped again in the middle of the room and stood there gazing at a remembered vision — that of her husband and Madame Merle unconsciously and familiarly associated. (364)

In a dark room in which the “lamp had long since gone out” and “the candles burned down to their sockets,” Isabel is paradoxically able to gaze at a vision (364). While the notion of seeing in darkness seems impossible and contradictory, the language describing this second epiphany suggests photography and the process of developing negatives. The epiphany arrives as if she had been startled into understanding, through the camera’s flash of a “sudden flicker of light” (343). The momentary “image” that she glimpsed when seeing her husband functions as a photographic negative; only by developing the shadowy negative in a dark room can she resolve both the image and her questions. This necessary dark room is figured in the darkened drawing room. Indeed, this image is completed when she leaves the room; the image of her husband and Merle materializes after hours of sitting in solitary darkness. After seeing this image, Isabel concludes that the two had shared an intimate past and returns to the darkness to sleep. James’ method of describing this moment of realization subverts the familiar trope of combined mental and physical illumination, achieving an effect akin to Catherine’s moment of recognition. And like Catherine’s epiphany, the manner in which the epiphany occurs is as unconventional as the epiphany itself.

As if to emphasize the role of darkness in triggering epiphanies, James concludes *The Portrait of a Lady* with an image of Isabel in darkness, a darkness in which she obtains additional epiphanies that follow moments of literal illumination. Before her final interaction with Caspar Goodwood, Isabel strolls

across the lawns of Gardencourt and walks away from the light, “under the great oaks whose shadows were long” (*Portrait* 485). James bookends the text with Gardencourt’s expansive grounds, but now its lighted lawns have faded into darkness, as if rejecting its promise of that “eternity of pleasure” (17) at the story’s beginning. This inversion symbolizes the reversal of fortunes that Isabel undergoes; Gardencourt’s grandeur once promised her happiness, but the inheritance she has obtained from the estate directly caused her miserable marriage. And just as the lawns have darkened, so too has her spirit been dimmed by the prolonged influence her husband. But as Goodwood approaches her, frightening her with his desire “to see [her] alone,” Isabel perceives “a feeling of danger” (486). “Twilight seemed to darken around them,” as Isabel notices an environmental change accompanying this ominous tonal shift (486). She acknowledges the subjectivity of her observation, qualifying her perception as something which “seemed” to occur. The reader knows that Isabel, who is well-read, would be prone to color her perception of the world with a pathetic fallacy like this. As Goodwood evokes a feeling of fear in her, he speaks with a voice of darkness as much as a “voice in the darkness” (486).

Yet, as if balancing the darkness that shades this conversation, a moment of startling light overwhelms Isabel. The reader can imagine a sizzling flame when Goodwood “flared almost into anger” as he expresses his desire to save her from her marriage (*Portrait* 487). Each word sparks like a luminary in the night, drawing Isabel’s gaze and attention to his conversation. In one moment, Isabel questions him and the shocking qualities of his ideas:

“[t]o think of ‘you?’” Isabel said, standing before him in the dusk. The idea of which she had caught a glimpse a few moments before now loomed large. She threw back her head a little; she stared at it as if it had been a comet in the sky. (488)

She still stands in the darkness of “dusk” yet notices that Goodwood offers ideas that burst like miniature epiphanies within her head. Isabel considers his words not as stars or the moon, both of which are known for navigational constancy, but rather as a comet, far more ephemeral yet also more brilliantly dazzling. The repeated motive of darkness — both of Isabel’s mind and the atmosphere — being punctuated by bright lights of conversations, phrases, and epiphanies mirrors the realization Isabel has during her vigil.

These moments of light figure the mental and physical effects that accompany Goodwood’s speech and Isabel’s internal epiphanies. As he implores her to run away with him, she remarks that the reason why she will return to Gilbert Osmond is:

“[t]o get away from *you!*” ... But this expressed only a little of what she felt. The rest was that she had never been loved before. This was the hot wind of the desert. (*Portrait* 488)

While Isabel begins this moment by answering Goodwood and stressing her dislike of him, she concludes it with a realization. She realizes that, despite all her fairy-tale dreams, she “had never been loved before” (488). In retrospect, neither

her husband nor any suitor who had pursued her had actually loved her. In her unbalancing moment of epiphany, she not only visualizes light, but feels it — the “hot wind of the desert” heated by the bright daytime sun (488). Her epiphany transcends the space of her mind, and its emotional impact physically affects her. The physical effect accompanying the epiphany highlights the physical reality of Goodwood’s presence and his physical desire for her. The epiphany which feels like “hot wind” becomes, for a moment, the winds of change, temporarily seducing her with whispers of the passion that could blaze between them. For a moment, she believes that Goodwood could offer her salvation. So overcome by this dawning realization,

she believed just then that to let him take her in his arms would be the next best thing to her dying. This belief, for a moment, was a kind of rapture. (489)

Here, she interprets the light of his words as a momentary “rapture,” if not a salvific force and a moral good (489). For a moment, Isabel considers Goodwood’s promise of love to be powerful enough to overcome the darkness of her own life, even the darkness of Osmond’s invasive influence. He offers her the promise of a dawning future, but James reveals this momentary epiphany to be a willful oversimplification on Isabel’s part.

When Goodwood makes his physical approach, James reveals the dangerous power of light; again he reiterates the power of darkness to bring about epiphanies. The conversation between Goodwood and Isabel ends and:

[h]e glared at her a moment through the dusk, and the next instant she felt his arms about her and his lips on her own lips. His kiss was like white lightning, a flash that spread, and spread again, and stayed; and it was extraordinarily as if, while she took it, she felt each thing in his hard manhood that least pleased her ... by this act of possession. (*Portrait* 489)

In this strange twilight that lacks natural sources of light, a “flash” of “white lightning,” like the wrath of an ancient god, terrifies Isabel. Like the comet to which she had previously compared him, lightning is an irregular and evanescent light source that appears as both a marvel and a danger. And the kiss’s resemblance to “lightning” recalls the French phrase, *coup de foudre*, the metaphorical lightning bolt of love at first sight. However, the effect of this lightning kiss inspires fear rather than love. She is entrapped by this light, transfixed proverbially like a deer immobilized by the blinding glare of headlights. She rejects her suitor, as definitively as James rejects romantic convention in the story’s conclusion and Isabel chooses to remain in an abusive marriage. Interestingly, she clarifies that “when darkness returned she was free” (489). This is perhaps because Isabel is not in true darkness; she establishes repeatedly that she is in “dusk,” not night. Dusk, full of shadows, occupies the darkly indeterminate middle ground between day and night. One cannot yet see the stars, but the sun has already set. Likewise, Isabel is uncertain and confused, stuck between the darkness of her life with Osmond and the aberrant light that shines from Goodwood’s promises. In a moment in which she considers herself shipwrecked, “wrecked and under water,” she looks for a guiding light to lead

her out of this twilight (489). She notices that the familiar windows of Gardencourt gleam like beacons, like a lighthouse directing lost ships to safe harbor. “She then runs toward the house,” guided by “lights in the windows of the house; they shone far across the lawn” (489). Just like a ship seeking port, “she moved through the darkness” in order to reach the safety of Gardencourt (498). Ultimately, lights provide safety from the darkness and guide her, saving her from the irregular distraction with which the flashes of lightning and comets dazzle her. But before she can reach this saving light, the return of darkness makes her “free.” In this moment of darkness between Goodwood’s lightning and Gardencourt’s windows, she realizes that she will not find a future with Goodwood.

James’ unusual artistic choice to render epiphanies through darkness exemplifies his tendency to subvert literary tropes and expectations in his novels. In these various epiphanies, he reveals that the contrast of darkness and light, both metaphorical and literal, grants his heroines insights into their lives. As if acknowledging that the luminescent gleam of brightness has an aesthetic and insincere connotation, James relies on darkness to induce realizations. In both Catherine’s vigil and Isabel’s nighttime epiphanies, darkness reveals the truth about the men that they had considered brilliant, but who desired to use them merely to magnify their “brightness” and impress the “popular voice.” Just as staring into the sun for too long can be blinding, the presence of abusive yet bright men has prevented these two heroines from seeing the truth. However, the darkness of quiet rooms provides the remedy for blinded eyes. Only in the absence of obscuring light, can the truly deceptive nature of “brightness” be seen, and epiphanies be achieved. Within these scenes, James establishes a modern world in which photography becomes the primary vehicle of capturing portraits of two unique ladies and their unconventionally unromantic stories.

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## The Many Paths of Thoreau's Writing: A Response to Buranelli's Critique

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When reading any piece of writing by Henry David Thoreau, it is easy to become lost in the exaggerations, the juxtaposition of opposites, the lengthy imagery, and the bold statements. Because of this aspect of Thoreau's style, many critics have trouble pinning him down under one particular idea. Some believe him to be contradictory and hypocritical, and others, such as Vincent Buranelli, consider him anarchistic, idealistic, radical, and ignorant to the lives of others around him. Buranelli illustrates certain aspects of Thoreau, such as his exaggeration, as negative, while misinterpreting other qualities, such as his call for others to be more independent. I believe that all of these critics who speak negatively of Thoreau are missing the entire point of his life; his primary work is writing, which he considers to be "the work of art nearest to life itself."<sup>1</sup> If we consider this idea in relation to an earlier quote from *Walden*, where Thoreau writes "I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life ... to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms ..." then it becomes clear that Thoreau is living through his writing. He did not necessarily set out to cause a major reform, he set out to record all of his thoughts on the page and let it loose to the world. In that way, he intended for readers to experience his writing as he experienced nature. He wanted it to be multilayered and complicated, yet beautiful. In this essay, I plan to defend Thoreau against Buranelli's argument by examining the background of Thoreau's life for context, by using the thoughts of other scholars on Thoreau's work, and by examining Thoreau's work to reveal his intention behind his writing. In this manner, I will strive to express that Thoreau meant for his writing to wander through a myriad of ideas instead of taking one direct route and thus to portray truth as Thoreau experienced it in nature.

The first point that Buranelli makes is that Thoreau seems unique only in the context of his time period. Buranelli believes that if "our social and political bonds were becoming looser instead of tighter ... there surely [would] be a decisive swing of the pendulum against Thoreau." Buranelli notices this freedom and looseness in the form of Thoreau's exaggeration, which causes his ideas to become radical and should be "considered highly suspect."<sup>2</sup> However, this argument is faulty because it is imperative to consider the time period within

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<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey S. Cramer, *The Portable Thoreau*, (New York, Penguin Books, 2012), 281.

<sup>2</sup> Vincent Buranelli, "The Case Against Thoreau," *Ethics* 64, no. 4, (1957): 259.



which Thoreau was living while reading his work. Thoreau considered himself a Transcendentalist, and as Robert Sullivan writes in his book *The Thoreau You Don't Know*, “the Transcendentalists in general were thinking critically about society.”<sup>3</sup> Around the time Thoreau was living at Walden Pond, Concord (and the entire country) was coming out of a “severe financial depression.” This caused unemployment to run rampant in towns such as Concord, which Thoreau certainly would have noticed, and “the work that people could get was not necessarily worth it.”<sup>4</sup> This background is what incited many of the thoughts within *Walden*, and it is impossible to critique them as if they had appeared under any other circumstance. Thoreau intended *Walden* to “charge and change the reader, rather than incite a withdrawal from society.”<sup>5</sup> In addition, Thoreau does not call for total freedom and subservience to the natural will — merely an exploration of it. In response to sloth and sin he explicitly states that “[n]ature is hard to be overcome, but she must be overcome.”<sup>6</sup> He calls for men to work hard at something that is good, instead of merely working hard without purpose.

A distinct part of Thoreau which Buranelli targets is his retreat to Walden Pond. Buranelli argues that, while the journey is admirable, it becomes problematic “when he goes on to set this up as an ideal for everybody.” Besides the fact that Thoreau needs an organized society in order for his experiment to be successful, Buranelli states that if everyone followed Thoreau’s example then the entire prospect of Walden would have been impossible.<sup>7</sup> Contrary to what Buranelli explains, Thoreau did not go to Walden in order to persuade all others to follow in his footsteps. Looking into his biography and his statements within *Walden*, we can see that by going to Walden he was conducting a satirical experiment to comment on society, and that he did not intend for others to follow exactly in his footsteps. Robert Sullivan addresses Thoreau’s plan, calling his journey to Walden a “literary stunt ... an essentially artificial experiment undertaken with an interest in making money on publication or putting forth a not-so-artificial argument.” Through living this way, “he was rejecting the changes that nineteenth-century America presented to him.”<sup>8</sup> But Thoreau did not intend for everyone to leave society to live off in the woods somewhere. First of all, he writes that his text is “particularly addressed to poor students,” and as for his other readers, he hopes that they do not “stretch the seams in putting on the coat.”<sup>9</sup> This statement shows that his ideas are meant to be explored by poor students — those who wish to learn about life and are having trouble finding a meaningful place to do this. Perhaps he intends this type of

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Sullivan, *The Thoreau You Don't Know*, (New York, HarperCollins, 2009), 41.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 125-127.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>6</sup> Cramer, *The Portable Thoreau*, 378.

<sup>7</sup> Buranelli, *The Case Against Thoreau*, 260.

<sup>8</sup> Sullivan, *The Thoreau You Don't Know*, 144-145.

<sup>9</sup> Cramer, *The Portable Thoreau*, 200.

audience to experiment with life as he did, but in their own way. As for any other reader, he worries that they will stretch his ideas too far. The idea of a coat shows that his idea and manner of living may not be fit for everyone. The reason why he aims his writing towards students connects to his reasoning for going to the woods: “to learn what [life has] to teach.”<sup>10</sup> Regarding his seemingly influential nature in recruiting people to his ideas, Thoreau writes: “(l)et every one mind his own business, and endeavor to be what he was made... let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away.”<sup>11</sup> Thoreau understands that not everyone is able or willing to follow his example. He portrays his own journey in examining life and provides short phrases that could be applied to any life: “live deliberately,” and “simplify.”

For Buranelli, the idea that Thoreau wanted everyone to follow him in retreating to a space like Walden is a main contradiction in Thoreau’s writing and preaching. Following the idea of contradiction, Buranelli comments on this quote, “the mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation,” by saying how Thoreau “[paints] all things either black or white ... he never tries for a nice discrimination among partial truths or for an intertwining of apparently incompatible ideas.”<sup>12</sup> Buranelli uses the quote “the mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation” to express that Thoreau believes that either you are desperately following the rules of society, or you are like him and living freely. As always with Thoreau, however, there are many layers to what he writes. “Desperation” has the sense of losing all hope for the future, as well as a great desire for something (he does not define what), but he also equates desperation with resignation. When read in this manner, Thoreau’s message simply becomes that many men live in a way that leads them always reaching for something yet not feeling fulfilled, as well as giving up any hope of change, since “they honestly think there is no choice left.”<sup>13</sup> Thoreau’s plan in the statement is to awaken the readers to the possibilities surrounding them. He wants to inspire them to believe they have the power to change how they live — even if that change is simply a shift in mindset so that they may become more aware of life to find more enjoyment in it.

As for the contradictory nature — Thoreau illustrates many times his beliefs on writing and how that may lead to contradicting ideas. In his journal, he writes [s]entences which suggest far more than they say, which have an atmosphere about them, which do not merely report an old, but make a new, impression; sentences which suggest as many things and are as durable as a Roman aqueduct; to frame these, that is the *art* of writing.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 271.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 462.

<sup>12</sup> Buranelli, *The Case Against Thoreau*, 262.

<sup>13</sup> Cramer, *The Portable Thoreau*, 203.

<sup>14</sup> Henry David Thoreau, *The Journal 1837-1861*, (New York, New York Review, 2009), 70.

Within this sentence, Thoreau places two opposites next to each other, the old and the new, to illustrate his commitment to examining multiple sides of an idea in his writing, rather than sticking to one direct idea. The image of the Roman aqueduct emphasizes this idea as well. Besides stating that the sentence and the aqueduct should be durable enough to contain the ideas and the water respectively, Thoreau implies that both good sentences and good aqueducts suggest many things. Considering how an aqueduct carries an ever-flowing stream of water, I believe that Thoreau means to say that a well written sentence is able to provide as many different thoughts as a changing current. Thoreau does not want to set forward one idea for his readers to follow, because he does not experience only singular ideas in his thoughts. He expresses this further later in his journal: “[i]t is wise to write on many subjects, to try many themes . . . there are innumerable avenues to a perception of the truth.”<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, he writes: “the more you have thought and written on a given theme, the more you can still write. Thought breeds thought. It grows under your hand.”<sup>16</sup> This juxtaposition demonstrates how vast the truth of life seems to be to Thoreau. The use of the word “avenues” relates to Thoreau’s prospect of walking to observe life and nature and causes the reader to imagine the pathless wood he travels in which truly has an infinite number of routes. The second quote demonstrates that any one of those paths can lead to such a large amount of truth and thought. If Thoreau believes there is one truth to know, then it must be right to him that that one truth is extremely vast, that it is impossible to understand without considering multiple angles. Therefore, in order to portray this to the reader he must write from all possible angles and point of views.

What solidifies this idea of contradiction for Buranelli is how he perceives Thoreau as living and speaking “from high principle and without compromise,” with “remarkably few second thoughts or hesitations,” and “no admission that he was ever wrong.”<sup>17</sup> Yet it is the very exaggerated and bold writing that allows for the consideration of the opposite. As Henry Golemba explains in his book, *Thoreau’s Wild Rhetoric*, doubt arises due to this exaggeration. By speaking from such a style described by Buranelli, Thoreau intentionally invites his reader to debate against him. “The rhetoric of doubt necessitated by exaggeration involved revolutionary implications,” Golemba writes, and “casting doubt upon an issue involved not only epistemological questions but also hierarchical and social reconsiderations.”<sup>18</sup> This idea disproves the idea that Thoreau never admitted he was wrong. His high exaggerated style was meant to be provoking in a semi-humorous way while simultaneously bringing on the debate which could allow for Thoreau to be wrong.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 602.

<sup>17</sup> Buranelli, *The Case Against Thoreau*, 262.

<sup>18</sup> Golemba, *Thoreau’s Wild Rhetoric*, (New York, New York University Press, 1990), 78.

Buranelli's final point against Thoreau is painting him as an anarchist, since if everyone followed their own individual will, society would fall into chaos. Not all men have a strict sense of morals which could lead to their delusion of what is right, and "delusion is a loving parent of atrocious crimes and vices."<sup>19</sup> By willing all to follow in his example, Thoreau wants an "end to organized, civilized life," which, according to Buranelli, Thoreau knows would be nearly impossible for those with families and jobs. However, this argument is negated at the start of *Civil Disobedience*, where Thoreau asserts "I ask for, not at once no government, but *at once* a better government."<sup>20</sup> The only reason Thoreau includes the idea of no government at all is due to his belief about the importance of exaggeration. In his book, Golemba speaks about Thoreau's rhetoric of exaggeration, saying how "the important point about the rhetoric of exaggeration is its powerful effect on readers ..."<sup>21</sup> Exaggerating a point makes the reader consider it more. It allows for some doubt to come into the mind of the reader regarding the hyperbolic extent, which forces them to think about the idea. At the same time, Thoreau is convinced "[he] cannot exaggerate enough even to lay the foundation of a true expression."<sup>22</sup> For Thoreau, facts do not state as much as the experience of a man. In order to express the entire truth of a matter, Thoreau needs to exaggerate to show the reader how it appears in his mind, and to more forcibly move the reader's mind. His exaggerated claims about government and the self are not meant to completely overthrow the government, but rather to awaken the reader to the issues and to inspire action, however small. In *Civil Disobedience*, Thoreau treats the government as a singular entity, yet he addresses individual men. It seems that through this method, Thoreau puts forward the connection between government and individual, saying that only if every man who desires justice were to take action towards justice, then the government would shift: "[m]en generally think that they ought to wait until they have persuaded the majority to alter them."<sup>23</sup> It appears that Thoreau connects "the majority" to the government, where it seems the individual self is the minority trying to persuade. This entire argument shows that Thoreau is not calling for "anarchy," as Buranelli suggests, but rather he is simultaneously calling for individuals who will step forwards with their desire for justice, and a government that will be more responsive to such action without impeding the individual.

Jonathan McKenzie responds to Buranelli's argument by explaining what he refers to as Thoreau's idea of political indifference. Thoreau uses the phrase "minding one's own business," which McKenzie believes to refer to both managing one's economic situation while simultaneously "[promoting] the well-

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<sup>19</sup> Buranelli, *The Case Against Thoreau*, 264.

<sup>20</sup> Cramer, *The Portable Thoreau*, 76.

<sup>21</sup> Golemba, *Thoreau's Wild Rhetoric*, 78.

<sup>22</sup> Cramer, *The Portable Thoreau*, 461.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

being of the individual, well-being as the individual himself defines it.”<sup>24</sup> The argument which Thoreau presents, through McKenzie’s reading, is highly focused on the individual, but it does not reject involvement in government and society. His idea of civil disobedience is “first and foremost, a privatist statement of disdain for the ways in which ‘everyday politics’ draws the individual’s imagination outward from its properly inward focus.”<sup>25</sup> For Thoreau, the individual should hold priority over the needs of society, but that does not mean that the needs of society should be disregarded. When it comes to slavery, for example, Thoreau feels personally required to act against the evil he sees. Only once such an external event “[encroaches] upon him personally, [he must] take an interest in it, it must violate the liberal individualism he hopes to take for granted.”<sup>26</sup> The existence of the government allows him to mind his own business and to speak up when he feels the need to.

As a final response to the critique of Thoreau, I would like to speak about his intentions when it comes to writing. As many authors realized: “Thoreau wanted to write — he knew it by the time he had graduated,”<sup>27</sup> “what he was doing more than anything else was writing,”<sup>28</sup> “to Thoreau, the most important of all the subjects he taught was writing.”<sup>29</sup> From how much time Thoreau spent trying to make a living as a freelance writer in New York, to how much writing he did when he returned to Concord, we can tell that writing was near to life itself for Thoreau. This is clear in his statement of why he went to Walden:

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately ... [to] learn what [life] had to teach ... [to] reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world ...

His main purpose, “living deliberately” means that he wants to have a constant consideration of his life, to live without haste and leisurely. However, within the word “deliberately” hide the words “liberate,” and *liber* (which is Latin for book). Here we see the example of Thoreau’s manifold meanings in his writing. He wants to live presently, freely, and he wants to write. In this passage we also find a reference to his idea of simplicity, where he says we wants to “reduce [life] to its lowest terms.” This is an active plan, considering “reduce” comes from *reduco* — to lead back. By including the word “terms,” we see another reference to writing, since Thoreau plans to put words to what he discovers. He continues this reference by saying how he wants to “publish its meanness to the world.”

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<sup>24</sup> Jonathan McKenzie, “How to Mind Your Own Business: Thoreau on Political Indifference,” *The New England Quarterly* 84, no. 3, (2011): 425.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 427.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 431.

<sup>27</sup> Sullivan, *The Thoreau You Don’t Know*, 43.

<sup>28</sup> Golemba, *Thoreau’s Wild Rhetoric*, 105.

<sup>29</sup> Mildred P. Hughes, “Thoreau as Writer and Teacher of Writing,” *The English Journal* 67, no. 5, (1978): 33.

This language shows that his primary goal is to put into words what he experiences in a way that allows his readers to experience life in the way he did. Seeing as how Thoreau required walking in nature to write, it only seems natural that his writing would imitate his experience. When we think of his writing to be as complex as nature, “*Walden* is as much a language experiment in a ‘natural style’ as it is a record of ‘Life in the Woods.’ A natural style, like nature itself, speaks in many dictions, in a variety of styles ... Looking into the text of *Walden* fluidly reflects the vision Thoreau experienced when looking into nature.”<sup>30</sup> With this interpretation in mind, there is no reason to believe that Thoreau would want one straight path through his writing. He would want the reader to get sidetracked by many different thoughts, to at one point become engrossed in the simple beauty of the prose, to experience sadness and happiness, and to work his way slowly and meticulously through all of *Walden*.

It is easy for a reader to misinterpret the writings of Thoreau or to try to put him into a specific category, which is a common method when dealing with other authors. Buranelli categorizes Thoreau as anarchistic, contradictory, overly serious, and not in tune with the needs of the common man — and in this belief he fails to approach Thoreau with a mind open enough to understand the complex ideas Thoreau advocates. When it comes to Thoreau, if one were to categorize him and his writings, it would most obviously have to be “wild” and “nature-like.” From the research I have done for this essay, it has become apparent that the three most important aspects of Thoreau’s life to him were his individualism, nature, and his writing — so there is no reason for him to keep these three separated. It is his personal goal to pursue nature and writing, so by living this way he performs as an individual. Then, he only needs to combine nature and writing to be perfectly satisfied in life. As I was reading the end of his journal, I noticed how, even though he knew his health was declining, he was still observing nature and working on his writing, which showed me just how certain Thoreau was that he had found his vocation. Critics like Buranelli do not quite understand that Thoreau primarily wanted to enjoy life through writing, so in his decisions he was having fun — he should not be read as overly serious and imperative. Thoreau sought to address as much of the truth of life as possible and present it to his readers in a beautiful fashion, as if they themselves were wondering the woods of Walden while reading *Walden*.

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<sup>30</sup> Golemba, *Thoreau’s Wild Rhetoric*, 223–226.

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## Narrator's Attitudes Toward Slavery in *Oroonoko* and *Robinson Crusoe*

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*Oroonoko* by Aphra Behn and *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe feature depictions of “primitive” cultures and slavery in South America during English imperialism. *Oroonoko* is narrated by a voice resembling Aphra Behn’s as she details the enslavement of the titular African prince. *Robinson Crusoe* is written as an autobiography of the titular character as he is marooned on an island for twenty-eight years. Each narrator functions as a sentimental or practical voice, sustained by the details of their narratives. These voices develop relationships with primitive individuals and insert perceptual filters into the environments of their enslavement. Behn’s narrator and Crusoe’s personal relationships with the primitive are filtered through their respective romantic and practical lenses, showing how perspective influences evaluations of slavery.

Behn’s use of biographical form implies an alteration between Oroonoko’s story and the narrated version. Instead of framing Oroonoko’s story as a personal narrative, Behn uses biographical form, with a narrator that witnesses some events and receives the remainder from the subject. The introduction of an involved narrator creates an intrinsic filter through which Oroonoko’s story must pass. As a European woman relaying an African man’s story, Behn’s narrator effects even greater filtration, as their perspectives are separated by culture and gender. Though she tries to combat this by stating that her account relates the truth “without the addition of invention,” she also admits to omitting details she deems irrelevant to the narrative (Behn 9). She skims over more masculine aspects of Oroonoko’s story, like his triumphs in war. Though she relates how the Prince became general of his army, she vaguely relays his successive victories, only mentioning briefly “the wars (which were now ended)” (16). The use of parentheses presents the wars as a minor detail, an omitted “little accident” of Oroonoko’s life (9).

Behn’s focus on romantic details establishes her narrator as sentimental. Behn’s narrator marvels at the tender exchanges between the South American natives, and intricately describes their “dying for love” and “blushing modesty” (Behn 11). This thorough narrative has little to do with Oroonoko himself but is awarded exceedingly more description than the brief mention of his battles, signaling the speaker’s sentimental interpretation. She sustains her romantic perspective through her description of Oroonoko and Imoinda’s lovemaking scene. The narrator had refrained from declaring her personal voice in accounting the Prince’s life in Africa, as she was not a witness to those events.



However, she inserts her voice into the intimate event: “I believe she was not long resisting those arms where she so longed to be” (29). By interjecting her beliefs, the speaker displays a sensitivity to the narrative, almost as if she could not refrain from commenting on the romantic scene. The presence of opinion subtly undermines her promise to relay the truth without embellishment, but she makes an exception for sentiment’s sake.

Crusoe’s practical narrative is affirmed through autobiographical form and the recurring presence of quantification in his narrative. Unlike Oroonoko, Crusoe narrates his own story, eliminating the possibility of external alteration. His narrative accurately depicts his story as he sees it, but the events of Crusoe’s life are interpreted by his practical mentality before being exhibited to the reader. General impressions of Crusoe characterize him as a sensible man: instead of wallowing in his misfortunes indefinitely, he fixates on survival and salvages every resource possible, down to fragments of wood from his shipwreck. He epitomizes the “self-made man,” not only surviving on the island but devising how to construct every tool he could need. His practicality is manifested in his diligent recordkeeping of his time of the island. Crusoe carefully preserves his sense of time by notching a “Kalender” into a tree (Defoe 48). He presents a precise timeline for his life’s events, painstakingly recording his daily actions in his journal. He even records months’ worth of scavenging and building that he had already explained, suggesting that he highly values explicit documentation. Numbers are present throughout the narrative as Crusoe consistently quantifies time, resources, and events on the island. His meticulous counting is most jarring in his account of those killed in a battle on the island, noting the number of people killed by each man in each location: “2 Kill’d by Friday in the Boat” (171). Crusoe’s impulse to quantify is enacted by the recurring presence of money in his narrative: he salvages “eleven hundred” pieces of eight and “six Doubloons of [g]old” from the Spanish shipwreck, even though he has no need for money on the island (139). Though it may be argued that Crusoe’s devotion to Christianity undermines his practical perspectives, he principally uses religion in a logical manner. After acknowledging the practical benefit of having a slave, Crusoe justifies his decision to rescue Friday as a “call ... by Providence,” twisting his religious commitment to align with his rational desires (146).

Behn’s narrator’s romantic evaluation of Oroonoko reveals how her Western standards allow her to distinguish him from other natives. The speaker’s account of Oroonoko’s noble qualities fixates on his pleasing appearance:

[h]is face was not of the brown, rusty black which most of his nation are, but a perfect ebony or polished jet ... His nose was rising and Roman instead of African and flat. His mouth, the finest shaped that could be seen, far from those great turned lips which are so natural to the rest of the Negroes (Behn 15).

The speaker depicts the Prince from a womanly perspective, romantically illustrating his “perfect” features. Her tender description is tailored to Oroonoko’s departures from typical African traits and she praises him for his

fulfillment of European standards. The narrator strikes at African characteristics in her severe comparison of Oroonoko's "polished" jet skin to the "rusty" brown-black of his native people. The narrator also appraises Oroonoko by his wit, citing his skill for "diverting" discourse (14). She enhances her evaluation by claiming the "most illustrious courts could not have produced a braver man, both for greatness and courage of mind, a judgment more solid [and] a wit more quick" (14). Her extensive praise culminates in the assertion that he is fit to rule wisely over the prestigious institutions unable to breed his equal. Her overabundant praise of the Prince's merit suggests that Behn's narrator acknowledges a significance in her claims — that she is surprised to have found a black man that overcame the "barbarity of his nature" and needs to completely convince her readers (15). Her evaluation is not solely based on merit but is grounded in contrasting Oroonoko with his "nature," suggesting that she only values him for likeness to Europeans. Though the narrator insists that he transcends them, native and Western models qualify Oroonoko's greatness — models that she adamantly establishes and vehemently raises the Prince above.

Unlike Behn's narrator's sentimental evaluation, Crusoe assesses natives based on their usefulness and willingness to convert to his preferences. Crusoe's initial appraisal of Friday originates from his ability to protect Crusoe from the threat of cannibals. He values Friday's "dexterous" ability with a bow and arrow and the insight he offers about the neighboring "savages" (Defoe 152). Friday become more valuable to Crusoe as his survival capabilities become evident. Crusoe praises Friday's quick study of building and farming, relishing his "ability to do all the work for [Crusoe], as well as [he] could do it [him]self" (154). This sense of Friday's practical worth is bolstered by his willingness to adapt to Crusoe's lifestyle. Crusoe endeavors to teach Friday the skills "to make him useful, handy, and helpful" (152). He expresses his "delight" at Friday's diligent efforts to learn English, calling him the "aptest Scholar that ever was" (152). Crusoe seems to value the minimal effort he exerts to teach Friday and the rewards he receives from Friday's work — cherishing the ease with which he can assimilate. Even his evaluation of Friday's physical appearance shows appreciation for integration:

the Colour of his Skin was not quite black, but very tawny; and yet not of an ugly yellow nauseous tawny, ... but of a bright kind of dun olive Colour, that had in it something very agreeable" (149).

By describing Friday's countenance as "agreeable" as opposed to "nauseous," Crusoe suggests that Friday's value stems from the absence of offense. Unlike Behn's sentimental narrator, Crusoe does not assess Friday as a person of merit but as a tool that yields the most benefits and the least affronts.

Behn's narrator's transformative relationship with Oroonoko exhibits her capacity to sympathize with a slave. As Oroonoko grew impatient waiting to be freed from slavery, the narrator felt "obliged" to satisfy him, by fear that he would incite a mutiny among other slaves (Behn 48). Though she feels compelled

to do so, she enjoys diverting him by imparting her knowledge: “I entertained him with the lives of Romans, and great men, which charmed him to my company, and ... endeavor[ed] to bring [him] to the knowledge of the true God” (49). The extent to which she “endeavors” to teach “all things [she is] capable of” suggests the speaker earnestly tutors Oroonoko, instead of distracting him with frivolities (49). This teacher-student relationship evolves into one of mutual discourse, as Oroonoko rejects the teachings of Christianity. He refuses to believe the concept of the Trinity, deeming it a “jest” (49). Instead of typifying an oppressive lecturer, the narrator does not reprove Oroonoko’s dismissal of Christianity and welcomes his unrestrained discourse. She seems to promote the exchange of ideas as, to recount the Prince’s life, he must have communicated his story. Through free discussion, the sentimental speaker forms a companionship with Oroonoko, and she eventually regards him with love. Their dynamic relationship culminates in the narrator’s sympathetic view of Oroonoko’s enslavement, falling into an “extraordinary melancholy” at his sadness and death (75).

In stark contrast, Crusoe’s immediate implementation of a master-servant relationship with Friday shows his view that the native is ignorant and must be mastered. Crusoe’s first glimpse of the naked, scared native yields expressions of an “irresistible” desire for a servant, disguised as a Providential call to “save [the] poor Creature’s life” (Defoe 146). Even less personal than his appraisal of Friday’s usefulness, this judgment is based off appearance alone, suggesting Crusoe’s intrinsic idea that native “creatures” are inferior to himself. Crusoe enacts Friday’s slavery immediately after his rescue by designating himself as “Master” and the native as “Friday” (149). Not only does Crusoe bypass Friday’s given name to assign him an English one, but he neglects to give him a real name, signifying his belief that Friday is unworthy of a proper title. Though Crusoe, like Behn’s narrator, establishes a teacher-student relationship between himself and Friday, his teachings center upon practicality and conversion. He teaches Friday what makes him useful but also dispels the “fraud” of Friday’s religious beliefs, calling him a “most blinded ignorant Pagan” (157). This admonishment of Friday’s ignorance contrasts the sentimental speaker’s discourse-based teachings. He further departs from Behn’s narrator in his censorship of discussion: when Friday challenges the notion of the Devil, Crusoe dismisses him by concocting a sudden reason to end his lesson. Unlike Behn’s narrator, Crusoe’s relationship with Friday is static, maintaining the practical value of Friday’s enslavement and the native’s ignorance compared to Crusoe’s righteousness.

Both Crusoe and Behn’s narrator accept the general practice of slavery with a practical perspective, despite the latter’s expressed sentimental values. Crusoe maintains his characteristic practicality in relation to slavery. He considers it a tool to simplify life, shown in his education of Friday on how to “make him useful,” to survive more efficiently (Defoe 152). He even considers his own

enslavement before landing on the island a matter of practicality. He does not condemn his enslavement as immoral but regards the situation as one to rationally escape. Crusoe seems unsentimental to himself in his circumstance, indicating his acceptance of slavery as a practical tool, utilized or escaped by those capable. Similarly, Behn's narrator does not condemn slavery but acknowledges its practical benefits. Concealed by her characteristic romanticism, the narrator attributes peace between the South American natives and English to necessity: "So that they being, on all occasions very useful to us, we find it absolutely necessary to caress them as friends, and not to treat them as slaves; nor dare we do other, their number so far surpassing ours in that continent" (Behn 12). Behn's narrator admires the natives, yet only refrains from enslaving them out of "absolut[e] necess[ity]." When she later details the process of the slave trade, she does so apathetically — nothing romantic in her evaluation of "twenty pound a head" (Behn 12). The narrator ultimately shows her acceptance in her refusal to condemn the dishonest captain's capture of Oroonoko. She moves to "spare her sense of it," as to let the readers decide whether the captain was honorable, but her silence translates to a quiet permission of slavery (Behn 33). Her sentimental perspective has no jurisdiction over a "practical" matter.

While they both accept the general practice of slavery, Crusoe maintains a rigid social hierarchy and Behn's narrator believes the system can be overcome. Crusoe views slavery as a practical tool but harbors innate ideas of a social hierarchy. This is exemplified by Crusoe's intervention with the cannibalistic ritual of the natives. Despite his resolve to observe without interference, when Crusoe realizes that a white Spaniard will be slaughtered, he hastens to rescue the "poor Christian" (Defoe 169). Crusoe only interferes to prevent the butchering of a European, unveiling his innate social hierarchy, as he deems a white man worthy of life, but not a South American. Behn's narrator affirms this hierarchy by accepting the enslavement of "typical" Africans while she considers Oroonoko above the confines of servitude. Her romantic evaluation of him and their dynamic companionship lead to her sympathetic view of Oroonoko's enslavement and she asserts his "worth[iness] of a better fate" (Behn 76). This belief stems from the development of a sentimental companionship, but also a fixation on Western standards. The speaker distinguishes Oroonoko from slavery by separating him from other Africans, in feature and demeanor. By glorifying Oroonoko in conjunction with his differences from "the Negroes" — noticeably not "the other Negroes" — the narrator maintains that only those who surpass African qualities could be worthy of freedom. Nevertheless, Behn's narrator believes that slavery can be transcended while Crusoe maintains a rigid hierarchy. Despite Friday's diligent conversion to Crusoe's values, Crusoe never frees him from slavery. While the sentimental narrator sympathizes with the Western slave, Crusoe never relents his practical view — no amount of companionship or conversion could make Friday worth saving.

Through their respective lenses, the sentimental and practical narrators present their perspectives as the moral truth. Though the speakers present vastly different narratives, the perspectives have underlying commonalities. They both acknowledge practical benefits to slavery, discarding romanticism. But Behn's narrator's view of slaves as dynamic humans, as opposed to tools, facilitates sympathy that outweighs practicality. Perhaps if Behn's narrator had developed a relationship with every slave, she would detect familiar qualities among all of them and acknowledge them as human beings worth saving; this may be true of Imperial England as a whole. But it seems the social hierarchy is too convenient, too ingrained to completely discard. It is always underlying, in even the most sentimental perspectives. There are limitations of human sympathy: though one slave could be redeemed in the eyes of morality, the generalized slave population could not.

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## “Oceania is Us:” An Intimate Portrait of CHamoru Identity and Transpacific Solidarity in *from unincorporated territory: [lukao]*

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Guam, or *Guåhan* in the CHamoru language, holds a history of traumatic and unresolved militarization imposed by several countries including the United States. From 1521 to 1898, Spain colonized Guåhan and inflicted near-total genocide (Taimanglo). From 1898 to 1941, the occupier became the United States, which inflicted its own trauma — until 1941, when Japanese forces attacked and occupied the island (Taimanglo). In 1944, the United States attacked the island once more, gaining control over the island and eventually deeming it an “unincorporated territory” — which poet and author Dr. Craig Santos Perez recognizes in the title of his anthology, *from unincorporated territory: [lukao]*. In this anthology, Perez elaborates on the effects of America’s forceful repossession and consequent influence: he writes that on July 21st, 1944, “300 U.S. fighter jets dropped 124 tons of bombs on Guam, and thousands of American soldiers invaded our shores to ‘save’ [us] from the Japanese” (*from unincorporated territory: [lukao]* 43). Though Guåhan is a territory of the United States, the island’s inhabitants are not represented in Congress — nor do their votes count in national elections (Ossola). Perez uses his CHamoru perspective to represent his passion and advocacy on behalf of his homeland; furthermore, he recognizes similar experiences throughout Oceania as a whole, and uses his anthology as a medium for transpacific advocacy. Through an analysis of his 2017 anthology *from unincorporated territory: [lukao]*, this essay examines how Dr. Craig Santos Perez casts light on the complex inheritance of native CHamorus via an intimate portrait of diasporic CHamoru identity. Furthermore, I argue that Perez’s view of Pacific Islands as an interconnected *unit* — in the same vein as Tongan-Fijian scholar Epeli Hau’ofa’s idea of a “sea of islands” — furthers the anthology’s alternate function as an inclusive call for justice on behalf of *all* transpacific peoples affected by American militarization and colonization, bound together both by the “communion” of the ocean and by the shared fallout of nuclear activity in the Pacific (Hau’ofa 152; “Praise Song for Oceania”).

Perez summarizes the gravity of the effects of American militarization on Guåhan by dividing his anthology *from unincorporated territory [lukao]* into disaggregated sections that read when combined, “Because America / can’t demilitarize / its imagination / people around the world / are dying” (*[lukao]*). These words have a cautionary effect and hint at the burdens suffered across the world due to American militarization. One direct effect of militarization is the

seizure of land from indigenous peoples — and its immense impact is augmented by the *value* of land for these peoples. In his fictional novel *Melal*, which reveals the effects of American militarization on the Marshall Islands, Robert Barclay quotes the following excerpt from a petition sent by Marshallese leaders to the United Nations:

[l]and means ... more than just a place where you can plant your food crops and build your houses, or a place where you can bury your dead. It is the very life of the people. Take away their land and their spirits go also. (73)

In *Melal*, a native Marshallese character named Jebro inherits ancestral land that “gave his life profound meaning and position,” and about which he had been taught since “before he could remember” (Barclay 80, 79). When he learns that America’s atomic tests have demolished his “rightful land, his inheritance,” he feels that the bomb had “destroyed part of his soul” (Barclay 79). Likewise, Guåhan governor Ricardo J. Bordallo argues on behalf of his nation’s land:

Guam is not just a piece of real estate to be exploited for its money-making potential. Above all else, Guam is the homeland of the Chamorro people. That is a fundamental, undeniable truth. We are very profoundly “taotao tano” — people of the land. This land, tiny as it is, belongs to us just as surely, just as inseparably, as we belong to it. No tragedy of history or declaration of conquest, no legalistic double-talk can change that fact. Guam is our legacy. Is it for sale? How can one sell a national birthright? (Phillips)

Historian Lawrence Cunningham argues that the American-perpetuated idea of property ownership violates the central value of CHamoru culture: *Inafa’maolek*, or interdependence (Phillips). This holds what he calls a “powerful concern for mutuality” that transcends the notion of individualism and, by extension, private property rights (Phillips).

Following World War I, much of Guåhan land was taken by the American government for a measly cost — or outright stolen — for militaristic purposes (Ossola). The United States Department of Defense currently possesses 30 percent (a percentage which is only increasing with time) of Guåhan’s 212 square miles, upon which it has built Naval Base Guam and Andersen Air Force Base — and military spending is currently the island’s biggest industry (Ossola). Guåhan Legislature, or *Guåhan Libeslaturan*, publishes their reaction to their nation’s loss:

world war, and attendant national security issues of the United States, motivated the taking of vast tracts of Guamanian lands by the United States under powers of eminent domain for the purposes of U.S. military base development ... [we] find and declare the United States’ acquisition of Guamanian land was unconscionable, unfair, unjust and inequitable. (Guam Legislature 8)

Haldre Rogers, a professor of ecology and biology at Iowa State University, claims that as a result of land seizure there has been a long sequence of military distrust built over the past 80 years — and that it will take much longer to repair military-based sentiment in Guåhan (Ossola).

A secondary effect of land seizure may be the possible dissipation of the idea of “home” in affected indigenous lands. Just as the United States military has violated and continues to encroach upon more and more of Guåhan land, native CHamorus and other indigenous Pacific Islanders are leaving their island behind to settle in the United States — due to reasons such as record local unemployment, the ability to work “indefinitely” in the United States without a visa, prominence of military enlistment, and scholarships toward schools in the contiguous states (Zak 1). In fact, Pacific Islander population in the United States grew 40 percent through diaspora between 2000 and 2010, while at present, the CHamoru population on Guåhan itself has been deemed a minority at a mere 37 percent (“How Pacific Islander Students Are Slipping Through the Cracks,” Landy, 1). Furthermore, inter-Pacific migration is also prominent, and “movements within island groups and the greater Pacific Ocean ... have enabled these islands to create complex identities that have expanded beyond their natural boundaries” (Papoutsaki and Strickland).

Perez dubs himself a “diasporic Chamorro” because he was born in Guåhan but later chose to live in Hawai’i (“Off-Island Chamorros”). Likewise, a prominent theme expressed in [lukao] is the conflict in the concept of home versus geographic proximity in CHamoru tradition and modern culture. Kirsten McGavin, a postdoctoral research fellow of anthropology at the University of Queensland, states the following on the subject:

[f]or Pacific Islanders ... the concept of a ‘homeland’ is often anchored in notions of *peles* ... [in which] ‘A central quality of Micronesian identity is the strong cultural attachment to home and land, as it is among many Pacific Islanders ... *Peles* is a multivocal term indicating a person’s place ... of Indigenous origin. *Peles* refers not just to the physical landscape, but also to the seascape and starscape and to the less-tangible spheres such as the spiritscape. [ ... ] some informants describe this connection as being ‘carried in their blood’, particularly because links to *peles* are defined through matrilineal or patrilineal lines of descent. (McGavin)

Perez shows his connection to his *peles* throughout *from unincorporated territory: [lukao]*, but especially in his separate poem, “Off-Island Chamorros,” in which he reminds other CHamorus that, “migration flows through our blood. Remember: we carry our culture in the canoes of our bodies” (“Off-Island Chamorros”). Perez also demonstrates his connection with his kin, especially his matrilineal side: in [lukao], he interviews his mother, grandmother, aunt, and wife. His resulting project is a multifaceted portrait of indigenous people, experiences, and perspectives, in which Perez primarily seeks to learn more about his cultural traditions and intimate familial stories and allows readers to “eavesdrop” on his “conversations” (Perez, Skype Interview 2019). In this respect, Perez clearly attempts to connect with and maintain his cultural traditions, as reflected in [lukao]. For instance, Perez explains that in CHamoru birthing practices, “the apuya’ (umbilical cord) and pares (placenta) were buried beneath or near the house because Chamorros believe that doing so would keep



children close to home throughout their lives” ([*lukao*] 21). Perez’s mother admits that while she was pregnant in California, it was her wish for her son to be born on Guåhan ([*lukao*] 36). Geographic proximity, then, seems to be a cultural and familial value — but Perez states that, “[w]e are the most ‘geographically dispersed’ Pacific Islander population within the United States, and off-island Chamorros now outnumber our on-island kin, with generations having been born away from our ancestral homelands, including my daughter” (“Off-Island Chamorros”). Forty-four thousand CHamorus currently live in California alone ([*lukao*] 22). Perez’s self-identified “malologue,” “from the legends of *juan malo*,” reveals the widespread dispersal of CHamoru peoples:

[t]his year, Chamorros will be celebrating Liberation Day in Bremerton, WA, Dayton, OH, Fort Bragg, NC, Fort Jackson, SC, Hopewell, VA, Jacksonville, FL, Killeen & Copperas Cove, TX, Port Hueneme Naval Base Ventura County, CA, San Antonio, TX, San Diego, CA, Yuba City, CA, Washington D.C., and South Korea. ([*lukao*] 44)

In fact, Kirsten McGavin states that “[t]he very nature of a diaspora relies on the notion that the people ‘contained’ within it identify ... with a distant homeland” (McGavin). Perez concludes “Off-Island Chamorros” with the pertinent verse, “home is not simply a house, village, or island; home is an archipelago of belonging” (“Off-Island Chamorros” 1). These words are representative of *from unincorporated territory: [lukao]* — in which Perez explores the concept of home through familial and migratory cultural ties.

Diaspora may dually contribute to and result from the notion of transpacific unity. Perez was born in Guåhan but immigrated to Hawai‘i, where he has nurtured respect for Native Hawaiian customs and language amid his marriage to a Native Hawaiian ([*lukao*]). Throughout [*lukao*], Perez reinforces the idea of transpacific unity and, as an extension, the collective call for justice on behalf of indigenous transpacific peoples. In “*ginen: understory*,” he references Nagasaki, Japan and the Bikini Atoll of the Marshall Islands, calling to attention “... what cancers remain / buried in pacific bodies like unexploded / ordnances” ([*lukao*] 61). Perez uses “Pacific bodies” as a collective term, recognizing the shared plight of indigenous peoples across the Pacific resulting from immense radiation — and the particular trauma for Marshallese and Japanese peoples, who suffered from the atomic blasts outright. Perez also employs educational “poemaps” dispersed throughout the anthology. For instance, “Poemap based on ‘Telegeography cable network map, 2009’” emphasizes the significance of Oceania’s islands in communication between Asia, America, and Australia — especially the critical roles of Guåhan and Hawai‘i ([*lukao*] 9). “Poemap based on the ‘Key US Bases in Pacific Pivot Buildup’ map” recognizes United States military presence on several islands, including on Hawai‘i, American Samoa, the Marshall Islands, and the Mariana Islands ([*lukao*] 25). Through explicit references such as these, Perez broadens his subject from Guåhan to include sister islands throughout the Pacific. He recognizes that all of Oceania has been

“raped,” or violated, by imperialism — but that “the rape of oceania / began with guam” ([*lukao*] 65).

Perez’s poem, “i tinituhon,” appears twice in the novel, and both times it raises the topic of transpacific unity by subtracting the concept of space between islands in Oceania, suggesting to regard them as a whole unit instead. He writes two versions of the same verses, “wheredoislans / beginandend[...],” and, “where do islans / end and begin” ([*lukao*] 15, 31). Through these varied forms, Perez raises the notion that islands are not in fact separate entities, but rather that they are *united* by the very thing that outsiders would argue divides them: the ocean. Tongan-Fijian writer Epeli Hau’ofa, one of Perez’s inspirations, emphasizes the idea of a “sea of islands” instead of “islands in a far sea” with the argument that “the idea of smallness is relative” and a “state of mind” (Hau’ofa 152). He argues against the idea of “islands in a far sea,” stating that, “... [f]ocusing in this way stresses the smallness and remoteness of the islands. The second is a more holistic perspective in which things are seen in the totality of their relationships” (Hau’ofa 152). Hau’ofa expounds, “[p]eoples of Oceania ... did not conceive of their world in such microscopic proportions. Their universe comprised not only land surfaces, but the surrounding ocean ... Their world was anything but tiny” (Hau’ofa 153).

Not solely does the ocean *contribute* to Pacific Islanders’ worldview, but for many communities it “constitute[s] ... a fundamental and spiritual basis of existence. The Ocean is their identity, way of living, values, knowledge and practices that have sustained them for millennia” (Huffer 1). In Perez’s “Praise Song for Oceania,” he addresses the ocean directly in a second-person point of view, demonstrating his reverence:

your capacity  
for communion /  
praise our common heritage /  
praise our pathway  
& promise to each other / praise  
our endless saga / praise our most powerful  
metaphor / praise this vision  
of belonging / praise your horizon  
of care / praise our blue planet,  
one world ocean / praise our trans-oceanic  
past, present & future flowing  
through our blood. (“Praise Song for Oceania”)

Perez claims the ocean is what “communes” his “trans-oceanic” fellows, recognizing that the “one world ocean” is singular yet vast, encompassing and uniting all the world’s inhabitants (“Praise Song for Oceania”). He uses the pronoun “our” against a backdrop of “common heritage,” raising the question that perhaps the familiar “[we]” and “[us]” throughout *from unincorporated territory*: [*lukao*] may refer to more than his immediate family or CHamoru relatives. This

poem suggests that Perez's anthology was written perhaps in solidarity with *all* transpacific peoples.

Perez demonstrates both transpacific unity and the endeavor for social justice through the use of prose and hashtags throughout his anthology. The hashtag “#prayfor\_\_\_\_\_,” which he uses repeatedly, could be interpreted as a placeholder for names of various Pacific Islands — due not only to natural disasters, but intentional injustices ([*lukao*] 24; 40; 56; 72). Perez seems to intentionally pair each of these pages containing the “#prayfor\_\_\_\_\_” hashtag parallel to a poem page that calls attention to transpacific militarization, toxic waste on Guåhan, and the effect of the American military's shooting range on endangered Guåhan wildlife ([*lukao*] 24; 40; 56; 72). The use of hashtags as a medium for activism appears in other poems. For instance, Perez writes “#justiceforkollinelderts” in one poem, demonstrating his solidarity with an unarmed Native Hawaiian who died after he was shot by a police officer under the influence of alcohol (“Judge Rules against 3rd Trial for US Agent in Fatal Shooting”). Another hashtag used is “#placentalpolitics,” in which Perez rebelliously attempts to maintain his cultural practice of burying his child's placenta near the home — against U.S. Naval orders that it “[...] must be burned because they [are] hazardous waste” ([*lukao*] 69).

Other hashtags Perez employs are “#yesallwomen,” “#bringbackourgirls,” and “#mmiw” — which refer to the recognition of misogyny and violence against women, the kidnapping of female Chibok students, and the advocacy toward awareness of “missing and murdered indigenous women” ([*lukao*] 65) respectively. In “(first teeth),” Perez uses “#freepalestine,” “#blacklivesmatter,” and mentions the “thousands of youth atop la bestia #unaccompanied” ([*lukao*] 33). In these poems, Perez takes an inclusive, global stand toward social justice, fighting on behalf of *all* lands which the ocean connects. He employs another hashtag at the close of the poem following a line of wishes for his infant daughter — which perhaps suggests his awareness that as a future indigenous woman, she is at risk for some injustice against which he is both dismayed by and prepared to fight ([*lukao*] 33). Perez's concern for his daughter's safety due in part to her indigenous identity is not out of the question, since indigenous peoples across the world have faced centuries of injustices.

Indigenous people in Oceania have much to remember and heal from due to America's militarization in the twentieth century. Radiation fallout from nuclear-weapons testing has caused *intergenerational* harm especially in the Marshall Islands, where the lasting effects of radiation beyond cancer extend to further generations — found in miscarriages, deformed “jellyfish babies,” and the general stint on population growth (Zak). Surrounding territories, including Guåhan, also absorbed radioactive debris from fallout during nuclear testing (“Appendix C: Radioactivity in Guam After Nuclear-Weapons Testing in the Pacific”). Perez reflects that “\\ rain clouds baptize guam / in strontium-90 fallout, / circa 1954” and wonders what “downwind toxins / will [his daughter]

inhale when her lungs / first expand” ([*lukao*] 61). Furthermore, the trauma experienced on Liberation Day is inaccurately represented in what Perez dubs “celebration colonialism”: *the legends of juan malo (a malologue)* demonstrates Perez’s incredulity that Guåhan celebrates a holiday on the date when the United States dropped 124 tons of bombs on Guåhan to liberate them from the Japanese ([*lukao*] 44). He writes:

[d]espite the amount of Budweiser consumed on Liberation Day, [we] sober up after calculating the high number of sacrificial Chamorros enlisting in the U.S. military, and yet our debt to the “savior” is still ballooning out of control. Maybe next year, the theme of the parade will be: “Kao magåhet na manlibre hit? Is it true that we are liberated?” ([*lukao*] 44)

In addition to health risks, American militarization has also generated widespread linguistic effects throughout Oceania — as writer and anthropologist Peter Rudiak-Gould states, “[a]nywhere there’s a coral atoll and a unique cultural group on that atoll, there’s that potential for mass migration and extinction of languages” (Walsh). CHamorus were banned from speaking their native language under the U.S. Naval Administration in 1917 — who collected and burned CHamoru books and introduced the game of baseball as an activity for youth under the condition that they spoke English (Taitano; Skype Interview). Schoolchildren were harshly punished if they spoke CHamoru in schools (Perez, Skype Interview 2019). A century later, the CHamoru language is severely endangered: according to the U.S. census from 1990 to 2010, “the number of Chamorro speakers declined from 34,598 to 25,827 ... Between 2010 and 2016, thousands more have been lost, bringing the estimate to 10,000” (Eugenio). Today, CHamoru, Marshallese and over one hundred other languages in the Pacific territories are endangered (Walsh).

Ultimately, throughout *from unincorporated territory*: [*lukao*], Craig Santos Perez establishes a historical context of nineteenth century Guåhan, promoting transpacific advocacy and unity as he educates readers on the effects of colonization and militarization on CHamorus and indigenous peoples throughout Oceania, on their land, and on their languages. Despite the physical and emotional intergenerational effects that stem from American militarization, Perez has confidence in the survival of CHamoru culture and language — and in those of other countries throughout Oceania (Perez, Skype Interview, 2019). Perez states that he is certain the CHamoru language will survive — “it takes a lot to kill a language” — as even if native speakers were to cease to exist, their language can be learned and relearned, and passed onto future generations (Skype). Perez possesses the view that both Guåhan and Oceania itself are constant and unfailing — a view that his inspiration Epeli Hau’ofa would likely share (Skype). As Hau’ofa asserts, “Oceania is vast, Oceania is expanding, Oceania is hospitable and generous, Oceania is humanity rising from the depths of brine and regions of fire deeper still, Oceania is us” (Hau’ofa 160). The resilience of Oceania’s languages — its *cultures* — should not be underestimated.

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## Sex, Lies, and Murder: Feminized Detective Fiction and the English Estate Novel

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Despite its intended association with dignity and dominance, the English estate serves as the perfect setting for abhorrent criminal actions in the detective fiction genre due to these distinct qualities. An estate ensures an enclosed environment with a wide range of characters that bring new allegations to light during tumultuous times. Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* and Ian McEwan's *Atonement* follow this framework with one glaring disparity from the traditional detective fiction novel: the narratives are told through the lens of young female detectives. There is no stoic male detective to guide each story from beginning to end in an objective manner as is traditionally done; instead, the two protagonists must accommodate their emotional attachments to the crimes while also telling their respective stories. *Rebecca* and *Atonement* destabilize the romanticization of the English estate novel tradition through the narrative of the female detective figure, and the detective fiction genre overall.

The protagonists are able to unmask the rotten roots of the British upper class due to their respective positions within the social group. Susan Rowland defines crime fiction as:

offering a story that the laws cannot or will not tell. It is saying, in effect, that ... there is more to criminals, their motives, actions and lives that can be represented through the cultural authority of the legal system. (17)

*Rebecca*'s unnamed narrator refuses to participate in this "will not tell" policy in the initial stages of her investigation. Neither Maxim's upper crust peer group nor the working class of Manderley question the events surrounding Rebecca's death. The unnamed narrator is the only person who sees both sides of Manderley interact with each other. This obscures Rebecca's murder as the narrator intrudes on the estate's typical operation. Manderley's established residents uphold the "picture post-card" image from Rebecca's youth by maintaining their same routines in her absence so the estate's iconic facade is preserved in the eyes of the general public (du Maurier 73). Manderley's "post-card" image implicitly shields it from an outside investigation into the property and Maxim himself:

[I] asked the wrinkled shop woman what it was meant to be. She looked astonished at my ignorance. 'That's Manderley,' she said, and I remember coming out of the shop feeling rebuffed, yet hardly wiser than before. (du Maurier 24)

This foreshadowing defines the unnamed narrator's role as the disruptive middle-class inheritor found in the typical English estate novel. She already has

an outsider's perspective of Manderley even before she sets foot on its grounds, yet her utter "ignorance" prevents her from inquiring further into its affairs. The estate's magnificence casts a noble shadow over her perception of Manderley just as it does to every other ordinary person. Common knowledge asserts Manderley's influence over the unnamed narrator in a simple "painting." The unnamed narrator breaks away from public sentiment once she marries Maxim and assumes her disruptive role in the estate's carefully manicured affairs.

The unnamed narrator harnesses her insignificance to her advantage in her pursuit of the truth. When she takes on the role of Manderley's mistress she cannot remain "hardly wise" about her surroundings as she could have as an ordinary citizen. As her entire existence revolves around disturbing the status quo, the unnamed narrator takes on the detective role as it melds to her position as middle-class disruptor. The investigation commences because she cannot stand to live in the same "ignorance" that other Manderley outsiders accept as normal. Her inferiority complex revolves around the sentiment of being "rebuffed" by social convention, so she believes that uncovering the mysteries behind Manderley's exterior will catapult her out of her infantilized bourgeois position and into the elegance and glamour that Rebecca standardized while she was still alive. The unnamed narrator is used as the point of genre infusion within *Rebecca* to analyze the social hierarchies embodied in the English estate setting.

Briony serves as a similar conduit for examining British aristocratic corruption because she is isolated from the reality of the adult world. Like the unnamed narrator of du Maurier's novel, her "ignorance" affects her, "[s]uch was Briony's last thought before she accepted that she did not understand, and that she must simply watch" (McEwan 29). Like every other conventional detective, she is the onlooker of a dangerous world that can be neatly organized by rationally deducing every situation into a logical conclusion, or so she believes (Nickerson 744). She has the privilege of "watching," as she is a member of this particular class yet is too young to "understand" her own entrenchment within that system. Briony can only emulate the actions of the stoic male detective seeking justice in the face of absolute evil because she has learned to see the world in black-and-white terms. However, she is not old enough to possess the critical thinking skills needed to observe her class position and privileged living impartially. Class division does not exist in her youthful imagination as she has never had to see it work against her in any capacity. She has never had to face any kind of social "confrontation" in her sheltered life. Briony thus feels entitled to romanticize and eventually create her own dangerous intrigue to feed her wild imagination (McEwan 11).

Briony is allowed to imitate the detective figure because her upper-class childhood enables her adolescent fantasies to blur reality without limitations. Significantly younger than her siblings and hardly looked after by an absent single mother, she roams around the Tallis estate with only her imagination as a morality check. Briony is written off as a silly child who spends more time



“watching” the world than participating in it, though the severity of her condition is clear to see. She cannot distinguish the line between reality and fantasy because she has been indulged and undisciplined her entire life. Briony’s detective fiction novels constructed her the black-and-white outlook on life, which motivates her vendetta against Robbie. She has never been taught to “understand” anything else about real life besides the things she has read in her carefully constructed literary microcosms. Briony imposes her warped worldview onto every situation without regard to others as her affluent lifestyle and rigid moral influences facilitated her self-absorbed upbringing.

Although Briony and *Rebecca*’s unnamed narrator are vehicles for analyzing the corruption of the British social hierarchy, their detective work leads them to uphold the status quo instead of dismantling it. Briony’s conjecture overwhelms any genuine investigation into the actual crime as she has been taught to value imagery over objectivity; “Briony was their only source, and she made herself speak calmly” (McEwan 133). Both Robbie and Danny Hardman fulfill the young working-class male figure that threatens to upend aristocratic bloodlines, a staple of the English estate novel genre, so they are the immediate suspects for Lola’s rapist. The real detectives choose Robbie as the culprit over Danny due to Briony’s imaginary investigation as her childish accusation is respected more than any real evidence that Robbie can provide. As Briony is the “only source” that the real detectives have, she is given the power to decide the outcome of the case despite her known overactive imagination. She weaponizes her image as a young traumatized girl from the noble Tallis estate against Robbie’s image as the rough working-class boy to secure the results that she wants from her fictitious testimony.

The narrative reasserts the existing status quo that Briony plays a part in because she does not recognize her own influence that stems from her social position. Brian Finney states that,

McEwan subtly suggests the invidious nature of a class system that permeates even those seeking to reverse its effects and works to protect the upper-class rapist from exposure throughout his lifetime. (Finney 76)

It is assumed that until grown-up Briony publishes her novel posthumously, Robbie is labelled as a rapist in historic criminal records, whereas Paul continues to be a celebrated philanthropist. Although the novel could clear Robbie’s name publicly, it cannot do anything for individuals that lived through the events. Briony will be dead before she can see her novel come to fruition, so the “upper-class rapist” will be “protected” from any physical repercussions for the remainder of his life.

McEwan writes the novel from Briony’s point of view, using her voice to commentate upon the British social system that shields Paul from “exposure.” Briony was empowered to accuse Robbie of the rape because it followed the “invidious nature of the class system” in which she was raised. Stereotypes encouraged both law enforcement officials and the residents of the Tallis estate

to turn on Robbie because of the whims of the fanciful young Briony. However, once she tries to backtrack on her accusation, she is met with resistance as there is no one left to support her new claims. Paul has used his freedom to build up his philanthropic portfolio and wealth, making Lola and himself untouchable in a court of law. The only agency that Briony is left with is to write down the truth and hope that the book can be published to expose Paul, yet even this action is unresolved as she does not publish it before she dies.

Unlike the confident Briony, the unnamed narrator begins her investigation because of her immense insecurity. However, her obsession with obtaining Maxim's approval stops any legitimate judicial procedure from occurring. The narrator states, "I would fight for Maxim. I would lie and perjure and swear, I would blaspheme and pray. Rebecca had not won. Rebecca had lost" (du Maurier 320). The repetition of "I would" stresses how she would rather feel a sense of belonging than seek moral or legal justice. Her investigative work does not right the terrible wrongs committed at Manderley, rather it only serves to enforce the social system that has already protected her husband without question. The unnamed narrator is poisoned by the first wife/second wife dichotomy that places her in competition with Rebecca as soon as she arrives at Manderley. To the Manderley residents, Rebecca was always favored, as the first wife of a first-rated estate, coming from a first-class lineage. The unnamed narrator detests her clumsiness and unsophistication, and these traits are only accentuated further by walking in Rebecca's shadow. She would rather "win" the place beside Maxim as his true wife and do anything to please him in order to feel like she finally is a member of Manderley's social structure. "I would" becomes a mantra of integration for the unnamed narrator to convince herself to remain by Maxim's side instead of following the moral path which would lead to her husband suffering the consequences of his actions.

To "lie and perjure and swear" evokes conventional court case proceedings that the unnamed narrator will undermine in order to defend Maxim, subversive actions that can be linked to historical representations of femininity within the detective fiction genre. Rowland asserts,

[t]he feminine has been the dark other to the masculine western tradition of privileging reason, intelligence, order and rationality; a tradition that has much to do with the generating of the fictional detective. (Rowland 16)

The unnamed narrator is not motivated by traditional attributes associated with the "fictional detective" in her investigation because her actions are inspired by her inferiority complex. She cannot see Rebecca as the objective victim to a murder; instead, she is the ghost that haunts the halls of Manderley and could destroy its hallowed grounds forever. There is no pursuit of true justice because she is solely driven by her morbid desire to take Rebecca's place in every capacity, from dutiful wife of Maxim to benevolent mistress of Manderley. In fulfilling the self-sacrifice required of heterosexual wifehood, the unnamed narrator

assumes a “dark other” in her investigation that renounces “reason, intelligence, order and rationality” for Maxim’s sake.

Briony and the unnamed narrator infuse their personal anxieties into their investigations to create imaginary projections of potential events, thus impeding a path towards justice. The unnamed narrator suffers the quintessential female experience of not being “good enough:” she is not pretty, not cultured, not witty, not anything in comparison to the effervescent Rebecca. She casts herself as the victim of Rebecca’s dominance and empathizes in Maxim’s (perceived) suffocation under her ever-constant superiority. The narrator thinks,

[o]ther women had been through this. Women I had read about in papers ...  
And the ordinary people who read about it in the papers said why should the fellow get off, he murdered his wife, didn’t he? What about the poor, murdered wife? (du Maurier 354)

The unnamed narrator uses free indirect speech to enforce sympathy for the criminal in the audience. She associates “ordinary people” with a mob mentality that blindly follows the “poor, murdered wife” narrative established by “papers” full of similar crime stories. In assuming this free indirect speech narrative style, she believes she has transcended the ignorance of “ordinary people” through the results of her investigation.

The unnamed narrator concludes her investigation based upon her submissive faith in her husband, too blinded by love to look further into his version of the story. “Ordinary” connotes a separation made by the unnamed narrator between the couple and the rest of the world. As soon as she hears his confession, she implicitly chooses to uphold the estate’s reputation as it is finally her possession to defend. To be a part of Manderley is to maintain the facade, and the unnamed narrator sets out to do this with a fresh vigor after Maxim gives her what she has always longed for in her life: a sense of belonging. By imitating the perspective of the “ordinary people,” she cements her place beside Maxim at Manderley. She silences her inferiority complex once she makes this distinction, strategizing how to save her new domain from ruin. She releases herself from the repulsive “ordinary” label that has haunted her existence by attributing it to those who would not respect Maxim, and thus Manderley’s, importance as she does. Since Maxim fulfills her lifelong desire for acceptance, she transitions from detective to accomplice and sullies any continued inquiries.

The unnamed narrator becomes a bleak symbol for the reinforcement of the British class system by putting her personal identity over finding justice. Alison Light writes,

[a]ll is not lost, however, for the heroine’s bourgeois virtue triumphs and in the end she manages to save both her husband and her marriage. (Light 7)

She succeeds in her role as the disruptive middle-class inheritor through her detective work, yet her investigative intrusion is the key to “saving her husband.” “Save” suggests a positive connotation as the unnamed narrator wants the reader to see Rebecca, not Maxim or the structural forces that went along with his version of the truth, as the real villain of the story. Rebecca defied the accepted

societal standard of heterosexual monogamy to partake in her own sexual escapades, disturbing the marital inequity that Maxim wanted. Asexualized, submissive, and an accomplice to the crime, the unnamed narrator performs her “bourgeois virtue” in standing by her husband. His confession becomes the only version of events presented to the audience as she chooses to position herself in a supporting role to Maxim’s story. Her detective work ends when she stops being an active participant in her own narrative because she would rather execute the duties of a properly domesticated wife.

Briony enters into a state of self-paralysis by the end of her investigation which is fueled by a lack of adult guidance. She begins to panic in the presence of the inspector,

[u]nder his neutral gaze her throat constricted and her voice began to buckle. She wanted the inspector to embrace her and comfort her and forgive her, however guiltless she was. But he would only look at her and listen. (McEwan 133)

Since Briony is a child, she inherently desires adult approval for every action she takes. Her childish anxiety ultimately controls the course of her investigation as she strengthens her commitment to her accusation in the face of passive authority. She balks under the “neutral gaze” of the real investigator as she is used to being coddled like the child she is, not treated like the adult she thinks she wants to be. Her investigation is based upon youthful ignorance and imagination. Rather than admit to her misunderstanding and lies, Briony chooses to continue her fabricated reality as she is fearful of getting into trouble like every other guilty child facing the consequences of their actions. In projecting what she wants the interrogator to do, rather than what he actually does, the narrative points out the corruption of the British social hierarchy. He only “looks and listens” to her because he treats her like a verifiable witness, despite her obvious emotional distress and established reputation for telling tall tales. The official police investigation accepts the whims of a volatile child as they value Briony’s opinion over any adult below her in social standing. As the outcome of the crime depends on circumstantial evidence, her story outweighs Robbie’s because she is inherently “guiltless” in the eyes of the system due to her wealth. To the investigators, a small, distressed child of her social stratum could not commit to the kind of horrendous lie that Briony executes when under pressure to please. Her history of fabrication does not need a background check as the British social hierarchy only needs her words of accusation to incriminate Robbie.

*Rebecca* and *Atonement* conflate the detective fiction and the English estate novel to analyze the endurance of the British social system through their narrative voices. *Atonement* combines first and third person narration styles to create a metanarrative that implements an “intrinsic conservative social bias” (Rowland 39). Despite her argument, Briony’s metanarrative creates a sense of distance between her present self and her past actions. Briony uses only a first-person narration style in the present, while reserving the third person style for her younger self. This choice enables her to elicit sympathy from the reader as

she has the privilege of hindsight to rework her childhood actions and emotions of the past to fit her narrative goal in the present. She can displace her actions onto a separate child character by using the third person style, not fully reckoning with her past in the way she could have if she had used the first-person style instead. Briony still cannot accept full responsibility for the false accusation because she never had to face any tangible repercussions in the real world, instead only experiencing an internalized guilt that she transforms into her book. The editorial rejection letter emphasizes this privilege of constructing the novel as a final literary project, not as a true act of contrition. Rather than facing consequences for her actions, she is only critiqued on her writing ability by the editors, who write, “[p]ut the other way round, our attention would have been held even more effectively had there been an underlying pull of simple narrative” (McEwan 240). Briony approaches the story as a novelist tinkering with the form and flow of her words and images as she still looks at her life through a literary lens as she did when she was thirteen. “Simple narrative” implies that her novel is not digestible enough to the average reader, calling attention to Briony’s obsession with form over content. Had she actually written the novel in the way the letter suggests, she would have been forced to directly confront her juvenile investigative assumptions without literary devices to shield her. She is so obsessed with the actual construction of her narrative that she does not have the ability to truly feel remorseful for her actions. Had she tackled the novel in an objective, linear method, the metanarrative distance would have collapsed, and she would thus come closer to an actual recognition for Robbie’s incrimination. She treats the act of atonement as another literary project to create and manipulate our perception of real people and events.

In *Rebecca*, the unnamed narrator corrupts her own narrative by withholding her own name from the reader, which provides her perspective without the nuisance of her personhood to impede her investigation. As Rowland articulates, [t]hrough the person of the detective, the reader searches for clues and signs, leading to criminal and innocent identities to ‘make up’ the boundaries of a meaningful world in the novel. (91)

By erasing her individuality, the unnamed narrator positions herself as the literary surrogate for the readers, so that they only understand the novel’s events through her partisan view. They are expected to wholeheartedly accept Rebecca and Maxim’s respective “criminal and innocent identities” because she has already decided this for the reader. She assumes the anonymous detective figure to solidify Maxim’s version of events as the truth in the reader’s consciousness, despite an overwhelming need to investigate further into his confession. The first-person narration style transforms Maxim’s confession from her individual perspective, to the only available account of the crime. The reader’s entire perception of the confession and crime is filtered through the unnamed narrator’s unwavering compliance to her husband.

Unrepressed sexuality is criminalized when the English estate novel combines with the detective fiction genre to expose the gender dynamics of the British social hierarchy. *Rebecca* heightens the consequences of illicit sexuality through the unnamed narrator's investigative enlightenment. The narrator herself muses that

[t]he silences that I had always taken for sympathy and regret was a silence born of shame and embarrassment. It seemed incredible to me now that I had never understood. (du Maurier 309)

Given Rebecca's status as the wife of an aristocrat, her potent sexuality could only be criticized by the unnamed narrator's "bourgeois virtue." She personifies "silence" to masculinize Rebecca's conquests as it is the only way she can conceptualize her sexual dominance within their patriarchal culture. "Born" places Frank and Beatrice in the submissive maternal role, forced to produce and carry their feelings of "shame and embarrassment" planted by Rebecca's wild behavior. The unnamed narrator's investigation leads her to "understand" Rebecca's untamed sexuality in a masculine sense as she does not possess the language to describe liberated female sexuality due to her sheltered middle-class point of view. Her conclusion unintentionally leads the reader to infer that Rebecca's voracious sexuality was provoked in part by Maxim's impotence:

Rebecca's most heinous crime, which drove Maxim to shoot her, was, of course, to taunt him with a future heir of Manderley who might not be his. What is at stake in her murder is the continuance of male authority and of masculinity itself, as it is defined through ownership and the power of hierarchy. (Light 15)

Before being shocked by the plot twist that Rebecca had a malformed uterus and therefore could not be pregnant, the reader sees how Rebecca had the capability to determine the inheritance of Manderley at the expense of Maxim. Manderley immediately transformed into a matriarchy in his eyes as soon as she "taunted him" with the threat of a "future heir" that would be solely connected to her bloodline. The unnamed narrator thus absolves Maxim as Rebecca's "threat" trumps Maxim's deadly deed as the true crime that plagues the novel. She has only lived in a world of "male authority," so a matriarchal Manderley is completely forbidden in her mind. Even a theoretical seizure of the Manderley bloodline justified Maxim's actions to the unnamed narrator.

The unnamed narrator "understands" the central problem of Maxim and Rebecca's relationship as a skewed gender dynamic, symbolized by the imagery of blood. "'I'd forgotten,' said Maxim, and his voice was slow now, tired, without expression, 'that when you shot a person there was so much blood'" (du Maurier 314). Detective fiction novels are rampant with bloody crime scenes that emphasize the victim's gory demise, yet the unnamed narrator uses this conventional image to create empathy for the criminal. She inflects his confession with a "slow" and "tired" cadence as if he had to put up a great fight against Rebecca, instead of the premeditated shot through the heart. Their struggle was a battle of wits, and the winner was a self-assured, sexually liberated

woman who invaded and transformed her husband's English estate into a celebrated cultural landmark. The unnamed narrator flips this crime scene image to portray Maxim as the victim of a masculinized woman, too powerful and robust to be contained and the murder a necessary evil.

The words "[s]o much blood" demonstrate how Rebecca's insatiability continues to tarnish Maxim's legitimacy as the heir of Manderley. As the English estate represents a physical concentration of patriarchal power, her blood usurps that power when it seeped into the Manderley cottage. Rebecca was too "much" for Maxim to handle even in her death as he struggled to cover up her murder. As it physically stains Manderley, the image of Rebecca's blood leaves a lasting psychological mark on Maxim that blocks him from assuming any kind of authority ever again. He is tormented by her death because he knows she has displaced him as the patriarch of Manderley, as her presence is now a permanent part of its legacy. Although Maxim is protected from further inquiry because of his social status, the discovery of her blood would set off a chain reaction that would evict him out of Manderley and place him in prison. Rebecca's blood equates to her psychological grip on Maxim's mind, teasing and torturing him into an emasculated state. Every other part Manderley could be burnt to the ground, but her stained blood will always remain as a symbol of her everlasting power.

*Atonement* criminalizes unrepressed sexuality, especially in women, so as to highlight class inequity within the British social system via Briony's investigation. As Rowland asserts,

[sexuality] becomes the sinister aspect of a society of social masks. It ... challenges social forms, becoming concentrated into irrational, sometimes criminal, passion. (Rowland 162)

Briony connects the "irrational" with the "criminal" when she sees Cecelia and Robbie together in the library, thinking that,

[h]e looked so huge and wild, and Cecilia with her bare shoulders and thin arms so frail that Briony had no idea what she could achieve as she started to go towards them. (McEwan 94)

Robbie fulfills the young, erotic, male, working-class figure specifically for Briony in this moment as he "challenges the social form" of the Tallis estate in having sex with Cecelia. Briony juxtaposes Robbie's "huge and wild" stature with Cecelia's "frailness" to reestablish the natural order of the British social hierarchy. The reader is meant to sympathize with her misunderstanding of Robbie and Cecelia's liaison due to her youth and inexperience. However, Briony imposes a historically-based working-class stereotype upon Robbie by comparing him to an animalistic, sex-crazed brute. The imagery's implicit evil emerges from our own empathy towards Briony's naiveté. Our perception of Robbie's stigmatization is nullified by Briony's genuine fear for her sister. By enhancing Briony's perspective of Robbie and Cecelia's encounter through this biased imagery, the reader is tricked into neutralizing the heavy-handed class discrimination because she is a young, scared, prepubescent girl. Her gender,

youth, and social class elicit our sympathy, and justify her reasoning for, investigating despite the fact that it is nothing more than a constant intrusion into Robbie and Cecelia's privacy.

The conventional detective fiction novel is supposed to uphold the traditional social order set by the upper-class inhabitants of the English estate novel. *Rebecca* and *Atonement* exist at a vital intersection of the two genres to show how the criminal justice system is corrupted by the injustices and inequalities performed by its inhabitants. Taking on the detective role, the two protagonists uncover the dark forces that protect upper class men from punishment due to the othering of their youth, class, and gender. The female detective especially subverts the facade perpetuated by the traditional English estate novel as Briony and the unnamed narrator expose the crimes committed, yet do not act upon their findings to right the wrongs. They do not fit the qualifications of the stoic male detective figure, so their feminized emotions and positions in society halt their investigations from ever being fully completed. *Rebecca* and *Atonement* show how external societal forces enforce one particular narrative at the expense of others, muting truthful voices in order to maintain the pretense of order and stability, especially in the upper class.

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## Song: The Emotional Storyteller in the Tales of Edgar Allan Poe

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Composed song and music are instinctive expressions of the human soul. Even when sound seems to burst out spontaneously from within, it is almost always motivated by a deeper urge — something that the characters in the works of Edgar Allan Poe know only all too well. Poe's works make frequent use of musical references and lyric art forms, elements which are often woven directly into the plot. His most striking musical interludes are poems that were added into stories to further enhance their meaning. Through poetic songs and instrumental music, characters such as Roderick Usher and Lady Ligeia express their unspoken feelings at critical moments in their stories. When these characters sing, play, or listen to music, what are they looking to assuage in their hearts? How does their song affect Poe's readers? To find the answers, it is necessary to examine song and music as expressions of human emotion, and to look at how song characterizes the different individuals who choose to sing. "The Haunted Palace" and "The Conqueror Worm," two poems which Poe interpolated the already-published short stories — "The Fall of the House of Usher" and "Ligeia" respectively — add deeper analytical and emotional levels to both the stories' plots and their respective speakers. These songs reveal the emotional state of the speakers, exposing inner workings that these characters would never reveal to others. The songs in these stories are valuable enhancements of the depth of the characters and the story itself.

Music has long been believed to be connected to the passions, whether in life or literature. To the ancient Greeks, music could affect the *ethos*, which governs the principles and therefore governs the right state of the world. Just as *ethos* was seen as a powerful influence on morality and behavior in human beings, so was music. Plato even argued that the "modes of music," scales and types of songs which correspond to different moods, "are never disturbed without unsettling the most fundamental political and social conventions" (Plato qtd. in Weiss and Taruskin 7). Music has always been connected to emotion in cultures around the world. Premodern Ireland, for example,

divided music into three groups, according to its visible effects on the listener: *goltraige* (weeping music), *geannttraige* (laughing music), and *andsuantraige* (sleeping music). (Henigan 142)

The different emotion associated with each type of music differentiates the style of the songs. Emotional style and intention greatly influence when and how the Irish songs are performed, as well as the effect achieved on the listener. The

same phenomenon is true of any song composed or performed with emotional intent. Song is a powerful rhetorical device precisely because of its connection to emotion. In *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*, Douglass remembers the slave songs of his childhood with tears in his eyes, because they were pure expressions of “the highest joy and the deepest sadness ... [of] souls boiling over in the bitterest anguish ... and a prayer to God for deliverance” (Douglass 20-21). The characters in Poe’s stories experience their own forms of joy and anguish, and they too turn to music to give life to their feelings.

In the short story “The Fall of the House of Usher,” Poe uses music to draw thematic parallels between the decay of the literal house of Usher, the Usher family, and Roderick Usher’s state of mind. When the narrator first reunites with Roderick, he describes him with musical terms, as when Roderick’s voice “varie[s] rapidly from a *tremulous* indecision ... to ... that leaden, self-balanced, and perfectly *modulated* guttural utterance” (Poe 92). A *tremolo* in music is literally a “trembling” of a note, an instance in which the same note or chord is repeated with great agility to create a quavering, suspenseful effect. A *modulation* uses the chords of one key to change to a different key, which may be starkly different from the first. If song and voice are the vehicles to express inner emotion, these two musical words alone hint that there is something unsteady about Roderick, something teetering on the edge which may change irreversibly if given just one push.

Throughout the story, Poe associates Roderick with the arts. Roderick conducts his own artistic activities, which seem to be his primary way of coping with his mysterious illness and his anxiety regarding his sister Madeline. He plays guitar and even composes, though he can abide only “peculiar sounds ... from stringed instruments” (Poe 92). Roderick’s forays into music, especially when the musical excerpts take on new meaning over the course of a performance, explore the story’s central theme of decay. The consistent trend of transformation makes it possible to track the multilayered decay in the story through the singular character of Roderick.

One of Roderick’s musical distractions is a version of “the last waltz of von Weber” (Poe 93-94) played on guitar. Stuart Levine and Susan F. Levine have clarified that the piece in question is actually the “Last Waltz” by German composer Carl Reissiger (1798-1859), though in Poe’s time it was believed to be the final composition of Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826); Weber had transcribed a copy of the piece to use in performance, and suddenly died. The piece itself is a simple, bright waltz, featuring a steady bass line that provides the harmony for a lilting melody. It features a dance-like tempo and a jaunty major key and contains several slowly descending *sequences* (melodic fragments repeated again and again, each time at a lower interval). Roderick’s rendition of the song, however, is a “perversion and amplification of the wild air” (93). While of course we cannot hear the music, we can easily imagine the sound from the written

description. The melodic sequences might be inching eerily downward with chromatic pitches, spiraling slowly and painfully, just like Roderick's sanity after Madeline's "death." The steady, robust bass line could become a plodding death toll, as thick as the nearby tarn and as blunt as fists hammering on a heavy iron door. Indeed, the reader herself can perform an experiment to achieve a very similar effect in real life. Playing the arrangement of Reissiger's "Last Waltz" for classical guitar performed by Guillaume VDK, at half speed, reveals a sound that is warped and slowed. It creates for listeners a dissonant, perverse, uncanny song very similar to what Poe's narrator describes.

Another of Roderick's musical "*impromptus*" includes lyrics, which add yet another level to the song's thematic significance. The *impromptu* was a nineteenth century style of musical composition, designed to give the impression of being improvised, based on in-the-moment changes and discoveries of mood. As such, it is a fitting vehicle for both the transformations in the poem and the emotional changes that are eating away at Roderick's psyche. One piece Roderick performs for the narrator, "The Haunted Palace," tells the story of a radiant palace that thrives with beauty, light, and music, until "evil things" reduce it to a haunted ruin (Poe 95). Like the original "Last Waltz," the song begins beautifully, but devolves into an eerie, strange final picture. The verses read like an epic poem (a poetic form that was originally sung), and it follows a form that would suit a musical *impromptu*. In general, the lines follow an A-B-A-B-C-D-C-D rhyme scheme, but rhymes are occasionally switched, or replaced, leaving some words out of place. These hanging sounds emphasize the state of the palace, its development, or even its destiny. For example, when the palace is first mentioned in the third line of the first stanza, there is no rhyme for "palace," signifying that the palace's presence is not as stable as it may appear, making room for the first twinges of doubt and fear. In the sixth stanza, Poe uses four near-rhymes, one after the other ("valley"/ "see" / "fantastically"/ "melody"), creating a discordant, repetitive sound that reflects the endless movement of the ghosts through the palace (95), without hope for resolution or respite. In a similar way, Roderick falls into a starkly different emotional state after Madeline's entombment. Each passing moment and every little sound seem to him a new unwelcome discovery, which intensifies his paranoia and drives him further and further away from happiness or peace.

The poem "The Haunted Palace" also includes frequent musical allusions to characterize the palace at its two different states. Initially, the spirits in the windows are "moving musically/ to a lute's well-tuned law," rejoicing in their "sweet duty" to "sing / in voices of surpassing beauty" (Poe 95). The palace first evokes a realm of consonance and harmony and by extension peace and life as well. The spirits move together, perhaps dancing to a waltz similar to von Weber's. They are accompanied by the lute, an instrument frequently used in the Renaissance and Baroque eras for love songs and ballads, whether in public or for private aristocratic entertainment. The epigram of "The Fall of the House of

Usher” also likens a human heart to a lute (88). However, when the palace falls, the chaos of dissonance reigns instead: the spirits move to a “discordant melody,” and instead of a dance, the “hideous throng rush[es] out together” (96) without joy or pause. For the Haunted Palace, the difference between life and death is also the difference between consonant music and dissonant noise. The song illustrates decay through dissonance, just as Roderick’s treatment of the “Last Waltz” does.

This poem was the perfect addition for the story; the death of the palace is brought to life by the House of Usher, in every sense of the name. Not only does “The Haunted Palace” mirror Roderick’s mental decline from peace into anxiety, but it also foreshadows major events in the story. The fall and haunting of the sumptuous musical castle bears a strong resemblance to the literal fall of the House of Usher, including the deaths of its wealthy, artistic residents. Roderick fears this outcome, but he remains fixated on it, and cannot help but pour his obsession into his musical “phantasmagoric conceptions” (Poe 94). His musical compositions betray this obsession, though Roderick never explicitly tells the narrator anything about it.

Why might Roderick Usher have gravitated toward this particular kind of music, and why do his compositions take such a turn for the worse? Classical civilization, a consistent source of inspiration for literature and the arts in itself, considered music to be a fundamental tenet of a gentleman’s education. The Roman orator Quintilian even argued that if a man wanted to complete his education as an orator, he must “remove all doubts as to the value of music” (Weiss and Taruskin 11). Roderick apparently enjoyed such an education: he has descended from a family that was gifted “time out of mind ... in many works of exalted art ... as well as in a passionate devotion to the intricacies ... of musical science” (Poe 89). If one follows the classical philosophy regarding music, it makes sense that the modes and timbres of Roderick’s songs are significant, even intentional. So why do the “Last Waltz” and “The Haunted Palace,” which begin beautifully, become “dirges” that “ring forever” in the ears of his friend (93)?

Roderick’s songs are designed not only to give voice to his troubled emotions, but also to convey them to the narrator and Poe’s readers. By listening to his songs in their imagination, readers gain great insight into his state of mind: an ill, “highly distempered ideality” (Poe 93). Roderick’s mental state deteriorates into paranoia and terror. As he falters, his idealist inspiration becomes more like madness. In a similar way, his compositions begin beautifully, but there is something wrong, “distempered,” at the heart of his art. He perverts a lively waltz into something haunting and “wild,” and tells a story of an idyllic palace destroyed by “evil things” (94–95). In both musical interludes, something beautiful and whole is “assailed,” turned into a haunted “discordant melody” fit only for ghosts (96). Paranoid, isolated, and descending into madness, the frightened and controlling Roderick transfigures himself and Madeline into some sort of living ghosts long before they are both actually dead. His music and

poetry certainly reflect his “fall,” as announced in the story’s title and emphasized throughout its story and imagery.

In the short story “Ligeia,” Poe presents another character who uses poetry and music to express her deepest yearnings. Just like Roderick Usher, Lady Ligeia is highly educated. The narrator, her husband, remarks that “in the classical tongues she was deeply proficient,” as well as in modern languages, and “all the wide areas of moral, physical, and mathematical science” (Poe 59). With this education, Ligeia would not only be aware of the emotional impact of the arts as outlined by classical philosophy, but she is also clever and skillful enough to put them into practice. On another level, Ligeia herself is a kind of incarnation of music and inspiration. Poe’s poem “Al Araaf” includes odes to Ligeia as “the goddess of harmony” (Levine qtd. in preface to Poe 54). A later explanation of the story, editorially supervised by Poe, also describes Ligeia as the personification of music and intuitive creativity (Levine, Poe 54). Indeed, Poe’s story describes Ligeia’s appearance in musical terms. Her voice is “dear music . . . low [and] sweet,” and the “enthraling elegance of her low musical language” captivates the narrator (56-57). In the person of Ligeia, music is the beauty and mystery of creativity, drawn from the human spirit.

Armed with her intelligence and possessing a very strong will, Ligeia creates a song with a clear intent. Her fervor to express herself reveals her true motive and the challenge she sees: she wants to prevent her life and her inspired voice from being silenced by death. On the night of her passing, she begs the narrator to recite her work “The Conqueror Worm” to her. Ligeia’s main artistic achievement is not exactly a song, but a poem. However, the narrator considers it to be “verses composed by herself” (Poe 60), and there is certainly a music to the rhythm and rhyme of the verse. Furthermore, Poe believed that poetry had a musicality. In “Ligeia” and several other Poe stories, interpolated poems do seem to function as musical interludes or songs might do in a musical on stage. They are brief moments when the action stops in order to present a lyric expression that is more measured and more emotional, designed to comment on the inner state of things before the action resumes.

“The Conqueror Worm” (Poe 60-61) is a tale of the universal power of death, presented as an extended metaphor of a night at the theatre. The form of the poem is like an opera or play in itself. The first stanza acts as a musical overture, while the “angel throng” take their seats and the curtain rises. A bouncy, ever-shifting puppet performance in the second stanza, full of “mimes, in the form of God on high” brought “low” as “mere puppets,” can be likened to a comedic first act or to an opera’s pastoral ballet. The cries of “it shall not be forgot!” and the philosophical realization that the circle “ever returneth in” is the poem’s dramatic aria, cut short by a tragic shift into the fourth stanza, and the arrival of the Worm. The “pangs” of the perishing humans and the repetition of “it writhes!” create a frightening, thudding conclusion to the play. The final stanza corresponds to the end of the opera; the curtains fall as the angels leave

in silence, accompanied only by the soft funeral dirge of “out—out—out all” (60-61).

Musical wordplay is present throughout this heavenly theater, and it points to the true significance of the poem. As the angels take their seats, an orchestra “breathes fitfully / the music of the spheres” (Poe 60). *Musica mundana*, literally “music of the spheres,” was a concept recorded by the Roman musical theorist and statesman Boethius, describing the movement of the planets as the large-scale harmony of all life. In Ligeia’s poem, just like in Roderick Usher’s twisted compositions, life seems to be falling out of harmony: the orchestra is breathing “fitfully” (60), as though already on its deathbed. Throughout the second stanza, the play is described in quaint, nursery-rhyme phrases such as the onomatopoeic “mutter and mumble,” and the assonant “hither and thither” (60). The words emphasize the futility of man’s efforts in life in a very musical way.

Although the narrator is the performer of the verses, they certainly move Ligeia, who “half shriek[s]” as she ponders whether it has to be true. In her heightened emotional state, she imparts one more cryptic verse to the narrator: man need not yield to death entirely, “save only through the weakness of his feeble will” (Glanville qtd. in Poe 61). This refrain, the epigram of the story, is repeated four times throughout the tale, though notably only while Ligeia is alive. The emotional drama of “The Conqueror Worm” stirs the feelings of its composer, giving her strength “*but* for life” (Poe 60) when she is coming face-to-face with death. In fact, the song paves the way for the ideas that set Ligeia on the path toward defeating death itself.

There is one more significant aspect of Ligeia’s song. It would be difficult to learn any emotional truths about a character if the person in question was never able to make their voice known. Ligeia’s song characterizes her in her own words, and on her own terms. These verses are starkly different from the other paragraphs about Ligeia. Although the narrator is clearly infatuated with and awed by her, most of his descriptions are merely outside observations of her appearance or vague explanations of her scholarly interests. The narrator admits to being aware but uncomprehending when it comes to the depth of Ligeia’s emotion and will: “the outwardly calm, the ever-placid Ligeia, was the most violently a prey to the tumultuous vultures of stern passion. And of such passion [he] could form no estimate” (Poe 58). The story is named after Ligeia, but this song is the only time her creative “voice” is truly heard. Even though her verses are actually recited by someone else, the song nevertheless expresses Ligeia’s deepest convictions and struggles, something that would otherwise never be revealed in the narration. When she implores him to recite and reflect on the poem, Ligeia has a chance to hint to the narrator about the problem weighing down her heart — her own mortality — before she dies. Although she never admits her musings outright, these verses give her the drive she needs to fight for her life, even from the other side of death. Her song provides the only way for her to express her sentiments, which may not be spoken aloud, but are

powerful enough to help her thwart death itself. Without the song, this deeper level of her character would be entirely lost.

Song remains an incredibly important literary device because it allows access to a depth of character that would never be explicitly revealed. In the work of Poe, music and verse illuminate the complicated psyches of his most striking characters. To add deeper meaning to his previously published tales, Poe intentionally inserted these songs, and they work in tandem with each story's musical imagery. This technique does not end with Poe — the tradition of song as a vehicle for emotional expression is persistent throughout American literature. Why is this phenomenon so enduring? Perhaps song in literature is so effective because, to a certain extent, it is actually impossible to fully bring to life on the page. Words do not have sounds in the world—only in our minds and voices do they truly come alive. When music appears in literature, it requires the readers to fill in the blanks for the silent songs they read. We give the characters a voice with our own musical choices, which have been informed by our emotions, connotations, outside knowledge, and understanding of the characters' situation. Music and song in literature opens the door to greater emotional complexity within the story. It not only adds greater harmony to a work; it invites the reader to finish the song and bring its power into their world with “the voice of a thousand waters” (Poe 103).

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