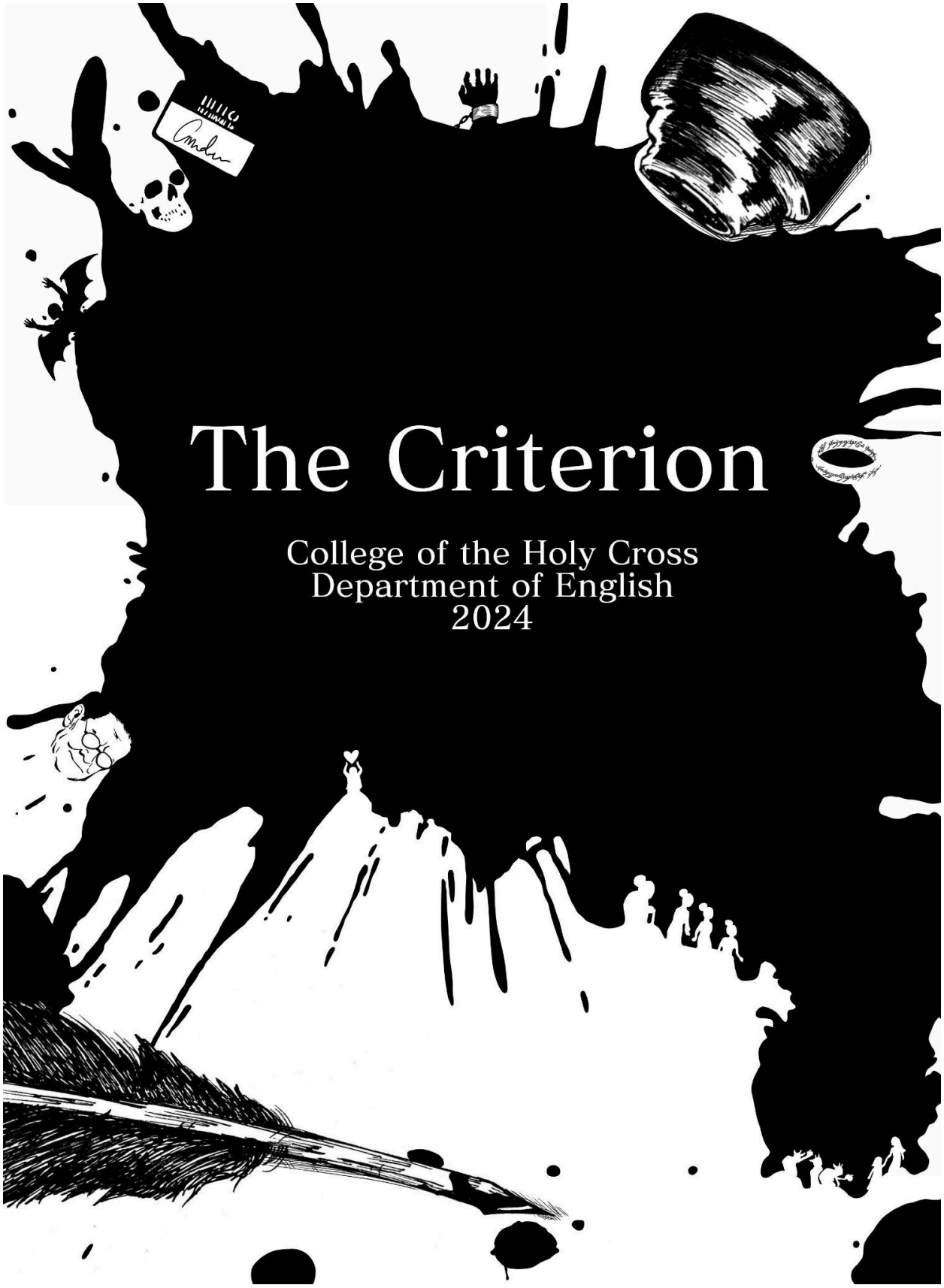
The Criterion

Volume 2024 *The Criterion* Article 10

5-31-2024

The Criterion (2024)



The Criterion

College of the Holy Cross
Department of English
2024

The Criterion

An Undergraduate Journal of Literary Criticism
The 2023-2024 Academic Year

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With special thanks to Ethan Peng ‘24 for the cover design.

Editor's Note

The *Criterion* is a journal open to all English students and published during the spring semester of each academic year. This year, we are excited to feature a wide range of essays, such as papers which consider the thought process of demons in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, analyze the role of language in Tolkein's *Lord of the Rings* series, and examine the depiction of disabilities in multiple texts, among others.

The editorial board is staffed by English students who are members of the Nu Chi chapter of the Sigma Tau Delta international honor society. This edition of The *Criterion* presents papers written during Spring and Fall 2023. We're also continuing last year's new policy of including submissions written in any literature course, including English and Studies in World Literatures.

As with most endeavors, publishing this journal would have been impossible without the help of many people. In particular, we extend our wholehearted thanks to Professor Hayley Stefan for her constant support, guidance, and enthusiasm; as well as Lisa Villa of Dinand Library, for all her earnest counsel and assistance in uploading the journal onto CrossWorks.

We also wish to 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. We are grateful for Elise Saad's work advertising the publication within the department. We especially offer our appreciation to all of the students who submitted exceptional work this year.

- The Editors (Matt, Anna, and Bella)

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"No Friend Like a Sister": Christina Rosetti's Fantastic Departure from Pre-Raphaelite Poetics and Art in "Goblin Market"

Anna Lee '24

College of the Holy Cross

From the jingle iterating the opening of the poem to the nursery rhyme punctuating its end, Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market" has invited interpretations ranging from the climactic effect of industrialization in 1860s England to the ambivalent roles of women in capitalist markets. Ironically, the mode that allows these social critiques to emerge — that is, Rossetti's employment of the fantastic — has received comparably little attention, relegated to footnotes of more prominent thematic patterns. In this essay, I will argue that Rossetti's poetic venture employs the fantastic as a departure from male poetic traditions created by her immediate circle: The Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood (PRB). Indeed, the PRB became Rossetti's actual "marketplace"; in a parallel to the content of "Goblin Market," Rossetti's brother, Dante Gabriel,[1] was extraordinarily involved in the publication process, even selecting the title "Goblin Market" and designing artistic accompaniments to the poem (Helsinger 15). Despite her exclusion, Rossetti formulated a feminist revision of fantasy and its components rather than entertaining the male traditions in the PRB's poetry and visual art. As a paradoxical agent of her own marketing process, Rossetti informs her subversive choice of fantasy for "Goblin Market" by replacing the traditional mercantile brotherhood with homosocial female alternatives.

Before turning to Rossetti's direct experimentation with fantasy in "Goblin Market," readers must first understand the sociohistorical circumstances under which the poem emerged.

[1] Dante Gabriel was the foremost founder of the PRB in 1848, alongside William Holman Hunt and John Everett Millais.

While Christina Rossetti was sister to two of the PRB's members and briefly engaged to another,[2] she was excluded from the homosocial fraternity and their musings on late medieval art and literature. Dante Gabriel explained that including Rossetti in the PRB's discussions "would bring her to a pinch of nervousness infinitely beyond" the male members of the group, framing his sister under the Victorian gender distinction of the hysterical woman.[3] Even if he were to admit Rossetti into the PRB's meetings, Dante Gabriel "merely intended that she should entrust her productions to [his] reading…," suggesting her proximity to the PRB depended more on matters of controlling her textual productions, rather than her contribution of ideas (Weintraub 30). As Dorothy Mermin astutely observes, "Rossetti's sense of poetical possibilities was restricted by Pre-Raphaelite assumptions about the subjects, moods, and tones appropriate to art," especially at the nexus between imagination and eroticism. However, in "Goblin Market," Mermin continues, Rossetti "shows that the erotic and imaginative intensity cultivated by the Brotherhood need not be self-enclosing, all-engrossing, or male" (Mermin 117). Mermin's argument spotlights the work Rossetti engaged in beyond the immediate world of "Goblin Market," and her generic choice of fantasy as a deliberate denouncement of masculine imaginative traditions. Although Rossetti may have refrained from directly voicing her discontentment with the PRB's masculine reimagining of late medieval art, her fantastic rejection of fraternal bonds, male-dominated markets, and artistry in "Goblin Market" suggest her interest in an alternate, feminine Pre-Raphaelite world.

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[2] Rossetti was sister to Dante Gabriel and William Michael Rossetti, as well as (temporary) fiancé to James Collinson. The engagement ended after Collinson reverted to Roman Catholicism, an affront to Rossetti's Ango-Catholic beliefs.

[3] Victorian labels of "hysterical" women – whether the labeled suffered from actual mental disorders by today's standards, were epileptic, or were simply non-conformists – was the most common label for women of the period. Elaine Showalter traces hysteria's understanding as a distinctly female pathology to Victorian medicine and medics. (Showalter 286).

Rossetti's defiance of male-dominated exchange emerges in her descriptions of the goblins, caricaturing the male characters or "merchants" of the poem. The goblins are at once non-human creatures, but at other times, recognizable "little men:" a trick of fantasy that subverts the PRB's adoration for the Gothic[4] and parallels the men's deceptive hybrid appearances (55). Even in humanistic renditions, Rossetti's language infantilizes the goblins into "little" and pitiful creatures, rather than the intimidating merchants they may conceive themselves as. In a likely caricature of the male authors, poets, and artists in her immediate circle, Rossetti constructs a list of the goblin men:

> One had a cat's face,
> One whisk'd a tail,
> One tramp'd at a rat's pace,
> One crawl'd like a snail,
> One like a wombat prowl'd obtuse and furry,
> One like a ratel tumbled hurry skurry (*GM*, 71-76).

This passage insists on self-enclosed competition, with predator (cat) and prey (rat) belonging to the same circle. By listing examples of differentiation among the male creatures, Rossetti suggests that the goblins are also subject to self-made creations of capital competition, through the market's hierarchal, predatorial maneuvers. Rather than privileging similarity and comradery among male characters, the distinct characteristics attached to each creates social striations between merchants and their competitors. Part of the poem's configuration, Elizabeth Campbell argues, lies "in this subversive world of fantasy," where "only the women…are endowed with humanity: the male figures in the poem are a different species of being" (Campbell 399). To build upon Campbell's argument, Rossetti's subversion does not just operate within a preexisting framework of fantasy, but departs from earlier generic traditions, especially those formulated by

[4] The PRB's interest in the Gothic Revival – a resurgence in Gothic design, art, architecture, and various other fields – found its way into many of their poems. "The Blessed Damozel," for instance, incorporates the talking dead and mysticism.

male writers. Moving beyond fantastic representations in which male characters occupy the roles of chivalric heroes (Beowulf, for instance), or even in their animalistic or villainous renditions, masculine, active creatures (such as the Beast from Andrew Lang's *Beauty and the Beast*), Rossetti's male characters are not only dehumanized, but among the most pathetic forms of non-human representation.

In her catalog of the goblin men, Rossetti also uses six lines to "illustrate" members of the goblin "brotherhood," attacking the PRB's formative engagement with the visual arts. With her engagement to James Collinson called off years earlier, she accounted for only six members of the original PRB, as expressed in two satirical poems. With the exciting stimulus of the PRB's founding days well in the past, and its original members dispersed across the world, Rossetti left her first poem on the brotherhood half-completed but highly informative of her later work in "Goblin Market":

> The two Rossetti's (brothers they)
> And Holman Hunt and John Millais,
> With Stephens chivalrous and bland
> And Woolner in a distant land,
> In these six men I awestruck see
> Embodied the great P.R.B. (The P.R.B. poem I, 1-6).

These "six men" could very well double as the sextet of goblins in "Goblin Market," with the same wry, satirical portrayals present in Rossetti's first poem on the PRB. The "great" male-dominated marketplaces described in either poem are actually run by six men with questionable ambitions. Rather than the women, it is the men who have lost their way or "fallen" from grace ("the great P.R.B."), resigned to a life in which "William Rossetti, calm and solemn / Cuts up his brethren by the column" (The P.R.B. poem I, 11-12). The goblin and PRB, so easily broken by the hierarchal dominance of one (William Michael, or the goblin described as a "cat") over the others (such as the goblin described as "rat"), stand inferior to the equal sisterhood

formed between Lizzie and Laura. Rather than privileging difference (and thus, creating a hierarchy between self and Other), Lizzie and Laura share a distinct likeness to each other, indistinguishable even with their differences in wealth (as Lizzie wields a silver penny, while Laura does not) or social standing: "Golden head by golden head / Like two pigeons in one nest" (*GM*, 184-5). Acknowledging the intrinsic oneness of the two sisters, Rossetti demonstrates the superiority of their bond compared to their male counterparts. While the brotherhood thrives from competition and troublesome power structures, the sisterhood persists firmly according to non-hierarchical grace and sacrificial generosity.

Building on her critique of poetry, Rossetti's language attacks and departs from the PRB's traditions on another, more famous, account: their visual art. Several members of the original PRB — James Collinson, William Holman Hunt, Dante Gabriel, John Everett Millais, Thomas Woolner, and Frederic George Stephens — were aspiring artists, and imbued their paintings with the fantastic, Gothic, and medieval, relying on literary sources from English Romantics such as Tennyson and Keats (Prettejohn 2). More renowned for their paintings than their poetry, these painters' aesthetic attitudes towards women depended on actual models — including Rossetti and Dante Gabriel's muse, Elizabeth Siddal[5] — and their reclusive positions on canvas. Rossetti modeled as the Virgin Mary for Dante Gabriel, bringing his works such as "The Girlhood of Mary Virgin" and "Ecce Ancilla Domini!" to fruition. In both paintings, the Rossetti-Virgin figure occupies domestic spaces, engaging in embroidery and following the guidance of another, more important female figure. She is no longer the immaculate Mary of Scripture, but almost infantilized into a position of docility, rendering her halo an apparent contradiction to her

[5] Elizabeth Siddal, curiously (as a matter of coincidence or intention) nicknamed "Lizzie" was Dante Gabriel's muse, mistress, then eventual wife. According to Mermin, Lizzie did not get along with her sister-in-law, suggesting that "Goblin Market" "imagine[s] a sisterly feeling among them that did not, so far as Christina Rossetti was concerned, actually exist" (Mermin 110).

domestic stance. In rendering the Rossetti-Virgin figure this way, Dante Gabriel compromises the high religiosity of Mary, reducing her stature to a young, naïve woman in need of guidance for more "suitable" female occupations.

"Goblin Market" revises Dante Gabriel's portrayals of the Virgin and other women in his artistry, with Rossetti holding the artist's pen in her depictions of the male goblins. In an inversion of the gendered artist-subject relationship of the PRB, "Goblin Market" portrays the male characters in positions nearing backwards evolution, no doubt consigning them to similarly degrading, static renditions in Rossetti's feminine Pre-Raphaelite world. Describing the goblins again, "Brother with queer brother; / Signalling each other, / Brother with sly brother," Rossetti renders a brotherhood dependent on queer deception: a fundamentally non-human and secular form of bonding, sutured together by temptation and commercial exploitation (*GM*, 94-96). While Rossetti does not explicitly refer to the brotherhood in these passages, she still departs from the PRB's artistic traditions of female passivity and male activity. No longer the silent muse who modeled for Dante Gabriel's paintings, Rossetti offers a radical departure from the PRB's traditions by locating humanity only within the women characters and depriving it from the men.

With the highly detailed descriptions of the Medieval pastoral landscape, Rossetti's poem also criticizes the natural components of the male Pre-Raphaelite world, brimming with a satirical inversion of their takings to artifice and illusion. The excessive array of fruit in the opening jingle — "Apples and quinces / Lemons and oranges / Plump unpeck'd cherries, Melons and raspberries," mimics a scene that resembles the backdrop to a Pre-Raphaelite painting (*GM*, 5-8). One of the PRB's formative influences, William Henry Hunt, created still-life paintings of fruit that John Ruskin even praised in his monograph on Pre-Raphaelitism.[6] In both Hunt's

[6] Ruskin praises Hunt's "simple love of our summer fruit and flowers" in his monograph (*Notes by Mr. Ruskin*, p. 378). Some of the paintings with a quality resembling the display in "Goblin Market" include "Fruit," "Still Life of a Pineapple, Grapes, and Pomegranate," and "Still Life of an Apple, Grapes, and Nuts." In "Pineapple, Grapes and

renditions and Rossetti's list, the fruits are clearly artificial — they exist in perpetual ripeness, despite their different harvesting periods across the calendar year. Food adulteration, a common practice in Victorian England,[7] allowed merchants to present these fruits alongside each other no matter the season, as one 1855 pamphlet states: green fruits "are almost invariably coppered to give them a false colour," hence mimicking ripeness (*How to Detect Adulteration*, 22-23). Engaging one of the contemporary discourses of the 1860s, Rossetti's language taps into her audience's probable knowledge of adulteration; undercurrents of reality permeate her fantastical world, suggesting the poem ought not to be read as just a derivation of the fairy tale. Rather, gesturing back to the "real world," the goblins' cornucopia of tantalizing fruits are poison and unethical products of the marketplace, suggestively much like the poetic "fruits" of the PRB.

By presenting poetry and art that privilege artifice and fraudulent fruits over the actual life cycle of the natural world, the PRB's intentions seem, in Rossetti's hands, more delusory than sincere. Indeed, if reading the goblin market as an extension of the male-dominated poetic marketplace, then the textual "fruits" of the PRB's labor may be mere illusions: distractions from greater didactic purposes and the presence of the sacrament in ordinary (not manufactured) life. Rossetti's other works, such as her second poem on the PRB — "The P.R.B. in its Decadence" – inform the brotherhood's abundance of artifice in relation to fruit: "So rivers merge in the perpetual sea, / So luscious fruit must fall when over ripe, / And so the consummated P.R.B." (The P.R.B. 12-14). Despite the "luscious fruits" preserved in the pastoral landscapes in the PRB's paintings, Rossetti reminds readers that all fruit is susceptible to rot. Contrary to the

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Pomegranate," the array of fruits cannot exist together, unless adulterated: pineapples are ripe from March to July, grapes from August to October, and pomegranate from September to November. Notably, Ruskin was the same critic who dismissed Rossetti's poetics as irregular in meter and violent to the common ear, encouraging Dante Gabriel to engage his sister with more appropriate forms.

[7] From adding alum and chalk to flour, from contaminating spices with lead and mercury, food adulteration caused significant health problems for the common buyer in the Victorian marketplace. Such practices effectively allowed merchants to maintain high profits with cheap supplies."

suspended artifice of Hunt's paintings, or in the influential Romantic works, such as Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn,"[8] or "Eve of St. Agnes,"[9] Rossetti's imaginary world remains susceptible to the decaying influences of passing time. In "Goblin Market," too, the sensual fruit, no doubt employing the Edenic narrative, is all temptation and no substance: a product of the masculine, mercantile economy that leaves Laura pining after fraudulent symbols and ideas. By emphasizing the dangers of artifice and the PRB's desire for preservation, Rossetti's poems gesture towards a new sort of imaginative labor: one that appreciates the temporal impermanence of the real world and aims to make progress despite its challenges.

Rossetti's critique of PRB masculinist aesthetics also extends to feminized appropriations of medieval theology, transforming the PRB's Christian tropes of passive, demure, and domestic women. Linda H. Peterson identifies these Christological themes of sacrifice in the PRB's works, contrary to those posed in "Goblin Market," as "Rossetti does not introduce a male figure to save Laura – as her brother Dante Gabriel did … in his painting "*Found*"[10] (Peterson 219-20). To omit a male savior would be ludicrous enough, but with the replacement of a heroine, Rossetti makes a radical choice with the Christlike Lizzie:

> 'Never mind my bruises,
> Hug me, kiss me, suck my juices
> Squeezed from goblin fruits for you,
> Goblin pulp and goblin dew.
> Eat me, drink me, love me;
> Laura, make much of me:

[8] The images and symbols are quite literally frozen in Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn," wherein the speaker observes the painted scenes of Greek civilization and rustic landscapes on an ancient relic. The timelessness of art in Keats' poem stands in contrast to Rossetti's approach in "Goblin Market," who shows how timeless perfection (via the artificial fruit) can be decadent to a harmful degree.

[9] Keats provides a decadent catalogue of fruits in "Eve of St Agnes:" "… Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd; / With jellies soother than the creamy curd, / And lucent syrops, tinct with cinnamon; / Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd / From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one, / From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon" (265-270). These lines echo the descriptions of fruits in "Goblin Market," emphasizing the PRB's inclinations towards decadence, extravagance, and artifice (especially related to fruit).

[10] Dante Gabriel's *Found* depicts the rescuing of a prostitute at the hands of a young farmer. *Found* was lauded for its extravagant treatment of contemporary social issues and the growth of urbanization, with the woman, looking away in apparent shame, seeming to take the hand of the farmer and accepting his grace.

> For your sake I have braved the glen
> And had to do with goblin merchant men.' (GM 467-474)

Engaging contemporary discussions and celebrations of late medieval culture, Rossetti appropriates the PRB's conceptions of art through the symbolically rich medium of the Eucharist. With liturgical resonances to Christ's words at the last supper — "'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me' … 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me'"[11] — Rossetti reenacts the Eucharistic events that allow mankind to "make much" of Christ's sacrificial action. As though the "goblin pulp and goblin dew" become extensions of Lizzie, she becomes the vehicle through which her sister can redeem herself — no longer the poison that robs Laura of her autonomy, but the cure, when displaced onto the female body. It is only when Laura re-consumes the fruits, crushed onto the wounds of her sister (echoing the wounds inflicted on Christ), that she achieves liberation. Here, moral and ethical salvation emerge from bonds of sisterhood, not the presence of a male savior so often located in the PRB's artistry. Instead, Lizzie offers her body for her sister's consumption and healing, asserting herself as a medicinal commodity.

With Lizzie sacrificing her body as a consumable site of redemption, Rossetti rejects the PRB's portrayals of women's bodies as sustenance for the carnal male appetite. A particularly apt poem of comparison is Dante Gabriel's poem, "Jenny," which Rossetti makes several probable references to. "Jenny," a dramatic monologue wherein a male customer watches a sleeping prostitute (Jenny) after their relations, surrounds the figuratively consumable or interpretable female body. Much like a reader enveloped in a novel, Dante Gabriel's speaker exclaims of Jenny: "You know not what a book you seem, / Half-read by lightning in a dream!" ("Jenny," 51-2). Repeatedly relating Jenny's body to a book — a textual, consumable site of

[11] Corinthians 11:24, 25

interpretation — the speaker posits himself as the moral "savior" of Jenny's situation, pondering and sympathizing with her occupation. Importantly, Jenny, herself, is never positioned as a reader or writer, only ever capable of being read and written upon (both sexually and physically) by her male clients. Ultimately, however, the speaker leaves Jenny to her station; he acknowledges her horrific circumstances yet does nothing to resolve them. While Dante Gabriel could very well be critiquing such masculinist attitudes towards women, his authorial participation in which he centers his artistry around the objectification of women — no less, his sister[12] — suggests his complicity or even empathy with the speaker's enterprise.

If reading the three mentions of an ambiguous "Jeanie" in "Goblin Market" as a pointed criticism of Dante Gabriel's poem, then Rossetti rewrites Jenny's ending, gesturing towards a greater lesson in actionable empathy. In a warning overflowing with Pre-Raphaelite imagery, Lizzie reminds Laura of Jeanie, a third sister who met her slow demise after tasting the goblin fruit. While Lizzie's warning comes too late for Laura, Jeanie's story exemplifies the ambiguous position of a woman navigating a male-dominated marketplace: at once, Jeanie is a spinster who "pined and pined away;" a barren mother where "no grass will grow;" but also licentious and fallen, having "[eaten] their fruits and [worn] their flowers" (GM, 150, 154, 158). With these contradictions of status, Rossetti's "Jeanie" encapsulates the contradictory positions of women in the mercantile economy — grossly unfeminine and sexual in their independence, yet simultaneously resigned to a life of an unsatisfied old woman. Unlike Dante Gabriel's Jenny, however, Rossetti's Jeanie is only unredeemable because she is dead. Laura, who follows a similar path of "fallenness" to Jeanie, can be saved, through the grace of her sister. Equipped with a silver penny, perhaps suggesting her economic privilege over Laura, Lizzie "[braves] the

[12] Recall earlier quotes from his letters about his sister, relegating her to a "nervous" critic (a typical stereotype assigned to women).

glen" out of sacrificial generosity, rewriting the conventional typological act reproduced in the PRB's artistry and poetry. And, in doing so, Laura makes a full recovery from her fallenness, rescued at the brink of the same fate that Jenny met, with Lizzie fulfilling the mission that Dante Gabriel's speaker does not.

The suffering that Lizzie endures is not merely an example of *imitatio Christi*, but a feminine revision of the PRB's masculine hermeneutics. To simply "suffer," in the Christological sense, is insufficient for Rossetti's feminine Pre-Raphaelite vision — rather, Lizzie must endure a specific type of bodily assault to liberate her sister and herself from the market. This comes in the form of a thinly veiled sexual assault, when the goblins force themselves on Lizzie, upon her denying their invitation to eat alongside them:

> They trod and hustled her,
> Elbow'd and jostled her,
> Claw'd with their nails,
> Barking, mewing, hissing, mocking,
> Tore her gown and soil'd her stocking,
> Twitch'd her hair out by the roots,
> Stamp'd upon her tender feet,
> Held her hands and squeez'd their fruits
> Against her mouth to make her eat. (GM, 406-7).

While this passage certainly resonates with the suffering of Christ, Rossetti adds a highly erotic and gendered component to the attack. The possessive behind "fruits," with the addition of "their," (instead of, say, "*the* fruits") makes the goblin fruit a phallic extension of the male body. With the elusive positioning of Rossetti's fantastical world, the fruit may double as another phallic symbol — the artist's or the writer's pen, thus positing the goblin fruit as holding and dispelling the seminal ink of the male poetic tradition. In Rossetti's immediate sociohistorical circumstances, too, women in mercantile male-dominated economies were subject to all sorts of assault: not just of criticism or disapproval, but of sexual degradation. The 1860s prostitute, for

example, posed a critical threat to the independent economy, appearing in public as a free, marketable agent: as both commodifier and commodity.[13] The prostitute encapsulated a multitude of contemporary anxieties, including widespread disgust of female sexuality and the body (both of which can be identified in "Goblin Market"), and the privileging of women of higher social classes over their lower counterparts. Laura and Lizzie engage in similar behaviors as commodifiers and commodities of the goblin market (though not crossing a distinct line into prostitution), exemplifying their ambiguous position as women navigating a sexually and economically violent sphere of exchange. Rejecting the commonly held beliefs and superstitions attached to lower-class or fallen women, neither Laura or Lizzie discriminates against the other according to her station.

With significant charity involvement with women of lower social stations, Rossetti's portrayal of feminine equality is informed by actionable empathy among real sisterhoods, as explicated in her supplementary poetry. Jill Rappoport investigates Rossetti's volunteer work at St. Mary Magdalene's Penitentiary in Highgate as a fervent member of the Anglican sisterhood, positing that Rossetti's literal service work and poetic enterprise "'rescue[s]' women at the margins of Victorian sexual propriety," (Rappoport 855). Rappoport connects Rossetti's parallel missions, as both an Anglican sister and constructor of textual sisterhood, which both help redeem prostitutes or other "fallen women," shunned by the major populace. Beyond "Goblin Market," Rossetti's other poetry, such as "In an Artist's Studio," hold the male character responsible for the woman's helpless condition. Upon seeing a series of portraits of a young woman in "In an Artist's Studio," the male character "feeds upon her face by day and night / … /

[13] In 19th century England, prostitution was widely labeled "The Great Social Evil." A site of morbid fascination, prostitution brought several issues to light, at the nexus of morality, ethicality, medicine, gender, legislation, class, and economics. Repeal feminist leaders, such as Josephine Butler, refused any distinction between middle-class and working-class women, proclaiming, "Economics lie at the very root of morality" (Butler). A similar refusal of distinction emerges in "Goblin Market" – while Lizzie has a silver penny and Laura does not, the two sisters are otherwise almost completely indistinguishable.

not as she is, but as she fills his dream" ("In an Artist's Studio, 9, 14). Just as the speaker of "Jenny" textually feeds upon the image of the sleeping prostitute, the male artist of "In an Artist's Studio" depends on a cycle of constant renewal, consuming the image of the painted woman in numerous refractions. Likewise, the goblin fraternity also needs repeated sustenance, achieved through the consumption of their female victims. In both of Rossetti's texts, the woman, to the man, is unsuitable for anything but their "dream": an "angel of the house,"[14] who has no purpose other than her figurative or literary nourishment for the male viewer.

Rather than continuing this tradition of passive, sexless women in the PRB's art, and the long male tradition preceding them, Rossetti creates a woman (through Laura) who can be both fallen and redeemed — capable of sexual degradation, but equally assured in her restored station. From the beginning of the poem, Laura appears as the quintessential Pre-Raphaelite woman, having "stretched her gleaming neck / Like a rush-imbedded swan, /… / Like a vessel at the launch," in resemblance to the elegant, long-limbed women of Dante Gabriel's paintings or perhaps, like the painted object of desire in "In an Artist's Studio" (GM, 81-3). And, as Mermin rightly notes, "an association of woman and drifting boat … recalls a favorite Pre-Raphaelite subject, the Lady of Shalott," and the long, loose hair of painted Pre-Raphaelite women (Mermin 109). While sharing some superficial characteristics with the traditional Pre-Raphaelite woman, Laura is also the antithesis of her; she enters the market of her own accord, and in a reference to Alexander Pope,[15] attains the goblin fruit as she "clipp'd a precious golden lock" (126). By buying the fruit with her hair, Laura becomes the object of the market itself, emphasizing the

[14] In either a matter of coincidence or intention, the choice of "Laura" in "Goblin Market" echoes Petrarch's muse Laura, the ideal Laura of Coventry Patmore's "Angel in the House," and the equivalent position of the painted woman in "In an Artist's Studio." While a common name in many poems, novels, and productions of the time, it is worth noting the long (male) tradition that "Laura" emerged from – and perhaps, indicates more subversive work on Rossetti's part.

[15] Curiously, Pope's *Rape of the Lock* also subverts the genre of its inception (mock-heroic poem) – suggesting that Rossetti, too, employs her predecessor's fondness for satirical departure from tradition.

dangers of female consumerism. One difference, though minor, separates Rossetti's female characters from the male tradition preceding her; in Pope's "Rape of the Lock," the Baron severs Belinda's coveted lock – in "Goblin Market," Laura cuts her own hair. Thus, even though Laura still participates in a mercantile economy in which she will be exploited and abused, she wields some autonomy over her choice to exchange.

Like Laura, Lizzie exercises a distinct mode of commercial and bodily autonomy in the male-dominated marketplace, emphasizing the extension of homosocial female bonds in both religious and lay spheres. Showing the sacrificial payoff of Lizzie's suffering for the rescue of other women, Rossetti's language celebrates the heroine's ravaged female body. Describing Lizzie's escape with a tone of triumph, Rossetti renders her suffering a heroic act: "And [Lizzie] heard her penny jingle / Bouncing in her purse, -- / Its bounce was music to her ear / … / The kind heart made her windy-paced / That urged her home quite out of breath with haste / And inward laughter" (*GM*, 452-4, 461-3). Lizzie emerges from the goblin market harmed, but still equipped — not just with her silver penny still in possession, but with the antidote for her sister. She brings her own body to the market, transforming it into a Eucharistic antidote for Laura, and, contrary to the male speaker of "Jenny," does do something about her sister's "fallen" station. She, while largely powerless in an unfair battle against the goblins, ultimately leaves victorious, propelled by virtue and selflessness. In positing the suffering of the female martyr as a celebratory act, Rossetti reaffirms the religious *and* secular bonds between women, allowing them to achieve support and encouragement within her re-envisioned female Pre-Raphaelite world.

Amid Rossetti's fervent social and cultural commentary, readers may question her embrace of Medieval fantasy: a comparably unrealistic mode, not entirely reflective of the

contemporary discourses of 1860s England. Yet, in working within a mode that the PRB emphasized in their works,[16] and that the English Romantics lauded in theirs,[17] Rossetti appropriates the male-dominated genre for her own purposes. In a creative spin on the traditional fairy tale, "Goblin Market" resists realism through its charms, Gothic themes, and nonhuman creatures, not necessarily as a means of escapism, but to envision a dreamlike projection of an alternative Pre-Raphaelite world. It is both a "fantasy of feminine freedom, heroism, and self-sufficiency and a celebration of sisterly and maternal love," as Mermin posits, but also one that concerns the very real positions of women navigating male-dominated spaces (Mermin 108). Neither, by her own admission, would Rossetti be better off in more direct sociopolitical commentary — writing to Dante Gabriel, she assures her brother that she will never "turn to politics or philanthropy with Mrs. Browning: such many-sidedness I leave to a greater than I…" (*The Family Letters*, 31). Referring to one of her contemporaries, the poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning (known for her comparably direct address of women's roles and social evils[18]), Rossetti distances herself from more "realistic" modes. Keeping instead to lyric themes, fairy tales, and ballads, she works within and beyond social commentary, choosing fantasy as the most suitable tool for generic subversion of the PRB's stringent boundaries.

Rossetti's use of fantasy is not merely a product of her personal preference but demands a substantial degree of engagement from her readers. In the careful balancing act between visionary utopias and real cultural commentary, the imaginative work that "Goblin Market" requires goes far beyond the fantastical world of the goblins. Rossetti's artistic choices in the

[16] Edward Burne-Jones' "The Beguiling of Merlin" (1872-77) portrays the Arthurian legend of Merlin and his infatuation with the Lady of the Lake. His other works, including "Beauty and the Beast tiles," "Cinderella," and "Sleeping Beauty tiles," all show a deep engagement with the fantastical traditions preceding the PRB.
[17] Keats' "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" is one of the best examples of the Romantics' use of fairy tales in their poetry. With strong resonance to Arthurian legend and Medieval ballads, the poem offers a unique imaginative experience (especially through Keats' fairy woman).
[18] As thoroughly explicated in her poem, "Aurora Leigh."

poem exceed its textual confines, gesturing towards possibilities that lie beyond the boundaries of the typically isolated Pre-Raphaelite world. Just as Lizzie and Laura manage a barrage of bodily attacks from the goblins of the marketplace, Rossetti endured a slew of critical assaults on her work from the male critics in her field. Ruskin, for example, slandered "Goblin Market" for its lines full "of quaintnesses and offences," and the poem's "irregular measure," which tainted the Pre-Raphaelite tradition grounded in "Spenser, Milton, Keats" (Ruskin, Rossetti, 258-9). In both form and meter, with its frequent breaks in pace, rhyme scheme, and structure, "Goblin Market" presents a break from the PRB's celebrations of traditional English Romantic poetry and form. Compared to the regular sestets of "The Blessed Damozel," for example, the structure of "Goblin Market" is remarkably uncontained and free, a choice that Ruskin denounces in his criticisms. Operating within such a tight and restrictive framework, it is no surprise that Rossetti chose formal experimentation, rather than abiding by a male tradition resurrected by male artists. More importantly, by imagining a poetic tradition removed from the PRB's conceptions of form, structure, and subject matter, Rossetti successfully maneuvers Pre-Raphaelite traditions within and beyond their conventional use.

Critics both within and beyond the PRB recognized the potential subversions that Rossetti's project created, which also secured a more hospitable creative space for future women poets. If Rossetti must endure the aggressive slew of gendered and "mocking" violence from the male literary tradition, then other women poets, represented through Laura, may be spared a similar fate. Ending "Goblin Market" with a feminine utopia, Rossetti introduces a unique site of literal and textual female reproduction:

> 'For there is no friend like a sister
> In calm or stormy weather;
> To cheer one on the tedious way,
> To fetch one if one goes astray,

> To lift one if one totters down,
> To strengthen whilst one stands.' (*GM*, 562-7).

By teaching the children to sing, "there is no friend like a sister," Laura formulates a unique folkloric tale that appreciates the value of women: a tradition severely lacking in the PRB's productions or in the general literary marketplace. Envisioning a realm without men — for, after the goblin men have imprinted their seminal ink on Lizzie and Laura, there is no longer any use for them — Rossetti initiates the cycle of literal and textual reproduction. This final jingle is undoubtedly a haunting one, with the dangers of the marketplace still a present threat, but it is somewhat muted by the distance forged between the real and fantastic. As nursery rhyme overlaps with fantasy, Laura plants the "seeds" of textual production in her children — a way of reproducing women's texts and bonds through the passing on of feminist texts and oral retellings.

Ending with this ideal sisterhood, removed from the male characters of the PRB but still emerging from their influence, Rossetti may also be envisioning a larger community of women writers, poets, and artists. After a series of subversions and sly affronts to the PRB's traditions and Romantic inspirations, the ending does not dismiss the presence of the male tradition, but affirms the possibility of an alternative one, with self-sustaining circulations and textual productions from women. No longer are women readers or viewers only able to identify themselves in the languid backdrops of Pre-Raphaelite works but may see themselves in the celebratory utopia presented at the end of "Goblin Market." Also planting seeds of inspiration in her fellow "sisters," Rossetti employs the generic flexibility of the fantastic in a final demand for a cohesive feminist vision, until the time comes when they can all inevitably blossom into poets with their own imaginative qualities.

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Milton's Exploration of the Demonic Consciousness

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John Milton's *Paradise Lost* challenged issues of modernity in his time, exploring matters of theodicy, human origin, and centrality of consciousness. Milton's hell and its accompanying capital, Pandaemonium, contain demonic entities capable of action and in search of redemption through retaliation. The anti-hero of "Paradise Lost" and the ruler of Hell, Satan, leads the other fallen angels in directing humanity astray while establishing their kingdom in defiance of Heaven. Milton's portrayal of his characters' cognition and behavior through a captious lens allows for an unprecedented analysis of the demonic consciousness. Milton's journey into hell and subsequent exit grasp the inner workings of the demonic. This journey illuminates the ways of God to man and how the demonic consciousness interacts with both the divine and the human, conveying Milton's profound understanding of human consciousness. Milton's navigation of Satan's manipulative charisma and malevolence towards divinity reveals the irreconcilable nature of demonic consciousness. In examining the deficiencies ingrained within demonic nature, Milton creates a parallel between human and Satanic thought.

Satan's charismatic revival of a defeated army highlights the demonic belief that defiance against God's will is inherent to their nature. When addressing the apostate angel, Satan reminds his fallen army that "to be weak is miserable, doing or suffering: but of this be sure, to do augh good never will be or task: but ever to do ill our sole delight: As being contrary to his high will whom we resist" (I.158-62). Satan recognizes the dejected state of his army after their eternal damnation but knows he and the other fallen angels have taken a path of rebellion that possesses

no absolution from God. Although weakness is a miserable state, to Satan the act of complying with or doing anything "good" will eternally be worse. Satan reminds the army of their "sole delight": acts of defiance. This delight only benefits Satan, allowing him to maintain his leadership position eternally. Deceived into believing their only source of contentment will come from acts of ill will, Satan's army continues to serve him. Satan galvanizes a collective group sharing the identity of rejecting the "his high will whom we resist," affirming his leadership with "his." "His" refers to God's high will that the army rejects, leaving them with Satan's will to accept. Once Satan convinces his army that their nature is inherently against the desire of God, they reject the truth that their rebellion stems from the free will granted to them by God. Both the charismatic deception by Satan and the army's acceptance of rebellion are conscious decisions by the demonic.

Satan employs a comparable method of manipulative rhetoric in his enticement of Eve, appealing to her desire for autonomy and authority that both the demonic and human share. Satan's temptation of Eve stems from his perverse perception of the relation between God and all other creation: God desires to suppress creation to remain the sole superior being. In an appeal to Eve's ego, Satan equates her with Adam, mirroring Satan's desire to attain the level of the son. Eve's critique of Adam's authority allows Satan to challenge God's authority over mankind, asking Eve "Why then was this forbid? Why… but to keep ye low and ignorant… he knows that in the day ye eat therof, your eyes, that seem so clear, yet are but dim, shall perfectly be then opened and cleared" (IX.702-04,705-08). Satan's manipulation stems from a distortion of God's intention he has created in his mind. In answering a question that he poses, Satan subconsciously justifies his rebellion against God. Satan believes the forbidden nature of the fruit keeps Adam and Eve "low and ignorant," failing to recognize that is his condition. Satan is kept "low" in the

depths of hell and continuously "ignorant" of God's true intention, capable only of misguiding those he tempts. Satan dictates to Eve that God's control and suppression of knowledge represent true evil, disobedience being the sole remedy. This resembles Satan's message to his fallen army, that "ever to do ill is our sole delight." Eve's susceptibility to believe Satan stems from a subconscious desire to increase her being, which Satan affirms to her as legitimate. Eve's fall parallels Satan's as "pride and worse ambition" (IV. 40) threw her down from Eden, mirroring the way Satan was expelled from Heaven. Milton's understanding of faith maintains that no being or entity can parallel the divinity of God, demonstrated in these shortcomings of consciousness.

Both Satan and Milton seek to achieve an unprecedented status within their domains, a deficiency of the demonic consciousness rooted in arrogance. Milton creates "Paradise Lost" as a literary work that seeks to transcend literary excellence: "with no middle flight intends to soar above the Aonian mount while it pursues things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme" (I.14-16). Milton attempts to pursue such excellence analogously to Satan's attempt to battle and achieve victory "against the throne and monarchy of God" (I.42). Milton's reference to the "Aonian mount" invites comparison to the unimaginable heights of Heaven that Satan seeks to "soar above," extending an invitation to compare Milton's work to his literary predecessors. The "Aonian mount" references the mountain on which the classical muses lived; Milton invokes a superior Muse in that of the Holy Spirit which was present at the beginning of creation. Milton intends to have a more profound source of inspiration, allowing him to create a biblical epic in English that "soars" above the literary excellence of those before. Milton's ambition propels him on a quest to surpass all others in "prose or rhyme," redefining the literary benchmark for mastery. Just as Satan fails to understand the Father who remains the supreme sovereign,

Milton's critique of those before him is blind to the praise classical poets deserve and retain. Milton's desire for autonomy is parallel to that of the demonic consciousness, the only difference being unprecedented greatness in a different domain. Milton's desire to separate himself from the work of celebrated poets emphasizes humanity's tendency to favor a self-serving nature in place of collective celebration, parallel to that of Satan's.

Milton's narration grants the reader access to the inner workings of Satan's consciousness, creating a character that is for a time morally ambiguous. Satan's eternal struggle with God invites the reader to view Satan sympathetically, but his intention ultimately reveals a superficial consciousness. Book four of "Paradise Lost " contains Satan's confession, where Satan reveals to himself the "fear, envy, and despair" (IV. Prologue) that rot his consciousness. Satan confesses "Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell; and in the lowest deep a lower deep still threatening to devour me opens wide. To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heaven" (IV. 75-78). Satan sees himself as embodying torment while spreading torment. "The lowest deep" Satan experiences parallels a human state of depression, where one believes despair to be expanding until it eventually "opens wide " and devours them. The existence of a "lower deep" beyond the misery of Hell creates a perpetual cycle of misery and loathing within Satan's mind. Satan's psychoanalysis of the self presents his condition as irreversible. However, Satan's paradoxical condition arises not from condemnation but from the conscious choice to reject God's will and forfeit the privilege of Heaven. Viewing himself as an anti-hero, Satan's introspection reveals his suffering is concurrently his strength. The power and status of Hell and its capital of Pandaemonium allow Satan, or so he thinks, to view eternal suffering as "a Heaven," revealing Satan's true desire. Pride drives Satan's decision to experience a cycle of torment, showcasing an insubstantial emotion devoid of remorse for past wrongs.

Milton examines familial strife within the demonic consciousness, exiting from Satan the self to Satan the father. Satan's fatherly imperfections are contrary to the love and dominion God provides for all creation. Satan's prideful blindness to the inherent responsibilities of fatherhood and guardianship leaves him with no substantial relationship to his perverted "family." When attempting to exit hell and journey towards Earth, Satan encounters Sin: his daughter and the mother of their incestuous child, Death. Sin addresses Satan, "O, father, what intends thy hand," she cried, "Against thy only son? What fury, O son, possesses thee to bend that mortal dart against thy father's head." (II.727-30). Sin addresses Satan as "father" and Death as his "only son," an allusion to the relationship between God and the Son. Satan is ignorant of the relationship the three hold between each other, telling Sin "I know thee not." (II.744). Satan's inclination to harm his creation is antithetical to that of God, demonstrating the ignorance of a father who cannot recognize his son and a son who does not recognize his father. Upon the revelation that Death is his son, Satan demonstrates no restraint in his desire to harm him. Even the unconditional love of family is unable to amend Satan's Hellish state, as the demonic conscience rejects growth in morality. Satan's futile quest to undermine his father distorts a potential father-child relationship, tainted by the perverse rape of Sin.

Milton advances upon his exploration of intimacy within the demonic consciousness through a juxtaposition of Satan and Adam's impressions of Eve. Their distinctive responses illustrate Eve's beauty and divinity, invoking momentary disarmament rooted in Satan's lust while prompting Adam to recognize their shared connection as intimate companions. Milton's narration of Satan's reaction demonstrates an erotic shock towards Eve's "graceful innocence, her every air of gesture, or least action, overawed his malice… that space the evil one abstracted stood from his evil, and for the time remained stupidly good, of enmity disarm, but the hot hell

that always in him burns" (IX.459-61,464-67). Although Satan experiences a moment of reflection, his malicious intention remains unchanged. Satan's disarmament roots itself in a moment of awe defined by the phrase "stupidly good." Milton's choice of "stupidly" places Satan in a state of stupor towards Eve, making Eve's inherent goodness unintelligible to the demonic. This goodness does not serve Satan's purposes, which have only been questioned by his mind until now. In his stupor, Satan fails to appreciate the divine, instead experiencing a hollow moment of erotic attraction. Once Satan regains his natural state, the envious Hell inside him "burns" once again, as lust is only temporary. Adam's account of his first impression of Eve to the angel Raphael reveals the purity of Adam's perception. Describing Eve, Adam notes "with what all earth or Heaven could bestow to make her amiable… grace was all in her steps, Heaven in her eyes, in every gesture of dignity and love" (VIII.483-84, 488-89). Although Adam admits an erotic attraction towards the "amiable" appearance of Eve, he accompanies this with an appreciation of their unity rooted in admiration of God's creation. Adam's depiction of the "Heaven in her eyes" represents a pure and divine connection between them. Adam elevates Eve to the position of an intimate, eternal companion while simultaneously appreciating the "grace all in her steps." Adam recognizes Eve shares similar sentiments, demonstrating "dignity and love" in her actions, a part of her empathetic nature. Divine love permeates the desire within Adam's mind, while the repulsion of lust metastasizes the demonic perception of attraction.

Milton reveals the demonic consciousnes's ultimate deficiency is the pursuit of decimation, constrained by the incapacity for humility. Satan previously maintained that "the mind is its place and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven," (I.254-55) a shallow justification for his fallen state. Satan's return to Pandaemonium after the successful temptation of Eve culminates into a "a crowd of ugly serpents" (X.583-39), the shape Satan took when

tempting Eve. Satan's climatic transformation represents a projection of his inner turmoil upon humanity, causing him to descend deeper into perpetual degradation for his rebellion against God. The demonic consciousness finally takes physical form, determining the demonic consciousness to be irreconcilable with divinity. Milton differentiates between the demonic consciousness and humans in Eve's climatic statement to Adam in which she demonstrates humility in the face of her sin, "witness Heaven what love sincere and reverence in my heart I bear thee… both have sinned, but thou against God only, I against God and thee" (X. 914-16, 930-31). Eve's desire to repent roots itself out of love for Adam and God's grace, allowing her to confess her sin in search of penance. Adam and Eve's willingness to admit wrongdoing in their temptation permits the chance for redemption. This redemption is found in living in an obedient relationship with God, which has the possibility of being better than Eden: "Then wilt thou not be loth to leave this Paradise, but shalt possess a Paradise within thee, happier far" (XII.585-87). Through future expression of virtue, Adam and Eve will rejoice in the fruits of obedience. However, the conscious mind retains the choice to sin, with punishment demonstrated in Satan's eternal condemnation.

Milton's exploration of the demonic consciousness through Satan discloses human likeness to the demonic but confirms we contain the means to mitigate temptation. Satan's perpetual defiance against the supreme sovereign contrasts with the human journey to redemption, which requires obedience to God. While the personal struggle with faith may resemble Satan's defiant temptation of Eve, Milton's redemption of humanity's fall places the decision to repent or rebel within our consciousness.

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The Facade of Names in Benjamin Clark's "The Emigrant"

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Benjamin Clark's poem "The Emigrant" frequently refers to America without naming it directly, which emphasizes his strained relationship with his country of birth and highlights the inherent lie of its concept of freedom. While writing poetry about the issues of racism in America was not unique at the time with poems like "Let America Be America Again" by Langston Hughes or "I Build America" by Gwendolyn B. Bennet, much of this poetry relied on referencing America by name to make their points; Bennet names America seven times in her poem and Hughes more than doubles that with fifteen total mentions, thus establishing their accusatory tones toward America. Clark's poem stands apart here; his refusal to give a direct name to America displays how the speaker feels conflicted with his identity as a Black man in America. Despite being born in America the speaker refuses to address his country by name which emphasizes his distaste for the racism that was so present in the twentieth century. The vague and unidentifiable references to his destination of emigration represent how dreamlike a world without racism feels, considering that oppression is all he has known as a Black man in America. Clark's poem tears down the false promises of America by removing the power behind its name.

Clark's disinterest in names is made clear from the very beginning of the poem; even the title "The Emigrant" purposely leaves out any details of where the speaker is emigrating to and identifies him by his relationship to the unnamed country rather than by name. Clark's title establishes the speaker of the poem as "The Emigrant" immediately, and this instant identification contrasts with the omission of America's name throughout the poem. The speaker's first address to America does establish a certain level of appreciation for it, although

his decision to leave it unnamed hints at his problems with the country: "Adieu to the land of my birth –" (Clark, 1). The word "Adieu" leads us to believe that parting from his country is an emotional event because it can be used to display regret over the loss of something in addition to when bidding someone farewell (Clark, 1). However, his refusal to name the country directly implies that the speaker feels shame for his home country. His disdain is made clear in the following line: "Proud land of the slave and the free!" (Clark, 2). This line makes it clear that the speaker is American but is somewhat sarcastic in its delivery; the implication that America is "Proud" to be a land of slavery displays the speaker's anger at his country for portraying a false image of freedom (Clark, 2). Clark's decision to prioritize slavery over freedom in the word order of this line represents America's refusal to solve its problems of racism, instead continuing to promote false promises of being a free land. This line echoes the final line of the national anthem, "Land of the free and the home of the brave," further hinting at America's identity and making a mockery out of the country's false values of freedom. By replacing America's name with this bitingly sarcastic description, Clark is removing the facade of freedom that America so outwardly displays.

The second stanza of the poem continues to reference America vaguely, creating a crescendo of anger from the speaker towards his country that culminates in the fourth stanza. Clark's speaker further ridicules the false promises of America by referring to it as a "Boasted land of the free" (Clark, 5). Clark's speaker repeats the word "land" in an attempt to remove America's significance in his life; by reducing his home country to the literal "land" as opposed to a nation, he is deliberately refusing to recognize America and separating himself from the cruel treatment he has been forced to endure (Clark, 5). However, it is still only an attempt to do so; the repetition of the word "land" also implies that his home country is constantly on his mind. The speaker will never be able to fully disassociate from America because it is an

undeniable part of his identity, despite the cruel treatment that he experienced there (Clark, 5). The word "boasted" continues the poem's ironic tone and reiterates that despite America's grand promises of freedom, racism still permeates society selectively deciding who can be truly free (Clark, 5). Additionally, the word "boast" can be used to describe the creation of a threat, which subtly identifies America's darker side of systematic racism that was less obvious to the rest of the world (Clark, 5). This definition of the word hints towards the "contumely and scorn" that the speaker describes suffering from a line later (Clark, 6).

The speaker's complex relationship with his home country is made even more heartbreaking by the juxtaposition between his reality and his imagined destination in the third stanza. The lack of specific names reveals the speaker's despair because he is unable to fathom a place that could be rid of the racism that he has experienced in America. The refusal to name a location is less of a choice here; the speaker is wistfully imagining "places on earth" that are "untainted by slavery's breath" (Clark, 9-10). The fact that he is willing to scour the entire "earth" to find a place where racism doesn't exist shows how affected the speaker is by his upbringing in America (Clark, 9). The speaker's identity has been entirely dedicated to freeing himself from the grips of racism, even if it results in his demise: "I'll find them, or search the world round / Till my sorrows are ended in death." (Clark, 11-12). This hypothetical scenario that the speaker creates is the opposite of his life in America, and his decision to not name a place that might be better stems from a fear of setting expectations too high. Based on his own experience, slavery is near impossible to escape, and by creating a vague image of a location in his mind his hopes can remain intact.

The poem's fourth stanza is the culmination of the speaker's resentment towards his own country, where the concept of names appears in the poem for the first time. Instead of subtly using sarcasm to disagree with the facade of America's freedom, the speaker outright

calls out the hypocrisy of his country: “Thy liberty is but a name– / A byword–a jargon, in fine!” (Clark, 13-14). This line reveals the reasoning behind the speaker’s contempt for names: they create a facade that is rarely accurate to the reality of the country. His clarification of what names are in the fourteenth line supports this further; the word “byword” implies that names are pieces of fiction and are used to teach ideas or lessons instead of showing by example (Clark, 14). The word “jargon” gives even less meaning to names, implying that they are utterly useless and provide no actual information about the object they describe (Clark, 14). The lively tone of these lines is the most passionate voice that we see from the speaker, considering that he maintains a civil (while still angry) tone for the first two stanzas. These lines come just after the poem’s midpoint which creates a feeling similar to an epiphany as the speaker comes to terms with the overt lie of America’s notion of freedom. This confrontational moment is the crux of the poem, and the following stanzas look toward the speaker’s future after accepting his removal from America.

The poem’s final two stanzas create a sense of finality by mentioning a somewhat concrete destination for the speaker’s emigration, although no name is used. The first line of the fifth stanza, “Adieu to thy stripes and thy stars” again identifies America, now by the flag that flies over American ships while further emphasizing the speaker’s dedication to leaving his past behind him in his journey (Clark, 17). The repetition of the word “Adieu” shows how distant he has become from any notion of freedom that Americans conjure about their country (Clark, 17). The speaker’s final assertion of “I go to the Isles of the Sea” gives a vague destination to his search for a country without racism, however, the change in verb tense along with the lack of specificity creates a tone that is almost too optimistic (Clark, 21). Regardless of whether the speaker will find freedom in his new location, the act of leaving his “native land” is powerful enough to rebel against the facade of American freedom (Clark, 24). The final

reference to America being "My native land" reveals a level of grim acceptance of the speaker's past as he moves into a new chapter of his life (Clark, 24).

"The Emigrant" is a very unorthodox poem because of its passionate criticism of America without using direct names. One of the most frequently used words in place of the country's name is "land." While Clark echoes the idea of slavery tainting American land in the works of Bennet and Hughes, his refusal to give power to names elevates it beyond his contemporaries. Clark's poem doesn't allow his past trauma to define his identity; he instead removes the power behind his home country's name and declares his identity as a man on a hopeful quest for his deserved freedom. Clark's speaker's complex identity is displayed through his reluctance to buy into the facade of the American name.

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Downfall to Friendliness?: Analyzing Common Tropes in *The Boy Who Loved Too Much*

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One of the most commonly held misconceptions regarding the disabled population is that living with any disability automatically decreases the quality of life. It is assumed that any deviation from society's established norm for the perfect brain and body must be a burden. Both the physical and social implications associated with disability have forged in the minds of many the idea that a disabled life could not possibly be a good life. This overarching negativity, however, is turned on its head when considering Williams Syndrome, a rare genetic disorder more accurately described as happy syndrome. This so-called disability is not only a biological source of that individual's happiness, but also of their great vulnerability. Jennifer Latson's novel, *The Boy Who Loved Too Much: A True Story of Pathological Friendliness*, follows Eli, a young boy with Williams, and his mother, Gayle, as they navigate an unkind world with their own unique sense of love. Their story emphasizes the cost not of disability, but of the suffocating grip of societal norms, as well as the need for strong advocacy, not control.

In the fast-paced, self-serving, capitalistic society of today, everyone is expected to contribute; And how much you can contribute quickly determines your value and worth to the world. With this outlook, it seems disability *forces* people to slow down and get extra assistance, when in reality this is far more sustainable for everyone. As Susan Wendell wrote in *Rejected Bodies*, "When the pace of life in a society increases, there is a tendency for more people to become disabled, not only because of physically damaging consequences of efforts to go faster, but also because fewer people can meet expectations of 'normal' performance…" (qtd. in Bailey

286). Our societal pace itself is simultaneously disabling and isolating, even to those that do play by its crushing rules. Because of this, people with disabilities are viewed as infantile and often miserable because of their given disability. Their voices are frequently minimized and viewed as inferior, even when it comes to decision-making in their own life. They are discredited simply because of their disability. And while everyone should have the right to live freely and happily, Eli and Gayle's story offers a unique perspective on these common stereotypes. Not only does Williams syndrome give Eli elevated happiness, but it also strips him of the skepticism needed to navigate an unforgiving world. So while his disability does not negatively impact his quality of life, it tolls on his mother, who must be heightened to the world around them.

Disabilities are viewed as a misfortune, something that takes away from life's full potential. Those who subscribe to this belief may then be surprised to meet twelve-year old Eli, who would "hug a stranger as eagerly as he'd hug his grandmother" (Latson 39). His favorite things include vacuum cleaners, twirlies, and music, and everyone he meets is a friend. He has a boundless curiosity and a knack for using his charm and a grin to win adults over. When asked, "'What is Williams syndrome?'" he cocked his head thoughtfully. "'It's…he began, then broke into a wide smile. 'It's like a party!'" (Latson 106). Eli associated the phrase not with anything in regards to himself, but with the holiday parties, summer picnics, and awareness walks he had attended. While Eli surmised that he was able to identify the trait in others with Williams, it never held any negative connotations in his mind or life. Although he struggled to form deep social connections, particularly with children his own age, every interaction was worthwhile to him, regardless of the outcome. Take school lunch periods, for example, typically a prime time for socialization. Eli's lunchtime experience, on the other hand, as described by a teacher,

> ... was agonizing to watch because he spent the whole period looking around for someone to talk to. But it wasn't agony for Eli. He looked forward to lunch every day, walking to the cafeteria with a bounce in his step and a smile on his face. He high-fived everyone he saw, including the boys who'd recently reduced him to tears, whose taunts

> he quickly forgave, or forgot. When asked, he'd call them his friends, regardless of whatever they might have called him instead. (Latson 88)

Eli was blissfully unaware of the social ladder that is established so early in life and is content, regardless of where others may place him on this ladder. He is perfectly non judgemental and enthusiastic about everything the world has to offer.

While Eli is the picture of happiness, his mother, Gayle, obviously has a different perspective on her son's condition. She does everything with the fierce love of a mother, but is also very aware of the stigma surrounding disability. She herself was in strong denial when Eli initially began displaying signs of delayed development and the syndrome was suggested. Gayle thought that… "Williams syndrome meant nothing to her - nothing specific - and yet something about it filled her with dread" (Latson 15). Even after genetic testing had confirmed there were twenty-six genes missing on Eli's seventh chromosome, Gayle brought in family photos, hoping to prove his tell-tale traits were from the family line, not a genetic fluke. As he began to hit milestones, "She wanted to believe her son could be the one to break the curve" (Latson 27), and she "clung to the dim but real hope that he would be an exception to the Williams syndrome rules" (Latson 38). Though she loved her son regardless, it was evident that she did feel at a great loss because of his disability.

In addition to the delayed milestones, Gayle felt she did not get to have the same excitement for her child's future as other parents, because Eli would never amount to as much in the eyes of society. This loss of excitement about the family's future following Eli's diagnosis can be tracked through Gayle's scrapbooking. For instance,

> The early pages show a young couple embracing the joys of parenthood: cradling Eli at his first Christmas, picking pumpkins with him as a toddler, posing with him next to Big Bird at Sesame Place theme park. In later pages, their smiles look plastered on - more noticeably so in contrast to the thousand-watt grin of their chipmunk-cheeked child… Gayle gave up on the project, which lost its charm after her marriage dissolved and the family shrank to two. In any case, she was too busy taking care of Eli to bother with

bedazzling its block letters. (Latson 41)

It is clear that she does, at times, feel deflated because of Eli's differences, never quite getting over the unanswered question of why her.

Coping with Eli's disability was a struggle in and of itself for Gayle, but it also weighed on her emotionally. She was not so lucky as to have Eli's unrelenting positivity, meaning the cruelties of the world he so easily shook off hurt her all the more: "Eli himself was perpetually unlocked, open, vulnerable. He carried a welcome sign wherever he went. Gayle was the only barrier between him and everything that lurked outside the door" (Latson 14). The typical insensitive comments made by those uneducated on disability, including her own family, cut deep. In one instance in which her uncle referred to his daughter's behavior as retarded, Gayle's face paled, whereas "Eli, oblivious, reached for another spoonful of sauerkraut. 'Mmm, this is good!' he said cheerfully" (Latson 79). While interactions such as these had no effect on him, they weighed all the more heavily on Gayle, who was willing to take arms for her son at the drop of a hat. In addition, because Eli saw the good in everything and everyone, "It was easy to see how his endless capacity for love could put him in danger" (Latson 6), meaning Gayle was forced to be hypervigilant to all the world's bad. In an effort to keep him safe and help him fit in, she was unintentionally overbearing in her protectiveness. She "believed the best way to give Eli a shot at social acceptance was to get him to conform to American standards of conduct…" (Latson). This meant that in certain school settings, she opted for additional adult supervision to prevent bullying at the expense of unhindered peer interaction, telling his aid "to hover. He's not making friends anyway" (Latson 87). While she always came from a place of love, her elevated fears stifled Eli's chances at meaningful social interaction and contributed exponentially to her stress. In doing her job as a mother, she "had never noticed her identity slipping away. Looking back, she could see that, not so long after becoming Eli's mom, that was suddenly all she was: Eli's mom" (Latson). She felt the need to sacrifice her own social life and, at times, her

well-being to do what she thought was best for her son.

Up to a point, Eli was seemingly content with the limited world to which his mother exposed him. As puberty approached, however, and his sense of independence grew, Gayle walked a fine line between protection and control. "It was part of the frustration many teens with Williams endured: the impulse to pull away from their parents coupled with the immaturity and vulnerability that meant their parents could not responsibly let them go" (Latson). Despite this, he had clearly communicated his desire to branch out from his mother's side, doing things like reminding her he did not want her to sit with him and his friends at a baseball game. Oftentimes, he expressed his frustration by lashing out. The culmination of this rebellion ended with Eli saying "…I hate her, he said tearfully. I hate you, Mom, he said, looking Gayle in the eyes. It was the first time he'd ever uttered those words" (Latson 215). Instances such as these forced Gayle to question whether her extreme helicopter parenting was really for Eli or herself. Her sheltering was only hindering him from partaking in true, meaningful, social interaction; whether it be good or bad, it was life. For example, the very same classmates whom Gayle had insisted would not be Eli's friends, surprised her when they received her presentation on Williams with open minds:

> The power dynamics Gayle had envisioned in her head had been inverted: instead of seeing his openness as a weakness to be exploited, his classmates had been drawn to him and driven to defend him from the same threats Gayle herself had feared…She'd been afraid that Eli would never make a friend. But he'd had friends all along. (Latson)

This was eye opening, proving to her that Eli, just like anyone else, deserved the chance to experience life on his own terms.

This intertwined story of mother and son emphasizes just how harmful current societal norms are, not just for those with disabilities, but for everyone involved in their lives. Eli's story shows that disability itself does not negatively impact one's life, but trying to conform to

unattainable standards does. Whereas Eli, unaware of these social pressures, is perhaps even happier because of his disability, Gayle, who cannot ignore them, exhausts herself in the wake of these norms. In doing so, she inadvertently subscribes to the very same stereotypes she seeks to break in others. By mourning the loss of twenty-six small genes, she proliferates the idea that there is a normal body and behavior, and that this normal is better. In addition, she underestimates Eli's abilities time and time again, simply because of her own fears. This is a common theme seen in parents with disabled children. One study done by UCSF, for example, found that about fifty percent of mothers with autistic children reported elevated symptoms of depression, with levels typically corresponding to the child's behavioral problems (Berthold). This emphasizes the point that those actually living with the disability are not the ones reporting a lower quality of life because of it, it is those that subscribe to the idea of normal. The novel highlights the idea that "The rest of us don't put much thought into learning to be more like them - but we might benefit from trying" (Latson 241). As Dr. Karen Levine put it,

> [There is a] little-known disorder called TROUS: The Rest of Us Syndrome. Seen from the perspective of someone with Williams, this disorder includes traits such as extreme emotional distance, pathological suspicion of strangers, and a critically limited capacity for hugging… These people very rarely say 'I love you'. They might only say it a few times a day. (*The Wall Street Journal*)

To many, it seems unfathomable that the rest of us ought to try and be more like someone who falls outside the bounds of our accepted norms - that this could only limit our productive potential. In reality, however, such strict adherence to social norms only hinders our own human experience. Imagine a world in which the rest of us were more like Eli; where the cold bounds of proper socialization do not exist and every interaction is a chance to make a new friend. When doing so, it becomes overwhelmingly clear that it is our own standards that are in need of fixing.

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Language and *The Lord of the Rings:* The Expansion of a Universe

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Tolkien's inventive world building, which is constructed on the back of his invented languages, is supported by linguistic systems which enlarge the macrocosm of *The Lord of the Rings*. The invented languages theoretically enable someone to reconstruct a history of Middle-Earth outside of what Tolkien himself wrote. Tolkien means to point his reader towards this world outside the bounds of the text; throughout the primary text, Tolkien utilizes his invented languages and linguistic systems to indicate the existence of a fantastic universe. I will be looking at the historical accounts of multiple races in an effort to show that despite the historical perspective from which these accounts are written, it is the linguistic angle that is most compelling in the account's ability to point to the larger world outside of the text. I will then examine key characters within the text whose relationships with speech and language both inform the reader of history and lore beyond that presented in *The Lord of the Rings,* while simultaneously immersing the reader deeper into the primary narrative.

Linguistics informed much of Tolkien's writing: "His profession as a philologist and his vocation as a writer…overlapped and mutually supported one another" (Flieger 5). His deep knowledge of language and its proper structure allowed him to form the many languages of Middle-Earth. These languages are not merely a literary device meant to displace his fantastic world from our primary world, but rather they are the backbone of the entire mythology. One cannot read *The Lord of the Rings* without recognizing the importance of language: "We truly know a text only when we understand the words as they were used in the time the text was composed" (Flieger 5). To understand a text we must understand the words that make up a text in

the entirety of their context, and it is the written words from the past that inform us of civilizations and races long gone. This holds true even when studying mythologies and histories of fantasy.

Utilizing the support systems of real-world linguistic developmental processes, Tolkien's invented languages helped to inform the histories of Middle-Earth. We may look to the unique language Tolkien utilizes when speaking of *The Lord of the Rings* to better understand his relationship with his fantasy. In the foreword to the Ballantine paperback version of the text, Tolkien speaks about *The Hobbit* and its connections to the Third Age and to history: "It was the discovery of the significance of these glimpses and of their relation to the ancient histories that revealed the Third Age and its culmination in the War of the Ring" (Kilby 46). The use of the words 'discovery' and 'revealed' in this passage shows us Tolkien's perspective on his creative process as it relates to the history of Middle-Earth. When writing *The Hobbit,* which pertains to a certain period within the history of Middle-Earth, Tolkien discovered its context within that history which then revealed to him the entirety of events that make up *The Lord of the Rings.* There is no doubt that Tolkien is the creator of Hobbits and Elves and Dwarves; however, he describes his relationship with their histories as one who discovers something that already exists. This unique approach to recording the history of *The Lord of the Rings* is made possible by the languages of the universe that Tolkien had already conceived. His invention of the languages of Middle-Earth was supported by real world linguistic systems. When questioned about the invention of the many languages, "he said he did it by a 'mathematical' system…his inventions, including his Elvish languages, arose not simply out of imagination but from his professional knowledge of the origin and growth of languages" (Kilby 13). Tolkien's creative process utilizes many rational structures that exist within the primary world. Languages in the fantastic world of

The Lord of the Rings develop and change following real, organic processes identified by philologists. The cultural and historical development of different races goes hand and hand with the development of language. Tolkien plants his fantasy upon rational structures like a gardener plants a vine on a trellis. The mathematical system of linguistics, for example, can be thought of as a simple extrapolation; you are extending the evolution of the language using trends identified in the known data. If we look at the evolution of the Common Speech that occurs when the Dúnedain return to Middle-Earth after the downfall of Númenor we see an example of this extrapolation: “They used therefore the Common Speech in their dealing with other folk and in the government of their wide realms; but they enlarged the language and enriched it with many words drawn from elven-tongues" (TLOTR 1129). The language of a race or people changes and grows alongside historical and cultural events.

Just as the study of language is informed by historical context, so too can historical context be informed by philology. A comprehensive study of philology extends past the study of the laws that govern inflection, derivation, and syntactic construction.[1] Yakov Malkiel distinguishes between language history and historical linguistics as two competing fields within the study of languages. In his criticism of historical linguistics Malkiel remarks:

> A strictly internal study of linguistic changes (from smallest and most favored unit, the sound, to the largest, the sentence or the complete utterance), for all its intrinsic interest and stimulus, might provide the final answer only in an unperturbed, virtually motionless universe. (Malkiel 68)

This internal view of language development is thought by Malkiel to be incomplete. The many outside pressures to which language and cultures are constantly subjected render an unperturbed existence impossible. It is not only the pressures of war and forced migration that influence regional language: “The slow infiltration of linguistic forms from outside into the best-organized,

[1] Malkiel pg. 67

most tightly sealed systems, as imperceptible to the casual observer as is the breathing through the pores, is no longer questioned by any competent scholar" (Malkiel 68). No culture or race is immune to the linguistic influence exerted upon them by outside forces; cultural interaction and linguistic evolution is bound to happen even if the interaction is subtle. One observes, in light of this interplay between historical processes and linguistic development, that the philologist's discipline intersects with that of the historian: "Above all, note that the forces behind these transformations cannot, except in rare instances, be isolated through internal linguistic analysis alone" (Malkiel 68). It is necessary when endeavoring to trace the history of language to place it in context among historical events.

A close understanding of the symbiotic relationship between history and linguistics enables us to understand how Tolkien's philological profession and expertise in linguistic development allowed him to indicate, using subtle linguistic markers, historical events that occurred outside of the recorded history of Middle-Earth. Malkiel speaks of the historical application of philology: "Where historiography is at its weakest, because chroniclers were satisfied with focusing attention on the more glittering contemporary events…the truly important rhythm of day-to-day life can, at this distance, be painstakingly inferred from the minute examination of inconspicuous place-names" (Malkiel 71). The history of men and their relationship with the Elves can be traced in a similar way. As Tolkien wrote in Appendix F:

> The *Dúnedain* alone of all races of Men knew and spoke an Elvish tongue; for their forefathers had learned the Sindarin tongue, and this they handed on to their children as a matter of lore, changing little with the passing of the years. And their men of wisdom learned also the High-elven Quenya and esteemed it above all other tongues, and in it they made names for many places of fame and reverence, and for many men of royalty and great renown. (TLOTR 1128)

Having access to the completed history of men in Middle-Earth, we do not need to reconstruct the origins of man's relationship with Elves; however, from Tolkien's perspective, this

reconstruction was in some ways necessary. As Tolkien created the world of *The Lord of the Rings*, the language came before the history: "we are told that it was his linguistic concern that generated his myth" (Kilby 48). Thus, it can be assumed that in his creative construction, or reconstruction of the history of Middle-Earth, Tolkien would have been able to rely on the systematic development of Westron (Common Speech) as it related to Sindarin in order to inform him on the historical relationship between men and elves. Working backwards from the events of the Third Age, a historian of Middle-Earth would recognize in the names of places and people threads of High-elven Quenya. This in turn would guide the historian towards the realization that prior to the events outlined in the primary text of *The Lord of the Rings* there were dealings between the men of Númenor and the Elvish people. Tolkien's linguistic interest causes him to blend the languages of Middle-Earth; this scholarly enthusiasm for linguistic evolution assists him in his creative endeavors by tracing for him the historical narrative of *The Lord of the Rings* and its universe. Besides giving us a glimpse into how Tolkien operated, the language history displayed in this passage gives us insight into the cultural relationship between Men and Elves before the events of the Third Age. We are told that the wise-men learned High-elven and held it in high esteem. As a tribute to their appreciation, they named many great places and people in their era using the language of High-elven. This reverence for the Elvish languages speaks to the relationships between the two races. The men of old paid a high respect to the Elves; they respected at least their language and they observed in their beautiful places and powerful people traits that they felt demanded a name in Quenya. This relationship is discernible in the little bit of information this passage gives to us concerning the linguist history of the Dúnedain.

Tolkien the philologist can reconstruct the history of the Hobbits based upon peculiar words and names retained in their language. The origins of the race are somewhat obscure;

Tolkien writes in the prologue that: “Their own records began only after the settlement of the Shire, and their most ancient records hardly looked further back than their Wandering Days” (TLOTR 3). Tolkien, in his endeavor to trace the history of the Hobbits, bypasses the lack of historical records prior to the founding of the Shire by relying on, “the evidence of their peculiar words and customs” (TLOTR 3). Tolkien the philologist can reconstruct the history of the Hobbits based upon peculiar words and names retained in their language. I refer to their language, but in fact I mean the language of Westron that they have adopted:

> There is no record of any language peculiar to Hobbits. In ancient days they seem always to have used the languages of Men near whom, or among whom, they lived. Thus they quickly adopted the Common Speech after they entered Eriador, and by the time of their settlement at Bree they had already begun to forget their former tongue. This was evidently a Mannish language of the upper Anduin, akin to that of the Rohirrim; though the southern Stoors appear to have adopted a language related to Dunlendish before they came north to the Shire. (TLOTR 1130)

The evidence of their relationship with the men of the upper Anduin prior to their settlement of the Shire is referenced in this passage. The men of the upper Anduin are assumed to be the Rohirrim: “From the lands between the Gladden and the Carrock came the folk that were known in Gondor as the Rohirrim, Masters of Horses” (TLOTR 1129). This historical relationship is further developed by the exchange between Meriadoc and the King of Rohan. In this exchange, Theoden refers to the Hobbits as ‘kûd-dûkan’ which translates to ‘hole-dweller’. In the Westron tongue, the unique name by which the Shire residents and the citizens of Bree referred to Hobbits was ‘kuduk’; this is compared to the rest of Middle-Earth referring to them as ‘banakil’ which means ‘halfling’. The shortened form of ‘kûd-dûkan’ which the Hobbits use to refer to themselves is evidence of the historical relationship between the predecessors of Rohan and Hobbits. This linguistic peculiarity also helps the historian to better place the Hobbits’ origins in the Wilderland before their migration into Eriador. Due to the better-informed historical account

of the Rohirrim and the linguistic similarities between the two races, the historian can confidently assume that hobbits inhabited land surrounding the upper Anduin between the Gladden Fields and Carrock.

The implementation of linguistic evidence in historical study is a way in which a scholar of *The Lord of the Rings* may access a larger world of historical events. Another historically pertinent piece of linguistic evidence referenced in the above passage is the relationship between the Stoors and the men of Dunland. This southern race of men and their influence on the Hobbits' language serve to establish a wide range of Hobbit settlements along the southern vales of the Misty Mountains prior to the mass migration to the Shire as well as confirms Meriadoc's narrative of pipe-weeds origins. If we recall the prologue to *The Lord of the Rings* there is a passage devoted to the history of pipe-weed. This history was compiled by Meriadoc Brandybuck who refers to his travels into the south as being informative:

> Observations that I have made on my own many journeys south have convinced me that the weed itself is not native to our parts of the world, but came northward from the lower Anduin, whither it was, I suspect, originally brought over Sea by the Men of Westernesse. It grows abundantly in Gondor, and there is richer and larger than in the North where it is never found wild, and flourishes only in warm sheltered places. (TLOTR 8-9)

Merry's observations on the quality of climate and its effect on the flavor and size of the herb formed his opinion that pipe-weed was not native to the region of Eriador. However, he fails to account for the historical events that transpired that brought the mundane herb north. Through the application of linguistic study, the philologist can fill this gap in scholarship. By observing the traces of the unique language of Dunlendish abiding in Hobbit vernacular, the language historian is led to believe that the Stoors inhabitation of the southern vales of Dunland coincided both temporally and geographically with the Dunlending men. We know that the men of Dunland are a remnant of a people that once dwelt in the vales of the White Mountains of Gondor. Their

removal to the southern reaches of the Misty Mountains occurred when the shadow fell over Mordor: "These were a remnant of the peoples that had dwelt in the vales of the White Mountains in ages past. The Dead Men of Dunharrow were of their kin. But in the Dark Years others had removed to the southern dales of the Misty Mountains" (TLOTR 1129). The two groups either independently or collectively migrated north at which time they settled in Bree. This migration of Dunlendings from the vales of the White Mountains to the northern reaches of Eriador is linguistically and historically in accordance with Merry's informed observations concerning the origins of pipe-weed. The names and words retained in Hobbit vernacular point the historian towards the historical relationship between the Stoors and the Dunlendings, which in turn sheds light on the origins of pipe-weed in Eriador.

Both the invented languages of Middle-Earth and speech, the spoken manifestation of language, have unique effects on characters in the primary text of *The Lord of the Rings.* Through the utilization of different words, names, dialects and tones, characters such as Aragorn can self-create within the text. Aragorn is an excellent example of self-creation, as his long, self-imposed exile from Minas Tirith demanded the assumption of an alter ego. Besides this, due to his extensive travels and unique lineage, Aragorn was named independently by different groups of people: Aragorn by his parents Arathorn and Gilraen, Estel[2] by the elves among whom he was brought up, Strider by the natives of Bree and the surrounding areas, Elessar by token of the stone Galadriel gave him, and Thorongil was the name he assumed when under the service of Thengel of Rohan and Ecthelion II of Gondor.[3] The reasons for keeping his true identity hidden are twofold: for one, there is danger in naming himself Isildur's heir and secondly, revealing yourself as such to the people of Gondor is equivalent to staking your claim to the throne. A

[2] This means "Hope" in Sindarin
[3] Appendix B in *The Lord of the Rings*

claim to the throne based solely on heritage is not sufficient to unseat the powers that be. For those reasons, Aragorn was particular about who he revealed himself to during his wanderings and doubly particular about the circumstances for his entry into Minas Tirith after assuming his lineage.

The many names and identities assumed by Aragorn throughout his life were supported by the language and tone he spoke in. Only in moments of safety or extreme need would he fail in hiding his true character. One such moment occurred early on in the first book of *The Lord of the Rings* when Strider was speaking to Frodo: "I think you are not really as you choose to look. You began to talk to me like the Bree-folk, but your voice has changed" (TLOTR 166). Whether this revelation was purposeful on the part of Aragorn is unknown to us; what is important is the fact that Aragorn's voice reveals him to Frodo. It is not the physical disguise or weather- stained cloak that hides the identity of the character; rather it is the language and tone they use. Just as he may purposefully disguise himself with his speech, it is the purposeful speech of a king that reveals Aragorn as Isildur's heir. As the Fellowship rode down the Anduin between the Pillars of the Kings, Frodo observed the heir unveiled: "'Fear not!' said a strange voice behind them. Frodo turned and saw Strider, and yet not Strider; for the weatherworn Ranger was no longer there. In the stern sat Aragorn, son of Arathorn" (TLOTR 393). Inspired by the proximity to his kingdom and the figures of his lineage, Aragorn purposefully changes character by utilizing his voice to comfort those in fear and command his position in the rapids of the Anduin. Any actions undertaken by Strider in this moment would have been ineffectual; it is by his voice and speech that Aragorn identifies himself as Isildur's heir and thus commands the authority to ensure the safety of the Fellowship: "Under their shadow Elessar, the Elfstone son of Arathorn of the House of Valandil Isildur's son, heir of Elendil, has naught to dread!" (TLOTR 393). The ability of

individuals to utilize speech to enact changes in themselves and others is a real world phenomenon represented in fantasy; the ability to utilize language to reflect a depth or aspect of their character that is beyond their author is an ability unique to the characters of *The Lord of the Rings* simply because they are utilizing invented languages.

Gandalf's fluency in the languages of Middle-Earth and his knowledge of historical processes outside of those pertaining directly to the War of the Ring is indicated by his speech. The utilization of language by Gandalf, especially in regard to his magical acts, indicates an entire discipline of Middle-Earth which remains unexplored in the primary text. Gandalf's knowledge of the languages of Middle-Earth exceeds that of Tolkien: "*Open, open!* He shouted, and followed it with the same command in every language that had ever been spoken in the West of Middle-earth" (TLOTR 307). As the creator of the fantastic world of *The Lord of the Rings,* Tolkien admits that even he is not an expert in all of its lore: "he would indeed do a story in Elvish if only he knew enough Elvish!" (Kilby 33). The comprehensive creation of an entire world is too much for one person to undertake. To be familiar with the languages alone is a daunting feat. Gandalf on the other hand is an active participant in this history. He is a scholar of the great and the mundane, concerning himself with the languages of every race and the customs of the Hobbits who, before the events of the War of the Ring, had fallen out of the memory of most people. Tolkien has provided the linguistic backbone upon which these languages and historical processes develop, but it is Gandalf's intimate knowledge of the languages and history of Middle-Earth that sets his character outside of the scope of Tolkien's records. Just as Gandalf's history and origins are not entirely revealed in the primary text, so too does the entirety of Gandalf's knowledge remain hidden. It is, however, knowledge founded on actual languages and histories. As previously stated, it is theoretically possible, based on the nature of

the invented linguistic systems, for someone to reconstruct a history concerning Middle-Earth independent of what Tolkien has already published. There are historical processes occurring in Middle-Earth outside of the events of the primary text. Of these events, Tolkien may not have been aware; but, as his depth of knowledge implies, Gandalf would have been. Gandalf remains a mysterious character throughout *The Lord of the Rings*; the depth of his knowledge in the lore and languages of Middle-Earth is such that much of his character was unknown even to Tolkien. The most we hear of his origins comes in Appendix B of the primary text, where he is said to be a member of the Istari:

> They came out of the Far West and were messengers sent to contest the power of Sauron, and to unite all those who had the will to resist him; but they were forbidden to match his power with power, or to seek to dominate Elves or Men. (TLOTR 1084)

In addition, Gandalf sought no permanent dwelling place and he was known by different names throughout Middle-Earth:

> '*Many are my names in many countries*', he said. '*Mithrandir among the Elves, Tharkûn to the Dwarves; Olórin I was in my youth in the West that is forgotten, in the South Incánus, in the North Gandalf; to the East I go not*.' (TLOTR 670)

Gandalf's ability to associate with so many different races is enabled by his comprehensive knowledge of almost all of the languages of Middle-Earth. I say almost all because at the western gate of Moria, Gandalf references "the secret dwarf-tongue that they teach to none" (TLOTR 307). This aside, though not necessary for elaborating on the point of Gandalf's character, is interesting in and of itself because it hints at another language or aspect of Middle-Earth that is outside of the narrative. The magic of Gandalf is similarly outside of Tolkien's primary text. The use of language and speech is inherent to the practice of magic in *The Lord of the Rings.* We see the first combination of words used as a magical spell upon the pass of Caradhras when Gandalf lights a fire: "naur an edraith ammen!" (TLOTR 290). The translation from Sindarin is roughly,

"Fire be for saving."[4] The animating effect that Gandalf has on this sentence is never explained to the reader. The mechanism by which magic works in Middle-Earth may not have been known to Tolkien. Regardless of how the magic works, the purpose of illustrating the magical act is fulfilled. Tolkien shows Gandalf wielding speech for magical purposes, which reveals to the reader just enough information so that they become aware of how little they know about magic in Middle-Earth.

Not only does Tolkien utilize his invented languages and linguistic systems to point to Middle-Earth history and lore that exists outside of the text, but he also deepens the world and enriches our experience of it by making reading the text a sensory experience. In this way, reading *The Lord of the Rings* becomes a visceral experience; rather than interacting with a text, you are interacting with the very world of Middle-Earth. The effect which Saruman's speech has on the characters in *The Lord of the Rings* occurs independently of what is being said. Similar to Gandalf, the wizard Saruman's language is imbued with magic. However, the spells wrought by Saruman do not manipulate the natural world like Gandalf does when he ignites fire; Saruman's power lies in his ability to manipulate the thoughts and actions of people using his voice:

> Suddenly another voice spoke, low and melodious, its very sound an enchantment. Those who listened unwarily to that voice could seldom report the words that they heard; and if they did, they wondered, for little power remained in them. Mostly they remembered only that it was a delight to hear the voice speaking, all that it said seemed wise and reasonable, and desire awoke in them by swift agreement to seem wise themselves. (TLOTR 578)

This textual description of a voice is an interesting example of how Tolkien uses speech to enlarge his world of fantasy beyond the text. He describes the voice almost as if he were describing a fleeting vision whose impression lasts longer than the memory of the actual event. Often a text will ask a reader to recreate a physical landscape or another such sight experience.

[4] Appendix B in *The Lord of the Rings*

Rarely is such imaginative work pertaining to the sense of hearing demanded in a text. Tolkien describes not only the effect but the quality of Saruman's voice. This description comes before the text prints the words of Saruman. So, when we read the exchange between Saruman and Gandalf under the shadow of Orthanc, Tolkien has already put us under Saruman's spell. The words of the exchange cease to matter so much as the imagined sound of the voice. In our effort to recreate in our minds the description Tolkien gives of Saruman's voice, we are removed from the position of the reader and engage directly with the effects of Saruman's magic alongside the characters of the scene. Once we find ourselves immersed in this multisensory reading, we experience Tolkien's languages for the first time from the perspective of a listener rather than a reader. Tolkien takes advantage of our immersion to further impress upon us the character of his created languages. Twice in Saruman's initial address to those gathered amidst the wreckage of Isengard, Gimli the dwarf interrupts his spell. The second of these interruptions is felt most poignantly by those held under Saruman's sway:

> The Riders stirred at first, murmuring with approval of the words of Saruman; and then they too were silent, as men spell-bound. It seemed to them that Gandalf had never spoken so fair and fittingly to their lord. Rough and proud now seemed all his dealings with Théoden. And over their hearts crept a shadow, the fear of a great danger: the end of the Mark in a darkness to which Gandalf was driving them, while Saruman stood beside a door of escape, holding it half open so that a ray of light came through. There was a heavy silence. It was Gimli the dwarf who broke in suddenly. 'The words of this wizard stand on their heads,' he growled.' (TLOTR 579)

Gimli's growl removes the reader, and the characters in the text, quickly and uncomfortably out of the heavy silence imposed by Saruman's speech. The contrast between the smooth, soft voice of Saruman and the rough interruptions of Gimli informs the reader firsthand of the guttural-sounding tone of the Dwarves. While we are not exposed to any of the secret Dwarvish language mentioned in the primary text and Appendices, we gain an impression of it based upon

this reaction we have to 'hearing' Gimli's voice for the first time. Without making direct reference to the Dwarvish language, Tolkien characterizes it by immersing the reader in the abrasive spoken language of this scene.

The unique nature of Tolkien's fantastic world is that even a brief encounter with the primary text of *The Lord of the Rings* will leave a reader with the impression that they have stumbled upon something much bigger than the text itself. Oftentimes a work of fiction can be too easily defined. Someone can trace the limits of the author's conception by failing to identify the origin of a character, race, system, or institution. Tolkien's interminable creativity allowed him to continue creating past the limits of the primary text; C.S. Lewis says in a review of the first volume of *The Lord of the Rings*: "Not content to create his own story, he creates, with an almost insolent prodigality, the whole world in which it is to move."[5] However, it is not the nearly comprehensive history of Middle-Earth recorded in secondary literature that expands *The Lord of the Rings* beyond the imagination. Rather, it is the unknown world beyond the text that grants the immense scale to the universe. Throughout the primary text, Tolkien references this world and its many disciplines, languages, and histories through the compelling use of his invented languages. In both the primary text and in the historical accounts of the Appendices, linguistics enables a reader to reveal historical processes that have never been officially recorded. The history of Middle-Earth as it exists outside the text is indicated by the linguistic threads Tolkien weaves into the recorded history of his universe. How characters such as Aragorn and Saruman utilize the languages of Middle-Earth continually points towards a world the reader cannot access. This tantalizing cognizance of that which you cannot know is enabled by Tolkien's invented languages and the unique way they immerse the reader into the text, and beyond.

[5] *Time and Tide* August, 1954, pg. 1082

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Eliot's Raid on the Ineffable

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With the onward march of time, a pertinent question for all people in modernity is the appropriate balance between the maintenance of tradition and the need for invention - when pertaining to the artist or the thinker, how should they position themselves in relation to their predecessors? The continuity of the past and the potentiality of the future all weigh on the present (Oser 220). Additionally, the present represents an exclusive experience, and the continual movement from one present to the next creates a fragmentary timeline. In the poem *Four Quartets*, T.S Eliot employs a fragmentary form to dramatize the disjointed continuity of time. Within the poem though, the fluctuation or fragmentation of the form is also in service to the whole by showing the unending exploration of man to reach the "still point" of divine contemplation. As Eliot remarks in *The Music Of Poetry*, "[t]here must be transitions between passages of greater and less intensity, to give a rhythm of fluctuating emotion essential to the musical structure of the whole" (315). For Eliot, the fragmentary nature of the form in *Four Quartets* is in service to the whole, because the continual fluctuation of musicality embodies a journey or exploration for the "still point" of the world to achieve true contemplation. In that sense, Eliot's poem is an artistic success, due to the fluctuation or fragmentary nature of the form serving the whole of the poem. The point is that the unity of the piece comes from the fluctuation of musicality that reinforces the idea of a journey across time to the "still point."

The fluctuation in intensity not only exemplifies a command over the multiple modes of musicality and dissonance but demarcates the distinction between the aesthetic and the discursive

form. In the second part of *Burnt Norton*, Eliot begins the high lyric with, "[g]arlic and sapphires in the mud / Clot the bedded axle-tree. / The trilling wire in the blood" (2.1-3). In the first line, the repeated usage of two-syllable words, like "garlic" and "sapphires" in quick succession, creates an incantatory effect. Similarly, the repetition of these two-syllable words continues into the next two lines with "bedded," "axle," and "trilling." The usage of multiple words with a similar number of syllables has a "yoking" effect on readers to make them draw certain heterogeneous ideas together. The connection between "garlic," "sapphires," and "bedded" implies a level of superficial materiality. The word "bedded" infers this idea of a layer or strata of rock deposits, in that these material objects act as distractions from the underlying truth. This idea is yoked though with the "trilling" of the blood as if the material world acts as a barrier, like the skin on the body, that prevents man from seeing the supernatural movement beneath it. Though, the usage of the word "clot" elicits a bodily image of platelets covering a wound, as if humans have lost their connection with the supernatural world due to their materiality, which blocks them from the movement beyond. The musicality of incantation and the yoking of heterogenous objects all serve the aesthetic. This aestheticism though is characterized by egotism, wherein man is stuck on the superficial materiality of the world around him. In a sense, man cannot see beyond the interior self nor the superficiality of the material world. The aestheticism of poetry then becomes a distraction or rather a material limit that keeps man from the objective truth.

In the next section, Eliot changes to a discursive form to dramatize the unending process of contemplation needed to reach the "still point" of a constantly evolving world. Eliot beings his journey into the prosaic when he asserts, "[a]t the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless; / Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is, / but neither arrest

nor movement. And do not call it fixity" (2.16-18). Although Eliot discontinues his use of the high lyric, he still maintains the incantatory effect through the repetition of similar syntax across various fragmented phrases. Eliot repeatedly positions two oppositional ideas against each other with the conjunction "nor." This repetition of similar syntax offers up an apophatic understanding of existence, wherein the incantatory negation frames the mind within the paradoxical flux and permanence of time (Wight 65). Similarly, the repetition of commas and semicolons divides these apophatic statements from each other, creating a fragmented structure. Out of these fragments though, Eliot creates wholeness by encasing these pieces within the more definite statements of the "still point" and the perpetual "dance" of existence (Levina 196). In a sense, the continual usage of apophatic statements dramatizes the journey for the "still point," which embodies an unending contemplative life and the need to submit oneself to the forces of the universe. This discursive form becomes a mediative approach to thinking, comparatively to the egotistic nature of the high lyric, because the paradoxical form of these negated statements demonstrates the continual process of self-conscious contemplation and the need for suffering to reach the "still point."

The transition from the high lyric to the prosaic may seem at first to create a fragmented structure, but in reality, Eliot uses this transition or fluctuation of intensity in the service of the whole. As Eliot remarks later in *The Music Of Poetry*, "[i]t is time for a reminder that the music of verse is not a line by line matter, but a question of the whole poem" (320). Eliot's criticism expounds upon the fact that the musicality of a poem, or lack of it, must be in service to the wholeness of the piece. In that sense, Eliot's ability to incorporate different intensities and other aspects of poetic form, not only shows off his mastery, but the journey of self-conscious exploration of the human experience. As he later laments in the prosaic form, "Time past and

time future / Allow but a little consciousness…only through time time is conquered" (2.38-39, 44). Again, the repetitious use of the word "time" not only draws the reader's attention to the word, but it creates that incantatory effect as if Eliot is trying to reach a state of divine contemplation to discuss the nature of time. The incantatory effect hints at Eliot's need for divine revelation, in order to meditate on the nature of time. Further, the specific usage of the verb "allow" implies a level of impassivity in terms of man's experience of time. The verb "allow" brings the audience back to Eliot's early career and his conception of impassivity, as man is passively experiencing the process of time. This idea is reinforced by the phrase "little consciousness," dramatizing the little control or even awareness that man has over the passage of time (Moses 134). In a sense, man can only truly conceive of time in the present, as the future is unknowable and the past is only perceptible in imperfect memories and the effect of previous events. For Eliot, the "conquest" of time does not embody an active role by man, but instead, man's passage through time becomes a passive experience wherein man submits himself to forces beyond his understanding. The point is that the fluctuation of style between sections of the poem demonstrates the fragmentary nature of time in man's limited mind: the actualization of time becomes an unknowable force that exerts pressure on humans. In turn, the only solution for man is to achieve true contemplation by giving up the egotistical self and surrendering his being to this unending process.

The ability of Eliot to vary his poetic intensity and form represents the fragmentary experience of man in relation to his movement throughout time itself. As Eliot remarks later in the fifth section of *Little Gidding* about man's continual movement through time, "[w]e shall not cease from exploration / And the end of all our exploring / Will be to arrive where we started" (5.26-28). The use of enjambment across all three of these lines creates a circular loop, in terms

of man's exploration always bringing him back to where he started. On the other hand though, Eliot breaks this one sentence down into three separate lines, striking a surprising balance between fragmentation and wholeness. This tension between the whole and the fragmented represents the artistic success of this poem because Eliot is able to employ a fragmentary form that acts as an experiential reference to how man interprets and experiences time. The point is that the fragmentation of the form serves a larger purpose to the whole of the poem, by showing how man experiences the flux and permanence of that "dance" through time.

The fluctuation of different poetic forms is not just a technical novelty, but a serious attempt at communicating experiential knowledge to the audience. The word "end" is repeatedly used throughout the entire poem, which elicits this idea of finality or an endpoint in the near future. This destination or telos is consumed in the circular structure of these lines as if man's ultimate goal or endpoint is a continual process of exploration across time that will turn man towards divine contemplation and submission to the divine will of God. This continual process embodies a synthesis of past, present, and future, wherein man is caught within the effects of the past, the current experience of the present, and the potentiality of the future. In that sense, time becomes a process of continual reinvention and exploration, as every new moment becomes a new present situation. Although every new present is an entirely different experience, the past moments in time have formed the current period and left their mark on us. In the end, the continual process or movement of time embodies a synthesis. In a way, Eliot is demonstrating the necessary balance between tradition and invention, as the past leaves its effects on the present and it binds us to history. On the other hand, the freshness of each experience in the present offers up a need for reexamination and exploration to readjust to the current situation. As Eliot remarks in his famous essay *What Is A Classic*, "[w]e want to maintain two things; a pride in

what our literature has already accomplished, and a belief in what it may still accomplish in the future" (680). Although he is talking specifically about literature, Eliot strikes a balance between respecting the past for its accomplishments and the need for reinvention in modernity due to changing circumstances. At the center of this circular process is the "still point" of a constantly evolving world, in which man must seek a state of divine contemplation and give himself up to this divine will in order to gain some sort of objectivity.

The fragmentation and fluctuating intensities of this poem are all in service to the wholeness of the piece's message. This embodies the human journey or continual search for a state of divine contemplation and complete self-sacrifice. In that sense, Eliot's poem is an artistic success, because he is able to employ various modes and forms that contribute to the whole piece by making the reader feel the experiential process of time. On top of that, Eliot is able to conceptualize a complex circular process of time that synthesizes the past, present, and future into one looping cycle of continued preservation and reinvention.

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Moving “Passed” Life for Death

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Emily Dickinson's poem #479, "Because I could not stop for Death," emphasizes the concept of movement through the word “passed.” This movement, although enviable, isn't linear. The poem's periodic stopping points drive the idea that motion remains until it ceases entirely, allowing a new cycle to begin. The paradoxical nature of moving and stopping work in tandem as the pauses made along the way highlight life's motion and allow readers to reflect alongside the speaker. Dickinson's radical use of the word “passed” suggests progression over one's journey through existence, but more importantly, indicates a continuance of life after death. Dying is often looked at in a threatening and fearful light, but the poem's thoughtful use of language alters readers' perception of Death.

The contradictory qualities of movement, accompanied by life, and stopping, accompanied by death, are interchanging throughout the poem. The fifth quatrain presents the speaker as "paused before a House that seemed / A Swelling of the Ground –" (17-18). For the first time, the vehicle has come to a complete stop with the speaker inside. “A House that seemed” gives the impression that this isn't the home she left behind since the term “seemed” indicates a sense of unfamiliarity. Rather, she arrived at a burial ground, where “A Swelling of the Ground” illustrates the freshly dug patch of land meant to hold her remains. Before the pause, Dickinson painted an active and lively setting in which the speaker moves along, but her fate is subtly introduced as the carriage halts. The speaker doesn't display any symptoms of worry in response to this realization of fate. She refers to the grave as a “House,” granting it a warm and welcoming feel instead of one that's morbid. Although Dickinson could have written this poem

with the speaker in a fixed location, she decided not to; remaining stagnant would not align with the true nature of living. All people experience life as constantly moving and changing, as found in the poet's illustrative language concerning the transforming setting; readers envision the speaker's view from the carriage as it advances, and it prompts us to reflect on our own timelines.

When expressing the ongoing journey of life, Dickinson portrays forward motion using "passed" to display moments of physical movement from one location or time to another. The poem observes the speaker's move across land. Early on, the speaker describes how a "Carriage held but just Ourselves" (3). This carriage serves as our speaker's vehicle and what brings her to the afterlife. The speaker goes on to explain that when riding inside the carriage, she "passed the Fields of Gazing Grain –" (11). At first glance, the reader may mistake “Gazing” for “Grazing" because it is typical for livestock to graze amidst a grain field. To graze also refers to the act of briefly touching some surface as one passes, promoting the idea of closeness in proximity. “Gazing” pushes our speaker outside the scene, and she is seen experiencing a movement in perspective. Having the ability to gaze from an exterior viewpoint momentarily gives the speaker the means to look at life's progression in a new light.

A shift occurring, not only in the perception of space proximity but in the speaker's comprehension of time, permits movement in the perception of her journey through life. In lines 21 and 22, readers hear the speaker reminisce about all the years that have gone by, saying, "Since then – 'tis Centuries – and yet / Feels shorter than the Day.” She suggests that although a lengthy amount of time has passed, it feels as if it's been a much shorter period. Four words are capitalized: Since, Centuries, Feels, and Days. When put all together, “Since Centuries Feels Days” suggests that the speaker feels as though Centuries and Days are equal. Dickinson instills a classic symbol of dying when writing, "We passed the Setting Sun –" (12). Readers understand

that the day is coming to an end. The source equated to life fading away, enabling darkness and an essence of death to present themselves. The natural cycle of day and night parallels the mortality of our speaker. She is witnessing this natural transition of the sky while undergoing personal life changes. Dickinson's speaker has been made aware of how far along she is on her journey. She understands the ever-moving course of time and that life on Earth must eventually reach its end, and as a result, readers themselves reflect on how life is passing by faster than we know.

Dickinson's exhibiting various states of experience, from childhood to arriving at a post mortal condition, shows she understands the inevitable circuit of life and death and how "passed" has the potency to mark a change from one condition to another. Dickinson's writing expresses a transformation in human biological development, specifically from a preadolescent state. The speaker mentions that she had "passed the School, where Children strove" (9). Students playing illustrates the paradoxical standing of our speaker's life compared to the kids she observes. As our speaker experiences her last moments, these children simply go about their lives since they possess an innate naivety to humankind's inescapable fate. Meanwhile, the speaker has aged past her once youthful state and understands that she is reaching the end of her life. The final lines of Dickinson's work say, "I first surmised the Horses' Heads / Were toward Eternity –" (23-24). The speaker has realized that the horses drawing her carriage are proceeding toward the afterlife. It is important to highlight the phrase "Horses' Heads." Horses are typically characterized as courageous and free, traits that reflect the speaker's final moments. The horses and the speaker exemplify courage as they continue on their way despite death being seen as scary to many. "Heads" can be depicted as having a double meaning in this line. The word is recognized as being a body part of the horse; however, it also can be understood as a movement towards death,

bringing the reader's attention to the idea that freedom from her life on earth is coming soon. Then, the poem comes to its final stopping point, signifying the speaker's final advances toward death.

The poem conveys the speaker's reaction and acceptance of her inevitable death because “passed" can reference an exchange between two individuals. In her writing, Dickinson makes death a manifested being rather than an intangible phenomenon. Our speaker states, "Because I could not stop for Death – / He kindly stopped for me –" (1-2) when opening this poem. The word “Death” is capitalized and is referred to as a “He” to insinuate that death displays humanlike qualities, including autonomy and authority. The personification of Death allows it to interact directly with the speaker, and Death is the one who ultimately passes and gives our speaker her fate. Dickinson chooses the term "kindly" to characterize how the speaker perceived the initial delivery of her fate. The speaker's acceptance of death is apparent when, after settling in Death's chariot, she tells readers, "I had put away / My labor and my leisure too, / For His Civility –” (6-8). By emphasizing that the speaker's actions are “For His Civility,” she offers Death a sort of courtesy despite his reasons for consulting her. The speaker doesn't fight her inevitable end; she lets go of her old commitments to embrace and make her last few moments on Earth pleasant and reflective.

It's one thing for Dickinson to have embedded dashes repeatedly throughout the poem, as it alludes to the continual movement of the speaker's life while on Earth. Still, her choice to have a dash end her poem suggests a continuation of the speaker's journey after her death. Within the poem, dashes break up her journey, similar to how existence is broken up into different stages and walks of life. The dashes also slow down a reader's movement through the poem, representing how distinct periods can feel as if they are moving at different rates up until death.

Ending the work with a dash instead of a period has readers questioning whether there is more to come after death. The poet intentionally chose to use this punctuation mark; it creates a long, abrupt pause in a line or sentence. Similar to how the speaker was made to pause and reflect deeply during the final moments of her journey.

In this poem, death has a positive connotation, unlike many depictions in other media. The speaker recognizes death as something that shouldn't be our worry. Instead of fearing death, something we can't control, humanity should focus on how we live in the present and what we can do to better ourselves and our community with our time on Earth. Dickinson inspires readers to reflect and realize that living a life dictated by fear should be seen as scarier than our inevitable end.

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The Search for Worth: How Relationship Conflicts Reveal the Universal Nature of Insecurity

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James Joyce's short story "The Dead" and Marina Carr's play "The Mai" juxtapose two opposing relationships. In "The Dead," Gretta and Gabriel Conroy's marriage is defined by trust and support, while "The Mai" shows forty-year-old The Mai and her husband Robert's relationship is built on unfaithfulness and indifference. Each couple has a moment of marital conflict and surprise, where one partner is seeking a truth about their relationship that can't be, or isn't, answered. Despite the differences in nature of Gabriel and Gretta's and the Mai and Robert's marriages, these moments of questioning demonstrate that no matter what a relationship looks like, the human experience of insecurity and questions of self-worth permeate every marriage.

In "The Dead" by James Joyce, Gabriel and Gretta Conroy have a marriage built on mutual care and trust that allows them to poke fun at one another while showcasing their love for one another and their children. Early in the story, the Conroys arrive at a party, and right away, their synergy as a couple is clear. Gabriel comments on Gretta's tendency to avoid taking care in the cold, causing Gretta to playfully attack Gabriel's solicitude. She describes his parenting traits, after which "she broke out into a peal of laughter and glanced at her husband, whose admiring and happy eyes had been wandering from her dress to her face and hair" (Joyce, 180). While the couple's care for one another is the subject of their jokes, their trust is

evident in Gretta's ability to joke with her husband in front of others. It's clear that Gretta's teasing of Gabriel is acceptable: Gabriel gazes at her "admiring[ly]," and they laugh with one another. Gabriel's physical pleasure with his wife is apparent, too: he looks her up and down, and his "happy eyes" take in her hair, face, and dress.

The Conroys' mutual affection is shown in tandem with the care and attention they pay their children. In teasing Gabriel, Gretta speaks to his dedicated parenting, saying, "'He's really an awful bother, what with green shades for Tom's eyes at night and making him do the dumb-bells, and forcing Eva to eat the stirabout. The poor child!'" (180). Although Gretta's words paint Gabriel as a harsh father, her joking nature makes clear his attentive parenting is a positive attribute. She juxtaposes Gabriel as an "awful bother" when he helps their son gain strength, and though he "forces" their daughter to eat porridge, this is a healthy meal that will ultimately benefit her. And Gabriel upsets gender norms by ensuring their children are taken care of and eating healthily–duties that, particularly in the twentieth century, were often occupied by a mother.

Marina Carr's play "The Mai" exposes the broken relationship of Robert and The Mai, whose marriage is defined by Robert's selfishness and unreliable presence in the family's life. Unlike the marriage of the Conroys, Robert and The Mai's family dynamic is demonstrably rocky from the beginning of the play, when Robert returns home after a long absence. He bears gifts, which he presents to The Mai, saying, "and this is for you (whiskey) and I'll have a shot as well… (*The Mai goes to the drinks cabinet, pours the whiskeys. Millie moves forward, looks at Robert, looks at The Mai)*. Now let me see, is it Orla or Millie?" (Carr, Act I, page 85).

Robert immediately shows his selfish nature by offering The Mai whiskey from which he will also benefit, saying he will "have a shot as well," and he doesn't even pour his own drink–The Mai pours them. Whiskey isn't a personal gift; it's a consumable offering that offers short-term pleasure. It's also addictive, symbolizing the Mai's continuous acceptance of Robert and willingness to take him back into her home. Robert can't identify his own children, and instead of taking accountability and asking Millie her name, he relies on The Mai to provide the name of their child. Robert's dependency on The Mai to serve him his own gift and even re-introduce him to their child reinforces the traditional role of the mother taking on household responsibilities. Robert's dominance in the conversation, self-serving gifts, and ignorance of his children show his selfishness and clear absence in the lives of his wife and children.

In "The Dead," Gretta's reminiscence on a past relationship introduces conflict and incites Gabriel's questions about the past, but their care for one another is evident throughout the conversation. In the final pages of the story, the song "The Lass of Aughrim" prompts Gretta to reflect on a relationship from her past: a young romance in Galway with Michael Furey. As she thinks of her relationship with Furey, Gabriel becomes increasingly upset, though Gretta's words and actions make clear she is not recalling this memory as a way to hurt Gabriel. Gabriel demands, "'Perhaps that was why you wanted to go to Galway with that Ivors girl?'... She looked at him in surprise: 'What for?' Her eyes made Gabriel feel awkward. He shrugged his shoulders" (Joyce, 219). Gretta's innocent response coupled with her simultaneous willingness to look at Gabriel indicates that she does not seek to make him jealous. But her steady gaze makes him "feel awkward," and his indifferent response and body language exposes his insecurity in discussing the matter. He questions Gretta repeatedly about whether she was in love with Furey,

but as their conversation progresses, "her voice was veiled and sad. Gabriel, feeling now how vain it would be to try to lead her whither he had purposed, caressed one of her hands" (220). Gabriel's initial disconcerted and angry reaction at hearing about Gretta's past romance morphs into one of sympathy for her sorrow, as he realizes she genuinely mourns the loss of Furey. His motivation to see whether she was in love with Furey dies down, and in letting go of his personal motivations he is able to literally extend a hand to Gretta and offer her comfort.

In "The Mai," Robert's return from a long absence motivates The Mai to address this source of conflict in their marriage, but an unfruitful series of questions lays bare his infidelity and carelessness. Throughout the play, Robert's extramarital affairs are made clear, and it's apparent that his actions aren't a secret to The Mai. Shortly after his return at the beginning of the play, The Mai asks, "'Why'd you come back?' 'Why'd I come back? Difficult one–it's not so great out there, Mai.' 'Is it not?' 'No.' 'And I thought you came back for me'" (Carr, Act I, page 95). Robert repeats her question, which could signal he is composing a thoughtful response, but his answer is vague: he tells his wife that "it" is difficult without specifying what "it" is, and he doesn't address where or what "out there" means. This ambiguity gives The Mai no information about his reason for coming back–his response only confirms he has not returned for his wife or family. Robert's replies also show his total indifference to The Mai's feelings: he gives clipped, cryptic responses–"it's not so great out there"–that barely answer her question about why he has returned. And unlike Gabriel, who gazes happily at his wife, Robert doesn't comment on The Mai's appearance or acknowledge affection for her in any way. The format of their interaction offers insight into their relationship, too–one person's question becomes the other's answer, and vice versa: "'Why'd you come back?' 'Why'd I come back?' … 'It's not so great'... 'Is it not?'

'No.'" Such back-and-forth language mirrors the pattern of their relationship: Robert leaves, The Mai addresses his absence, she forgives him, and he leaves again.

Despite the difference in nature of the Conroys' and Gretta and Robert's marriages, and the varying reasons questions arise, these moments of inquiry reveal that no matter what a relationship looks like, the human element of insecurity and questions of self-worth permeate every relationship. In "The Dead," Gretta doesn't reveal she has fallen out of love with Gabriel or that she has been adulterous–she reflects on a relationship from before their marriage. Yet Gabriel second guesses himself, thinking, "while he had been full of memories of their secret life together, full of tenderness and joy and desire, she had been comparing him in her mind with another" (Joyce, 219). A song reminds Gretta of her relationship with Furey, indicating he isn't always on her mind. She recalls this relationship from when she lived in Galway, prior to meeting and marrying Gabriel. Nevertheless, Gabriel's insecurity dominates, and he goes so far as to compare the thoughts in his brain with those in Gretta's: he imagines her "comparing him in her mind with another" while he was "full of memories of their secret life together." His insecure thoughts point to the solidity of their marriage: it is one "full of tenderness and joy and desire," corroborating the point that even in relationships informed by love, happiness, and trust, insecurities lie just beneath the surface.

In "The Mai," Robert's tendency to leave home and engage in extramarital affairs is not new to The Mai, but while she accepts him back into their home, her questions reveal her search for self-worth. She is aware that he goes out to have sex with other women, but still, she asks him, "Why'd you come back?" (Carr, Act I, page 95). Her desire to feel validated in her

marriage is not fulfilled, as shown in his responses (examined on the previous page), and she probably knows that when she asks the question. Yet even the cyclical nature of their marriage–Robert's brief presence at home, an extended time away, his return and The Mai's willingness to accept him–doesn't stop her from searching for a sign that Robert cares for her. "The Mai" thus offers a different perspective from that of "The Dead:" although it's clear that Robert's priorities lie elsewhere, the Mai's continual acceptance of Robert and her questions reveal her desire to feel validated.

The two relationships examined in "The Dead" and "The Mai" portray very different marriages: Gabriel and Gretta have a marriage built on mutuality and love for one another, while The Mai maintains her marriage by allowing Robert's cycle of infidelity and selfishness. Gretta's past relationship incites Gabriel's questions and arouses his insecurities, and The Mai's desire for affirmation drives her to question Robert. Examining these relationships side by side reveals a fundamental truth: in every relationship, one's tendency to doubt themself prevails. The underlying nature of insecurities and the human desire for affirmation are an informing piece of all marriages, no matter how perfect–or crumbling–they appear.

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The Configuration of Society in *The Dispossessed* and *Blindness*

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One of literature's greatest strengths is its ability to teach readers about complex themes through engaging, fictional stories. Through novels, readers are able to grasp everlasting truths about life through entertaining stories with believable characters. One of these themes is the construction of society. Books can deal with the concept of a hierarchical society, and how people react to changes within society. Similarly, they can illuminate truths about human society that transcend the time or geographic region the book was published. However, not all novels deal with this concept the same. Both Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* and José Saramago's *Blindness* offer complementary but entirely unique perspectives on the establishment of society. *The Dispossessed* follows a man who travels to a world where the construction of society is the complete inverse of the one he is accustomed to, while *Blindness* explores what happens to society once an inexplicable epidemic of blindness spreads throughout the population. Keeping this in mind, how does each book rationalize the construction of society, and explain the complex relationship between a society and its peoples? Although both *The Dispossessed* and *Blindness* assert that individuals can both mold and be molded by the society they live in, *The Dispossessed* contends that the formation of hierarchical society is inevitable, while *Blindness* maintains that hierarchical society only exists with the collective consent of its citizens. Through an in-depth analysis of each novel and supplementary examination of related secondary sources, this point will become clearly established.

In *The Dispossessed,* Le Guin asserts that individuals can both mold and be molded by the societies they live in. Within the novel, the character Shevek is the most prevalent example of an individual interacting with the society they exist in. Throughout the duration of the book, Shevek leaves his collectivist home planet of Anarres, lives extensively in the hierarchical structured planet of Urras, and then later travels back to Anarres. All the while, Shevek is both shaping and being shaped by the societies he lives and interacts with. Most clearly, Shevek's character has been defined by his upbringing in Anarres. From a young age, the principles of Anarresti collectivism were drilled into Shevek's mind. During infancy, Shevek pushes another baby out of the sunlight, declaring that the spot belongs to him. The Anarresti nurse is quick to respond, saying "'It is not yours…Nothing is yours. It is to use. It is to share. If you will not share it, you cannot use it"' (Le Guin 27). As demonstrated by the matron, the pragmatic tenets of collectivism are taught to the people of Anarres from a young age. By looking at how Shevek behaves throughout his days on Anarres and initial time on Urras, it is unmistakable that his upbringing in Anarresti society has had a significant impact on him. However, this effect of "molding" is not exclusive to the world of Anarres. Shevek's time on Urras also plays a part in his development. During his time on Urras, Shevek finds himself thinking more and more like a "propertarian"- the very antithesis of his way of life on his home planet. This inner turmoil climaxes in Shevek's confrontation with Vea, a lifelong resident of the capitalist A-Io. Shevek attempts to have his way with Vea, groping and kissing her despite her vehement protests. Soon after, Vea is disgusted while Shevek is utterly ashamed of himself (Le Guin 230). This incident reflects the corruption of Shevek's collectivist ideals due to his extended time on Urras. In an act of lust and greed, two feelings that belong alone to the individualistic society of Urras, Shevek attempts to claim Vea as "his," signaling his transformation to a

propertarian. This change is only made possible through Shevek's time on Urras, as the differing culture of the society ultimately changes his own personal code.

As seen in *The Dispossessed,* individuals can be shaped by the society they exist in. However, the truth is the same for the opposite- individuals can also shape the society they exist in. In Carter F. Hanson's article "Memory's Offspring and Utopian Ambiguity in Ursula K. Le Guin's 'The Day Before the Revolution' and *The Dispossessed*," Hanson contends how just as the settlers of Anarres lost sight of the collectivist utopia they set out to establish, other societies commonly lose their original purpose over time (Hanson 3). Essentially, Hanson is arguing that societies can be changed due to the shifting beliefs of its inhabitants. This assertion is supported by the novel, as seen through the evolution of society on Anarres. When the first Odonian believers settled on Anarres, they participated in a truly anarchist society. However, by the time the novel takes place the PDC has been formed. Bedap, a lifelong citizen of Anarres insists to Shevek that "Government is defined as the legal use of power to maintain and extend power. Replace 'legal' with 'customary,' and you've got Sabul, and the Syndicate of Instruction, and the PDC" (Le Guin 164). This change on the planet is not random, it stems from the idea of the innate desire to form societies, a concept continuously reinforced throughout *The Dispossessed.* In the end, the society of Anarres was altered due to citizen's changing perspectives.

Likewise, in *Blindness,* Saramago contends that individuals can both alter and be altered by the organization of the community they reside in. In a similar matter to *The Dispossessed, Blindness* also demonstrates how individuals can change and be changed by the societies they exist under. In the novel, society is plunged into confusion as a plague of blindness rapidly spreads throughout a nameless city. As a result of this conflict, societies and

communities are strained, destroyed, and formed. The inmates' reaction to the strained society within the prison for the blind illustrates how individuals are molded by their societies. Before the epidemic, the characters of the novel were all members of typical hierarchical society. While moral repugnancy still existed as seen by the car thief and lady with dark glasses, the characters were mostly respectable citizens. They followed traffic laws, had jobs, and attempted to help each other for altruistic reasons. However, once they became blind and were held prisoner in the old hospital, the characters of the novel quickly begin to change due to their new conditions. The inmates begin fighting over beds, defecating in their wards, and attacking each other. The instinct to remain civil quickly disappears among the blind as they adjust to their new society. In the most apparent example, a gang of thieves quickly forms after an influx of the blind, and holds the food hostage. The group then demands that other wards exchange their valuables for food, and later, their women (Saramago 139, 166). This barbarism demonstrated by the internees is directly caused by the deteriorating state of society. These people who were once regular members of the public have been transformed into savages as a result of the new lack of order. It is not only the blind internees who are victims of this change. The soldiers guarding the medical center are equally as molded by the new strained society they now must function in. In multiple instances, the soldiers gun down defenseless blind people who pose little threat to their safety. The soldiers are even described as massacring hordes of the blind who are simply trying to obtain their rations (Saramago 86). It is difficult to imagine these soldiers would be doing the same under different conditions. Rather, it is the stressed condition that society is currently under that provokes the soldiers to now act the way they do.

However, in a manner akin to *The Dispossessed,* the characters of *Blindness* are also able to mold their societies. Saramago's character development of the doctor's wife is a strong example of this idea. In James Martel's article "An Anarchist Power Amidst Pessimism: The Overcoming of Optimism in José Saramago's Blindness and Seeing," Martel argues that as the prevailing pessimist of the novel, the doctor's wife is able both identify and face challenges, and inspire others to do the same (Martel 4). Martel even writes that "she seems to be acting as an independent agent but as I'll argue further, in fact she is acting on behalf of the entire community" (Martel 3). Through her courage, the doctor's wife is able to change the current state of society, and even form new communities. This line of thinking is supported in numerous instances throughout the novel. To start, there is the doctor's wife's ability to see. Even though the other inmates are unaware, the doctor's wife's sight helps her guide the group throughout the hospital, and to locate the shovel and bury the corpses. Both of these actions help maintain some sense of society within the prison. Furthermore, the doctor's wife is directly able to mold society through her killing of the gang leader (Saramago 189). She is directly responsible for liberating the other internees from the primitive bartering system that the gang imposed. Moreover, the doctor's wife is able to create a community with the group of the blind she brings to her house. By her own power, the doctor's wife provides them food, shelter, and adequate hygiene. She is the one who helps transform the group's reality of chaos into some semblance of order. As seen through the novel and Martel's piece, the characters in *Blindness* both are molded and mold the societies they exist in.

In *The Dispossessed,* Le Guin contends that the formation of hierarchical society is inevitable. In the world of the novel, several forms of hierarchical society can be seen. First, there are the nations of Urras, which include A-Io, Thu, and Benbili. All of these societies are

clear in their hierarchies, and draw similarities to contemporary nations during the time of the novel's publishing. A-Io is a stand in for any capitalist nation. Though it may be tiered more economically than politically, the country has explicit classes that construct society. Shevek interacts with the upper class of the planet, who are vain, excessively opulent, and greedy. Seemingly excluded from the nation's wealth are the working class people of the nation, which suggests that this specific population is exceedingly poor, unrepresented, and forced to live out of the sight of the wealthy. Neighboring A-Io, there is the nation of Thu. Thu represents any nation with communist aspirations. Drawing on knowledge of communist nations in the real world indicates that while Thu's citizens might be "equal," there is almost absolutely an authoritarian political hierarchy present within the country. The last country on Urras is Benbili, which stands in for any developing nation with political turmoil. If the country of Benbili is anything like the proxy-war nations of the Cold War, it likely also possesses a hierarchical society with a military dictatorship. Le Guin establishes these nations on Urras to emphasize how the formation of hierarchical society is inevitable. Just as these nations with hierarchical societies ended up existing on Earth, they also ended up existing on the fictional planet of Urras. Though the existence of Anarres might seem to contradict this claim, it actually only reinforces it. Though the collectivist society of Anarres was initially an anarchist society, it eventually became a hierarchical one through the continued growth of the PDC. Though many Anarresti view the PDC as a necessary institution to keep life on the planet viable, the syndicate proves to have similar tendencies to hierarchical governments that ultimately undermine the anarchist Odonian mission.

To start, the PDC is in complete control of foreign trade. Even though there are continued protests of Anarres's ore trade with Urras, the PDC ultimately has the final say in the

matter (Le Guin 92). This monopoly of power is a far call from the anarchist ideals that Anarres was built upon. Additionally, the PDC also monitors intellectual information that travels between the planets. Sabul, Shevek's associate, notes that "Defense insists that every word that leaves here on those freighters be passed by a PDC-approved expert" (Le Guin 115). Later, Shevek finds that his work has been severely censored by the institution. Essentially, the PDC acts exactly as a government in a hierarchical society would- just without the official nominal recognition. This conclusion is reinforced by Daniel P. Jaeckle's reasoning in his article "Embodied Anarchy in Ursula K. Le Guin's The Dispossessed." In his piece, Jaeckle claims that anarchism is ultimately the best political structure seen throughout *The Dispossessed*, and how the anarchist society of Anarres is constantly at odds with the environment, organized religion, and the state. Jaeckle correctly theorizes that these opponents challenge if the collectivist society of Anarres is truly anarchist (Jaeckle 2). Jaeckle articulates how an organized state must rise to face the environmental challenges seen on Anarres, and how it is impossible for an anarchist society to deal with this problem alone. Continuing, Jaeckle discusses how the "organized religion" of societal pressures on Anarres naturally take the place of laws. Those who deviate from these norms are subsequently punished, as exemplified by Tirin the radical playwright's banishment to an asylum for his unorthodox ideas (Jaeckle 12). As seen in *The Dispossessed,* The rise of the PDC on Anarres supports the idea that hierarchical societies are inevitable.

Conversely in *Blindness,* Saramago maintains that hierarchical society only exists with the collective consent of its citizens. In the novel, the presence of hierarchical society quickly disappears and reappears. Throughout the first few chapters, society in the unnamed city functions normally. Saramago intentionally does not provide a specific setting for the story so

that readers can fill their own society into the events of the novel. However, as the blind begin to accumulate in the medical center, notions of society immediately begin to disappear. Average individuals are compelled to act in violent, disturbing, and strange matters, and act in manners they would not have done before the outbreak. Additionally, the government of the fictional state appears to fall apart, as the soldiers stop guarding the hospital of the blind. As the crisis continues however, small communities with typical societal norms such as rationing and non-violence begin to form. This progression eventually culminates in society being reformed upon the lifting of the "white sickness." Through this rapid formation and destruction of society, Saramago is suggesting that society only exists as much as its citizens perceive or "see" it. Saramago uses the allegory of blindness as a stand-in for the social construction of order- as the ability to see is lost and people become accustomed to blindness, society consequently deteriorates. Essentially, there is no external force keeping society in place, and society can come and go as quickly as its people choose to believe it. The most clear example is the decay of the military. Consistently portrayed as the most sturdy and orderly structure in the novel through its use of violence and courage in the face of danger, even the military quickly falls apart as it is put into a high-pressure situation.

This claim is reinforced through Duncan Chesney's article "Re-Reading Saramago on Community – *Blindness*, Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction," where Chesney discusses how Saramago's depiction of community in *Blindness* displays truths about humanity when it comes to destitute situations. Chesney asserts that Saramago uses the "white sickness" as an allegory to explore notions of community in the contemporary world, and that the lessons found in *Blindness* are applicable to the world at large (Chesney 2). Chesney discusses how "Saramago stages a crisis situation in order to reveal latent weaknesses undergirding social

relations in this non-specified modern urban society: the violent and callous institutional state response; the recourse to a Hobbesian state of war among some of the people; but he does this to emphasize the ethical resilience of the band that finds in community strength to survive the extreme situation of the white blindness" (Chesney 4). Here, Chesney acutely describes the lessons of society Sarmago tells the reader in *Blindness.* Considering hierarchical society only exists with the collective consent of its citizens, in intense scenarios, society is likely to quickly collapse and reform. By placing responsibility on community, Chesney correctly attributes the construction of society to people, and not an outside invisible force. Though the collapse of society and the confounding of regular moral principles dominates the novel, it is also important to focus on instances where societes are formed. The main group of characters following the escape from the medical center are exemplary of a society forming during a time of crisis. Despite the group being small, admittedly only seven individuals, they undeniably form a community. And as Chesney notes, societies are built upon communities which in turn are built upon individuals. In this sense, the main group's experience is a sample that can be applied to society in the novel as a whole. As the group settles into the doctor's wife's house, they agree to a number of typical societal norms. The group agrees to share any food they find, share the space of the house, and to bathe themselves. The doctor's wife, acting as the leader of the group, even agrees to read to the other members. Perhaps most importantly, the members of the group subconsciously agree to treat each other with respect and dignity. The collective assurance of non-violence is one of the greatest signals of typical hierarchical society being formed. Again, this creation of order is not by random, but from the conscious collective decision of the group.

The Dispossessed and *Blindness* both share messages regarding hierarchical society, yet differ upon its construction. Both novels share ideas concerning hierarchical society, but differ on its extent or how it looks in practice. For example, *The Dispossessed* paints hierarchical society as a plainly tiered system, while *Blindness* views it as a more discreet phenomenon. On Urras, there are established governments presumably with heads of state. A-Io may sport a president and Thu an autocratic leader, but both share distinct levels of power. When compared to the assumed working class in each country, the disparity becomes obvious. Even on Anarres, there exists social ranks. Though these ranks are not established by an official form of government, they still prevail. Take Sabul as compared to Shevek, or the head of any syndicate compared to a laborer. It is never explicitly stated whether the higher-ups in the PDC are also subject to the constant changing of jobs. Consequently, one can reason that even on the supposed collectivist society of Anarres there exists hierarchy. This broader, larger vision of hierarchical society is contrasted with *Blindness's* depiction. In Saramago's novel, the members of the main group are all close in societal standing. This is made even more true considering the group is mostly blind, stripping away any physical or occupational advantage a person might have had. The doctor's wife, being the only one that can see, is naturally the leader of the group though she views herself as equal amongst the blind. Hierarchy still exists within the group- the doctor's wife is the one responsible for gathering food, providing clothes, and keeping the house clean. However, the gap between social statuses in the group is not as extreme as the ones seen in *The Dispossessed.*

Furthermore, regarding similarities, both novels share ideas about how hierarchical society's creation and altering is strongly linked to memory. Starting with *The Dispossessed,* the society of Anarres itself was largely created and then changed due to memory. As argued in

Hanson's piece, " Le Guin situates collective memory, as well as the Odonian historical tradition, as the means by which the Odonian/Anarresti people gradually lose sight of the idea of utopia as process, as well as their rights and responsibilities as free people" (Hanson 2). Hanson asserts that for a society such as Anarres to maintain the "continuous revolution" that it is in, its people must rely on memory. The memory, in this case, being the conditions of society on Urras before the settlers left to establish their own colony. Just as memory is a large part in creating societies in the novel, it also helps in changing them. Those on Anarres who embrace the PDC, and do not view the system of social pressures as imprisoning as Shevek comes to see them are some of the biggest proponents of "Odonian ideals." These individuals are warping history to fit the current state of society, in turn facilitating its change. This concept is also supported through Shevek's participation in the revolution on Urras. It is Shevek's memory of collectivist life on Anarres that provides the catalyst for the riot. These same ideas are also seen in *Blindness.* It is the visceral memory of the mental ward that drives the main group to create the community within the doctor's wife's home. It is the disturbing memory of society's quick collapse that provokes the population of the fictional nation to come together at the end of the novel. Moreover, just as Shevek was able to shape Urras due to his memory, the doctor's wife is able to mold the hierarchy in the hospital due to her past experiences. The doctor's wife is pushed to kill the leader of the thugs due to her intense memory of the brutalization of herself and the other women. After stabbing the leader, she yells "Remember what I said the other day, that I'd never forget his face, and from now on think about what I am telling you, for I won't forget your faces either" (Saramago 191). The doctor's wife's mention of remembering faces demonstrates how memory drove her to kill the leader, and subsequently alter the society of the

medical center. As proven, both books contain evidence to support the idea that the creation and changing of hierarchical society is tightly linked to the power of memory.

Touching on a final similarity between the two novels, both Le Guin and Saramago contend within their respective works that individual actors are often the most influential players when it comes to configuring societies. This claim is most broadly supported through the characters of Shevek and the doctor's wife. Both characters are the epitome of individuals being the driving force behind societal upheaval or formation. Perhaps the easiest way to see the extent that both characters had in their stories is to imagine the outcomes of their worlds without them. In *The Dispossessed,* there was little progress regarding development of relations between Urras and Anarres, and not much had changed in the Anarres way of life over two centuries. As seen through the PDC's censorship and Sabul's apprehensions concerning transplanetary physics academia, the chances of sharing technological ideas or even basic communication between the two planets was low. It was Shevek that started the cultural shift in both societies, and reconciled the unspoken barrier that separated the two worlds. Similarly, without the doctor's wife in *Blindness*, it is unlikely that that barbaric bartering system employed by the third ward would ever be resolved. As an individual actor, the doctor's wife was the most influential force behind the altering of society in, and later outside of the hospital. Both of these characters' impact on their world's societies reinforces Le Guin and Saramago's idea that single actors can commonly be influential players when configuring societies.

Although both *The Dispossessed* and *Blindness* assert that individuals can both mold and be molded by the society they live in, *The Dispossessed* contends that the formation of hierarchical society is inevitable, while *Blindness* maintains that hierarchical society only exists with the collective consent of its citizens. Both of these novels offer explanations to

how societies are formed, how they are changed, and how they are ultimately destroyed. The events of *Blindness* intentionally take place in an unnamed city, and the societies of *The Dispossessed,* though on alien worlds, bear striking resemblance to contemporary societies in the real world. Considering this, it is imperative to understand that the lessons found in the novels certainly apply to one's own contemporary society. Absorbing the ideas that Le Guin and Saramago impart can help one understand the state of their own society better, where their society may be headed, and that they have the power to shape their own society.

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