

symposium

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S Y M P O S I U M

SYMPOSIUM

THE ADELPHI HONORS COLLEGE
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Rhapsodes

Danielle Greco

Rhapsodes, my poetry collection written for my senior thesis, was inspired by the vivid, experimental language, shifting points of view, and classical subject matter of Elizabeth Cook's novel in verse, *Achilles*. One of the most difficult steps in creating this collection was naming it. So much rests on a title—it is the first tidbit thrown to the reader that simultaneously must inspire intrigue and anticipate the words to follow. I chose *Rhapsodes* because of its etymology:

Ancient scholars suggested two etymologies. The first related the word with the staff (*rhabdos*) on which the singer leaned during his performance. In that view, the rhapsode is a “singer with a staff.” The second connected the word with the poetic act of sewing (*rhaptein*) the poem (*oide*). Thus, the rhapsode is a “stitcher of songs.” Modern scholars prefer the second etymology, which is attested in a fragment of Hesiod (7th century BC) and in Pindar's Nemean ode 2, lines 1–3. Both passages use the word *rhaptein* to describe the act of poetic composition. Encyclopædia Britannica

The act of weaving is a recurring image throughout my collection because I feel that the process of composing poetry is very similar to that of creating a tapestry—both are

methods of weaving together entire worlds and stories, whether it be through the use of threads or of words. Thus the word “rhapsode” is especially fitting as its very root illustrates the union between the two arts of weaving and poetry.

Rhapsodes also invokes a long tradition of men reciting the epic poetry of other men; yet, in my collection, all the rhapsodes are females. However, not once do they interfere with the plot or tamper with the occurrence of Homeric events. Instead, they offer their own takes on pre-existing stories. This is still within the realm of the traditional rhapsode’s role: after reciting poems or passages from longer poems, the rhapsode would comment on them. But the female rhapsodes of my collection take their positions one step further. Rather than waiting to speak their part having finished recounting, they interweave their own commentary *throughout* their songs. They elaborate on parts not originally featured, maintaining the plots and events, but interjecting their own voices.

Such elaboration of the ancient Greek myths is what my collection aims to achieve. I argue that there is a distinct complexity to being in the background. When a character is forced into a dormant role, the activity taken from the body is picked up by the mind. A person who spends years waiting, serving, weaving, or fulfilling any other idle task creates an open canvas for thoughts and emotions to saturate. In my collection, the complexities of being a supporting character collide with the complexities of being a woman—whether a mother, daughter, wife, goddess, fate—whose greatest powers are those of observation. Through *Rhapsodes*, I hope to reveal what went on “behind the scenes” of the classic epics, and prove that what takes place in the minds and hearts of those left behind can be just as violent, passionate, and beautiful as the adventures of the ever-journeying heroes.

Rhapsodes

Prologue: *Voices*

“Rage—Goddess, sing the rage of Peleus’ son Achilles,
murderous, doomed, that cost the Achaeans countless losses...”
-Homer, *Iliad* (Trans. Robert Fagles)

“Arms and a man I sing, the first from Troy,
A fated exile to Lavinian shores
In Italy...Muse, tell me why.”
-Virgil, *Aeneid* (Trans. Sarah Ruden)

“Sing to me of the man, Muse, the man of twists and turns
driven time and again off course, once he had plundered
the hallowed heights of Troy.”
-Homer, *Odyssey* (Trans. Robert Fagles)

Sing to me
Sing to me
Sing.

Calliope's Invocation of the Women

He would have me
gather my skirts,
cup them like filmy butterflies,
and waltz before him—
unwind myself like a scroll
for him to write upon
once more.

Hasn't he absorbed all
I can give? How many quills
have penetrated
my inkwell-body,
to soak me up
before spurting his words
across parchment?

I have sung
of the man of twists
and turns before, and re-sung
his crooked path
thousands of times.

My lips fray
from bearing his jagged
name; the jaw aches
holding a man—
so heavy,
so barbed—
on one's tongue
for so long.

Does he mean to say
all those blind men
weren't enough
for him?

What have they done with the women?

Let Odysseus use his own words,
the ones that wooed cities
and gods.

This time,

I'd like to save my voice
for myself.

I'm tired—
we're all tired—
of singing for heroes.

* * *

We Gather,

we gather, gather as his muse of old looks at him with war in her eyes. We gather as storm clouds wafting in from a southern wind. Our bellies taut and dark, we are boats gliding on the Adriatic, messengers marching from our homelands, souls leaking from cracks in the black stone that governs this place, and we circle like life around this man in his death. We invade the sweltering grey heat that parches his throat (*il dessèche la gorge*). Though our flesh softens and loosens from our limbs, though we feel the muscle of our bodies melting, our cores hold firm; chilled, perhaps, by the gurgling sound of Cocytus sawing through the cavern that throats it, chomping through its own banks with icy teeth just one circle away from where we gather. We gather in this unholy heat and circle the man, though not all of us are damned, and he stares past us as our bodies slide like glowing puddles of oil towards him. We are nothing but *psyche* now but we stand round him while he contorts, like a shape-shifter writhing rapidly between different forms. His chest broadens, encased in gold, he is king of men Agamemnon, and now ruddy Spartan Menelaus, and then Achilles with heaps of death riding both his shoulders, he is Paris trembling beneath Apollo's quiver, he is that plebeian sitting calmly by the fountain while a priestess is raped in Artemis' temple—he is all of them and none of them; the one who melds and molds, manipulates his many-forked tongue for them. In him all their voices collide. Odysseus, O great wordsmith of men, finally sails here where he is just a crooked snowflake dancing in no wind—his eyes full of the Cocytus in the distance. We stitch ourselves our sisters together and we wait we weave we wait we weave we wait we wait we wait

Part I: *Horses*

“They arrive suddenly. So many of them, jostling and pushing—elbows, knees, necks—forcing their way forward, their mouths leading. Their mouths aflame.

Only at the very beginning did the living outnumber the dead. Circe had told him what would happen. But not *what it would be like*.

The sound of them. The sound of dis-satisfaction.

Of layer upon layer of longing.”

-Elizabeth Cook, *Achilles*

* * *

Three sisters: Clotho

Three sisters there are—living in a grey pond pressed flat—three sisters and I am one. I spin out networks of flesh and capillaries, I’ve spun out tragedies (far more than one),

and heroes, rapists, bards, the pretty children and the ones who’ll gut them, I twirl threads of light animated by gods into muscle and bone and heart and not one

will mirror another so long as I spin them. Three sisters there are—self-exiled to a plane of godless silver limbo, where the water presses so thin a million layers become one,

all merged so close that we are incestual—three sisters, and I the spinner. I the drafter of lives. I fingered the membrane of Odysseus’s being, and knew he would be one

that carried more. He would rage and sing and cry and cry and cry more baby than man by the end, but if woven just right, he’d warp and swell and expand into one

and all of the heroes that touch my hands, and then stretch taut and touch all women, blackening us out, the expendable characters, in wave after wave of all that he’s won.

I tempered him thus, knowing he will forget he is of the same clay on the bones of any man or woman, one wedge of the sea’s shelving edge upon edge; man is still only one.

So I weaved him a weaver to curve him straight. So when he’s all grown and feisty, whipping his hyacinth curls over his shoulder like a wild mane, eyes fierce as one

mad stampeding steed, he'll look at his weaver-wife who will lure him to her cool
troughs, and keep spinning, spinning, whispering deep in his mind, yes—she's the one.

* * *

Cassandra Waits on the Stygian Shore

I dreamed I had sex with a horse
the night before Troy fell.
The flaring nostrils,
tail thrashing,
coarse hair licking down my body.
How the awkward weight of his hooves
stung against my arms,
and how when I ran
my fingers through the dark curls of his mane,
I could almost feel a man inside.

I rocked in my bed, sticky
with sweat, nightgown tight,
my lungs hungry,
eager to suck more hot breath
from the horse's lips.

I woke to the hot breath of the city
exhaling plumes of purple smoke into a charred night sky.

One by one screams
gushed out of every window,
rolling slowly towards the palace
atop a drumming wave of flame.

War doesn't kill women.

Do you know how long it takes to reach Hades
with a body dry of libations? No milk? No honey? No blood
save for my own? Do you know how expensive
Charon's fare is for those who cannot pay it
at the onset?
Do you know the kinds of things he can get away with?
What he can charge
if you're huddling, body so brittle

with cold that you might shatter your soul if you
inhale too deeply?

Can you fathom how he would leer at you,
worms dancing brightly in his eye-sockets,
if you are an outcast even among the dead?

Is this the extent of my fatal curse—
to be unheeded even in death?

So forgive me, for not worshipping
divine Apollo and his holy art of prophecy;
I had sex with a gods-damned horse,
and no one believed the Greek soldiers he birthed
right into my lap.

I don't believe in gods anymore.

* * *

Andromache's Burden

I brush her
hair. I brush her
feet. I brush through
filaments of winding gold
and stroke rosy-fruit flesh.

Because I am a mother.

My husband is
kind, my husband is
blind, my husband thinks
victim and I think
harlot.

Because I am a mother.

So I pinch her a
smile. So I bite back black
words.
*You are not from
here, foreigner.*

But I want you (my
husband), and I want (my
children) my people
to know:

when I look at her
face, when I look in her
eyes, all I see is
your blood.

Because I am a mother.

* * *

Helen the Instigator

Ah, the putrid shine of gold
gropes me everywhere;
this olive skin glows,
hair shimmers
in loose coils that rope
down this body
and root me
in place.

I am more golden
than any statue
of the gods.

Lips red like a heart bit in two,
flesh folded back and
bleeding freely,
greener eyes than the sea,
split by two black pupils
fiercer than any Greek ship
on the emerald horizon.

Just another shiny thing
for men to squabble over;
to raze lives for.

And I want to believe Priam's daughter
when she tells us about the horse,
whispers sweetly that all of Troy

will be swallowed up by sputtering black heat
and wild tongues of fire.

I realize now that I will never have
that fortune.
Men don't burn the gold they find at war—
they loot.

You who would give your lives for gold,
you have never worn it,
never felt the metallic sting of it seeping into your veins,
never seen the way
it reflects off the eyes of others,
bright and sinister,
when they look at you,
never spent hours with a servant in a washroom,
trying to scrub
coins out of your hair.

When night falls,
after my most recent captor
has fallen asleep with a fist full of these golden
curls, I slip away with my shackles
to press my ear against Cassandra's door and
dream. She murmurs that the Greeks
are coming.
That the horse will trample all of Troy.
Beware,
beware;
Oh, if only,
if only...

I would pray to vengeful Hera
for Menelaus to find me
tainted, to not want any more of me;
for an end
to all the blinding gold of this body,
to every gilded sinew,
so saccharine.

I'd pray for the shelter of a sword wedged thickly in my belly,
before new soldiers can hasten me to new ships.

* * *

The Wordsmith Does Not Speak,

we are not sure if he remembers how. Il ne parle pas du tout. He is as silent as great Demodocus is blind. He does meet the muse's eyes like a spider wielding the eyes of many men. He does twist grotesquely at the waist and roll his eyes back one by one into the fire that cradles him. He will not be swayed by mocking; he will only be swayed by wind. We were a hash of the deformed, the disfigured spread belly-down on man's earth. Our fingernails bent and crusted orange, jammed too deep beneath our skins, clawing up through Man's tunic to cleave the iron from their hearts and reach and drink and suck the light. But now we gather, we gather in the depths that all men shrink from and we reform, recalibrate, revise. We scoop in at the middle and roll out our breasts. We are lithe. We pick off our scabs and yellow skin. We adjust. We spin out souls from within us, tornadoes spawned from a grand orange. The women are beside him now, pacing over the gummy residue of the bodies our spirits left behind, nous les avons laissés. Meanwhile man's story is losing volume in this void and new ones are condensing in the dank air; we are gathering, gathering, only to pull apart at our seams so that we may discover them. There will be shards of us, splintering off from this supercell like lightning. We may be static. We may be numb with longing. We may have been seduced. We will unravel cloud by cloud from this fabric of woman. We will fray. We are not one man. There will be many different rain

drops.

* * *

Weather for Iphigenia

She scampers like a doe through a strange wood on a strange island. She heads inland, away from the navy and tan, away from the monster rolling and rolling itself over its own blue belly fat, seething foam through its teeth as it bites at the shoreline. She heads towards familiar greens and browns like those she remembers playing in as a child. Blades of grass bow beneath her tender feet, her eyes bright halos brimmed with the fresh scent of adventure; she is far from Argos now. She is escorted by those men who'd been fixed like statues in her life since birth, close advisers of her father, guards of her mother. They line her on either side, like ash trees along an avenue, and whisper as they gather brush for a fire.

Clouds burst like bombs in the sky and rain whistles out from the smoke, spiraling to the earth like emblazoned corkscrews. The eyes of her father's friends comb her body as they peel back the dress from her stomach, thighs, breasts, leaving her raw and aching like an onion, her eyes stinging. Her father's men apply special pressure to the places on her body they never knew they'd always wanted to touch. She is no longer their princess, she is no longer their friend, and Agamemnon's supervision shows that she is no one's daughter now. So Maecon, who used to bring her little trinkets from overseas, rakes curious fingers against her calf, and Eurydys, who used to twirl the skipping rope for her and her friends, cups one of her creamy white breasts, and Agamemnon realizes how much her breasts are like his lovely wife's, and he wonders if she'd make Clytemnestra's same quiet noise if he pressed a war-battered thumb

over her rosy nipple. She is just a specimen of a woman now, and the men examine her piece by piece as surgeons before a delicate operation. She has stopped writhing and gazes up at the heavens, hoping the feathery grey sky will part and suck her into it. No one touches her. She's not sure if they ever did, or if her virgin exposure is so unfathomable that she is dizzy with nonsense, and perhaps the arms that held her down have done her no wrong, and perhaps there was some sickness they needed to rid her of, holding her down like a child who will not swallow medicine. Perhaps now they have let her go and it will end. She stares at the sky and prays to Artemis, protector of virgins. Then knives beat flesh like

rain
beats
sand.

Clytemnestra in Mourning

I would have them both
my husband and his whore-prize
throats gorged with apples
posed on silver serving trays
staring at me with blank eyes

eyes unblinking eyes
in my furnace melting hair
stoking the fire
slabs of their flesh for our dogs
flecks of their skin for garnish

I'll churn and I'll churn
the fluids that spill from them
stuff their intestines
full with their minced genitals
and slick white strips of thigh fat

I would have them both
lolling heads simmered in broth
necks sliced river-deep
red pools on my marble floors
because I am a mother

Penelope Remembers the Sound of her Husband's Voice

I press my cheek against olive tree bark, inhale its heady scent and fall quiet.
I weave the scene; I strum my loom like violin strings, orchestrating the quiet.

Ocean chokes on salt—throat frothy like warm blood bubbling up from a severed limb.
The water churns itself sandy, a whirlpool of dust and minerals, surging and yet quiet.

I wonder if he misses land, soil black with moist life, rich and decadent in his hands
like dark cake, peach worms wiggling up through his fingers, fleshy and quiet.

I weave drums and dances, gasps and mutes, maybes (I specialize in maybes); I listen
to the pounding, to the twirls, to the shedding, to the homes, to the leaving—just be quiet.

I stitch glittering spider webs of dew over fresh grass. Luxurious rain lolls over the curves of
my calves and I imagine myself drowning among his crew as he sails on. Not so quiet.

This house anchors me. This hearth swallows me. These halls pursue me. Our son guts me
with his dark eyes. The suitors' merriment cannot spare me from the deafening quiet

of the king's absence. I rethread my tapestry. I only reach the outdoors by secret tunnels in my
loom. I unthread my tapestry. An empty palace has so many seasons of quiet.

The sun rises and I must disengage, slip back to bed. I knead our blue silk sheets with sore
hands, the cloth dimpling like sea-surface. Only our bedroom has remained quiet.

We were once skin on pearly skin, swollen lips on fingertips, stomachs puckered in the tall
grass. And he insisted, breath like fire, "I've always known when to be quiet."

* * *

Part II: *Nostos*

Time
begins now, in which he hears again
that pulse which is the narrative
sea, at dawn when its pull is strongest.
*What has brought us here
will lead us away; our ship
sways in the tinted harbor water.*

Now the spell is ended.
 Give him back his life,
 sea that can only move forward.

-Louise Glück, *Meadowlands*

* * *

Three Sisters: Lachesis

Three

sisters there are, pressed flat and book-like, three stacked leaves.
 steps taken to measure the length of a mortal life.
 and I am the distance between two points; I am the allotter.

Measure

first the taffy-flesh chords, stretched and stringy and finite.
 the lives that span my fingertips like feeble bridges.
 how many eyes, enemies, broken pieces are sustained before the final cut.

Burden

each sister, make us silent within ourselves, married to our tasks.
 our shoulders that buckle under separate loads we can never share.
 presses us so close that if we had the breath to speak no one would hear it.

Tension

comes last; I pull each fiber taut and quivering before the sharp-eyed youngest.
 strains the strands like muscles on the craned necks of dying songbirds.
 waiting for release, as the wings of scissors flutter through not-so-distant air.

* * *

Artemis Critiques Nausicaa and her Train

When that man approaches the river,
 young girls swelter
 like the throat
 of a frog
 —warp in
 warp out—
 compressing hot green
 tight green skin,

fresh like flower stems.

I hunt
for green,
I hunt through
green, I see
it curled in the hair of girls
who wear their femininity like awkward nymphs.

I see a naked man for what he is:
a gangly animal, with pouches of flesh
that dangle like a hermit's beaded necklaces.
To girls he is a god-tower,
and they bleat up at him like sheep,
panting like wild horses,
over this stranger in their forest.
What a funny species, mortal girls.

Wolves would know better
than to trust an outsider. They can smell the iron
in foreign blood, attack on sight,

man who leaves his wife and child
to ogle at naked girls, man who
kills his child and is killed by his wife,
man who, to avenge his brother,
shattered his mother, man who
tells stories at kings' dinner tables
of man who lies with immortals
then cries about it, of man whose
wife spins desperately through a fog of leering men who
sont du pareil au même.

What are these girls that paint a man like a god, that
brush him onto heaven's canvas with the tiny strokes of their minds?

* * *

Penelope Sees Ghosts

One lavender morning,
milky with newborn clouds,
my dead sister Iphthime enters through my bedroom window.

The dead are not beautiful to me.

Her smoky complexion,
 limitless flexibility,
 repulse me.
 Her wrists twist unearthly,
 legs contort effortlessly;
 her marionette spirit
 is clumsy with failure to recollect
 the confining grace of a body.

Through my vanity mirror
 my eye calculates each of her steps,
 each should-be imprint that doesn't compress my carpet.

I remember her stubby young fingers
 that once wove my hair into braids
 when we were girls.

Come, she rasps,
 flashing grey eyes
 she never had.
 My lips braid shut,
 knowing she will insist,
 sensing the will of a goddess.

But I am waiting
 for my husband, I am waiting
 for something
 alive.

Come. Spectral fingers explode on my temples.
 I see Odysseus he is
 dining with foreign kings,
 he is skulking naked through tall grasses,
 fumbling on his sea-legs, he is
 sunbathing on an island,
 he is wrapped up in a woman
 more blonde than the sun, he has
 tears at the corners of his dark eyes,
 yet his erection prods the thigh
 of a nymph—no—
 of nymphs, as he recalls
 young girls in the woods.

This time, when my sister beckons, *Come*,
 I only see Athena's silver irises,
 an Olympic silhouette behind the mortal shade.

The divine conduct the rites of heroes.

I follow.
 I glide to my husband on a sea-bound gale that sharply whispers,

Come.

* * *

She Eclipses Him

slowly, like a waterfall of light that brings darkness. Seven years of lush Ogygian paradise. Plump apples strain the necks of tree branches, feed the plump nymph who feeds on the lost man. Odysseus swears that the ocean blinks up at him widely in the sunlight, like his wife's eyes watching. The nymph ambles by, lets her hair spill like a golden shower in front of him, blots out the eyes of the sea. We taste her sense of triumph; another risk of man waking from his ecstasy has been overcome. When the last strand of her hair sifts past, the sea is barren. The hero gorges himself with fruit, sex, sun, sea, wine until he can only sprawl across the sand and call gluttonously for Calypso. She longs to cast her honeyed shadow over him forever, shielding his eyes from the sun that never ceases shedding scales of light across the island. Each night they exchange shadows, their bodies morph through each season together—red to brown to green to yellow to red. They roll into each other like waves tumbling across the shore. And all the trees have eyes and we are their eyes spreading gossip for seven years. Odysseus sees his wife not just in the ocean but in the pears, the wine, the nymph's feet, and he flares up red and temporary like autumn leaves. And we see we see we see that the eyes in the sea are her eyes. His wife has joined us in the trees, but quietly. She sees all we see we see her see. And when Odysseus makes love to the nymph his wife's spirit saunters off as if to tell Calypso, "eclipse me if you dare."

* * *

Athena Considers Humankind

You are all forever falling, falling in Fall.
 Crimson maple leaves set on fire,
 Your burning edges curl like the beckoning fingers of a lady
 As you try to smoke out the last gasps of Summer's heat.

Orange leaves whirl by,
 Sailing on a breeze—on
 A child's chuckle. There is
 A crunch

Of lemony naïveté beneath your feet.
 Foolish leaves, don't you know that brightness is a weakness?
 To be bright is to be noticed, to be noticed is the end—
 You will tread on one another until only the most vibrant saffron dust remains.

Each color is a coma,
 Will you wake from red flames, orange whimsy, yellow ignorance?
 Are brown leaves sleeping? Or are they simply
 Brown like earth—no—brown like death.

And it is far too cold for any of you here.
 Why are you here?
 Why, where else could you be?
 Winter winds are never mild.

Abandoned
 Corpses litter the streets.
 But they can't collapse the cobblestone
 (Their scrawny deadness moves nothing).

These skeletons were leaves once, too.
 Now their naked veins gape upwards
 Under snow and foot
 (*always* under foot).

Snow sputters to keep up;
 The sickly clouds
 Belch burst after burst of cold ivory feathers,
 Tucking a white secondhand blanket over the colors of your broken bones.

Yet we will rise you from your own corpse-dust.
 Lukewarm is the temperate sun that melts away your coffins,
 Providing just enough warmth to breathe
 But not enough to live.

This meager diet of heat
 Constricts your lungs, your hearts, your minds.
 Your body dances on,
 For men are one in spring. One body

Will suffice. You embrace like lovers underground—
 Intimate. Until the time of resurrection.
 Then every gentle new sprout fights for himself,
 Every budding baby leaf in arms against his brother,

For a glimpse, or a touch,
 Of our light which grows you back.
 The sun flirts with each of you
 And wafts your bountiful branches into a hot Summer rage.

Until the sun explodes you
 And ripe emerald leaves swell at their branches
 Burning for release,
 For flight.

That
 Is the danger of passion;
 The heat
 Of a fresh woman sprawled before you,

Garbed only in a glimmer of sun.
 A city that fell before you,
 White sails leaving Troy, leaving Phaeacia,
 the flames of Summer erasing their wake.

With a shudder you sigh and sway together on the branches,
 Your brilliant skins perspire with dew.
 But then light from a lady's eyes glows up at you,
 And one by one you'll turn crimson.

* * *

The Sirens' Island

You watch with baleful awe the fatal imposters of the muses,
 As you're fastened to your mast with chafing rope and spare drape—
 Our one collective tender voice so dulcetly abuses.

Oh how the unobstructed light so easily diffuses
 As you sail unswervingly toward our dire creatures' cape;
 You watch with baleful awe the fatal imposters of the muses.

Your comrades stuff their ears with moist red wax, it oozes

Down along their chins. We winged women salivate, mouths agape;
Our one collective tender voice so dulcetly abuses.

We are but semblances of grace, which easily confuses
Your men—fools, with ironless hearts, sweat pearly on each nape.
You watch with baleful awe the fatal imposters of the muses,

Our honeyed lyrics mock you, “Hear all, how wise Odysseus chooses
To forgo this rare chance for our rarest truths!” the notes a mental rape;
Our one collective tender voice so dulcetly abuses.

And as you rail for release, your faithful crew refuses
To attend your orders. Deaf and deft, they hasten your escape.
Yet you watch with baleful awe the fatal imposters of the muses;
Our one collective tender voice so dulcetly abuses.

Lotus Flower

hazy winter daze
 a shade
 of a great building
 a monument
 of a man or is he
 a beast a great
 towering hut simmering
 in heavy sunlight the air
 too tight to breathe but when you breathe
 so
 lovely-bitter
 like rhubarb stalks
 my sister or mother or
 friend once placed between the petals of my lips
 one day or month or
 before the men with skin
 like bronze entered flashing, footfalls that swam
 like earthquakes through our yellow bones
 the hut the tower among them
 he ushered them all away
 and bellowed something name-like though
 we care not for names but for the
 composition of things
 blood & body & stone sometimes
 personne we'll know him by for this instant maybe
 he is
 & yet his feet clamored like
 nobody
 somebody
 but what I want to know is
 who says you need a person for a story
 anyway
 when I can plant my face-side against the frosty earth or animal hide or grass or
 & watch from the corners
 of someone else's eyes as my breasts rise and fall
 like snow caps heaving themselves over
 tall-breathing mountain
 ridges
 & rhubarb stalks

* * *

Penelope & Leucothea

these are not my breasts
 i focus
 i am like a layer
 over the layer
 of this sea goddess this nymph
 i feel her silken dolphin-skin
 graze my stomach
 we are bound by a scarf
 bright with every color of the waves
 weaving our waists together
 our hips are shells
 cupping
 as we rock alone in the ocean
 no land in sight

i've never seen anything so vast & swallowing

and suddenly
 my husband in the sea
 his wild curls a mirror of the water
 that erupts at his presence
 foam bubbles up and hisses
 like the sizzle of some great blue flame
 a far-crying tongue of flame
 that reaches
 reaches
 always upwards
 screaming
 never uttering a word

& i can feel the nymph's eyes on him
 as her sympathy
 rages into a fierce & sudden love
 better experienced for having never been realized

crude fantasies pass between our minds
 of what she could demand of Odysseus
 should she save him
 keep him forever bound to her & the sea
 what all these women want
 my husband & the sea

they would make love to the bantering rhythm
of her father's ocean

leucothea tilts her milky mane
strewn with glistening green weed
against my shoulder
the scarf that belts
both our waists
tightens as we sway
she stretches to touch her thigh
eyes locked on my husband as he struggles to breathe

but her touch grazes my leg
we share the sensation
of fingers light as spider legs
shuddering heat straight through my spine
our spine
woman caressing woman
like butterfly wings

& in her mind odysseus
grabs us by the hips
bites into our neck
rough & wrong & she doesn't know him
doesn't know his hands were smooth before the war
less bloody more
tactile more willing to hold & retain
& i redirect *no not like this*
love me like before the nymphs & lust like
husband & wife

he responds *& great olive tree bed & Ithaca*
taking his fierce & sudden love for me out on this immortal

& then a wave breaks &
leucothea touches only herself & i
& my husband loses color in the distance & he stops flailing &
i am not sure if i am watching him or
watching the nymph's hand between
our thighs

she loosens her scarf
tosses it to my husband
water floods the sudden chasm between our waists

i slip away
we unravel

Circe Consoles Calypso

The difference between science and magic
is that science scares those who don't understand it
and magic scares everyone.
I deal in magic—

accentuating the natural commonalities between pigs and men,
brewing weeds and limbs and silks into potions,
sucking out memories through the lips of men
and gnashing them apart between my teeth,
unweaving the fabrics that cloak the mind.

Love is not sorcery—
love is biology.

It's not about the praise or the shelter
or the sex
you lavished on him.

He didn't return any of those,
did he? Let me tell you,
when the man you kiss has tear-salted lips,
it's usually a fair sign
he's not interested.

Don't start—I've heard it all before:
But his tears dried when I stroked his hips
But he loved me while he bedded me
Name one Man, Cal,
who hasn't loved you
when you gave him an erection.

Maybe you're still not understanding.
Man—for lack of a better use—
is a tool to grow some hide over your softer skin.

In time,

all diseases are countered by immunities,
 chemical reactions dwindle,
 and there's no amount of crickets I can dismember,
 no special nectar to gather from black lotus,
 no fey chant or potion that will halt time.

So when Odysseus eventually remembers to flee, let him.
 And we will share with him only the sky-bound stars,
 just as we always had,
 before our flesh met
 his flesh.

So the cycle will have repeated itself,
que sera sera,
 move on.

Eurycleia Contemplates Balance

I may not have birthed them	but I
reared them all;	
I've trained every maiden	now I
watch each fall.	

The master's returned	and he's
glutting his sorrow;	
there'll be no talk of traitors	in this
house come tomorrow.	

Hippodameia, I'll grant,	as she's
ushered to the yard,	
has shamelessly pleased	the most
suitors by far.	

But there are some maids,	like Melantho
the lamb,	
who dropped to	her knees,
fearing suitors' strong hands.	

I see Telemachus shepherd	the queen's
loyal Eurynome,	
who disgraced her body	to spy
on the enemy.	

Hardest to behold,	young Dymnaea
--------------------	---------------

crying; I know for a fact damned her was lying.	he who
She prayed every night master's homecoming. The lewd leering suitors virgin heart drumming.	for her kept her
Gathered in the yard, shudder and sob before crude leather nooses their jobs.	twelve maids for misinterpreting
Like turtle doves flailing, out with their wings, they are herded together of their king.	striking by order
Like thin sacks of flour with quick ease, a dozen small baby dolls in the breeze.	strung up kicking

* * *

Penelope's Sestina

My bed is a sea of dead women
 who flock and thrash against the olive tree roots
 that cradle my bronze bed, the masterpiece of my husband.
 They gather around as my pale body sleeps,
 my hair like sea weeds, thrown loose from its braid.
 I let my spirit linger near the ceiling, watching the scene unravel.

It's a nightmarish wet dream, as each figure unravels
 from my bed's bulging womb, countless distinct women,
 who arouse me with an immortal elegance that seems braided
 into their beings, and horrify me because now all of us share roots
 through Odysseus. I see my feverish sleep
 and wonder which of these shades is now holding my husband.

Because I am a mother, I put my husband

before my child. How could I ever hope to unravel
 the mysteries of my son, while the memory of his father sleeps?
 Perhaps this is why mothers are women;
 to contain boys like Telemachus, one must root
 him with reflection—warriors heading out to sea, their hair in braids.

Eurynome, too awake or too alive to see the swarms of souls, enters to braid
 my hair and dress me. Instead she prays to the gods that my husband
 comes home. Where was she was sprouted? How do her roots
 in some distant village, perhaps across the sea, unravel
 into the map that led her to me? She has faith; unlike other serving women,
 she prays to each god for our shattered family before she sleeps.

For so many, a home is not the place where they sleep.
 A man lost at sea might whisper in the dark, clutch a braid
 that hailed from his city, close his eyes. The women
 he left behind, whether they called him father, son, brother, husband,
 each day feel more and more of their heart-fibers unravel
 as they ghost through their lives, crippled, cut loose from their roots.

I wake from the layers of women who clamp my body like roots,
 and my spirit reconnects with Ithaca. My body escapes from sleep
 to reunite with my spirit. The lavender morning light unravels
 me from these specters that I have been tightly braided
 into for a journey of years, chasing after a roaming husband.
 I peel back from Athena who wears my sister's ghost, I peel back from all the women.

I recover my roots, but miss the inscrutable truth of the braid
 that held me to the glowing creatures who sleep with my husband.
 I unravel a piece of myself when I shed the swirling shades of other women.

* * *

Epilogue: *Pyrrhic Victory*

Pyrrhic [(peer -ik)] victory

A victory that is accompanied by enormous losses and leaves the winners in as desperate shape as if they had lost. Pyrrhus was an ancient general who, after defeating the Romans, told those who wished to congratulate him, ‘One more such victory and Pyrrhus is undone.’”

—*The American Heritage New Dictionary
of Cultural Literacy*, Third Edition

* * *

Three Sisters: Atropos

I am the unturning one
of three. I do not waver. I am
unflinching. I am black
and white, before
and after. Before,
it's quiet as a valley
in winter. All life frozen
at the peak of death. There is only the sound
of an oar driven into the earth,
and my lifeless silver bird
whistles through the white air,
with an undeterrable beak that my grey hand guides.

After,
metallic humming
resonates inwards, upwards,
outwards from our flat plane
at the core of mortal
and immortal life.
After the thread is cut,
the body cracks open like a carapace,
the soul slips out from its shell,
like butterflies rippling forth from wounds.
After I cut,
the body falls.

* * *

He is such an Altered Creature

I hardly know him anymore. I am unraveled and now he is the aberration the unyielding mass of everything sour wrung out into one grotesque form, but I am not afraid of him. I yes I me I no longer require the crutch of “we,” I am my own mind, my own psyche, my own form, my own voice, breasts, heart, beating, beating, beating shape into my spirit. After the silence, Odysseus opens his mouth to fill me with his words and voice, as he once filled those hallowed halls of Phaeacia, as he once filled the wide ears of Homer, Virgil, Milton and all their train. But he finds he still cannot speak, *il ne peut toujours pas parler pour lui-même*. Now when he opens his mouth he only swallows flames. His time has passed. He has spoken for years and he has ridden on the voices of every quill and then every pen, and now that I too have a vessel I will rise in equality. I yes I me I no longer require the crutch of “we” though I will let it enhance me like rain enhances summer, by placing contrasting forces in parallel. Remember that a “we” is born only out of a sea of I’s and as I’s we can each gape our jaws wide open, we will each scream, we have each latched on with our teeth, *we will each sing out in our own voices*.

* * *

Penelope and Odysseus Make Love

When Odysseus returns, he finds me and boasts, *Everyone is dead; let’s make love*. We stare evenly at each other and I can’t determine if we should make love.

I clutch my blanket, my nightdress, my hair, his hair—working with my fingers is the only way I remember how to join two bodies, how to make love.

I hate how the suitors said, how the maids said, how my son said, how my dead sister said: *it’s been two decades now since the old queen made love*.

I ask him for stories, how he bested the Cyclops. He scans my face and summarizes. *I’ll tell you the rest after bed*. I wish I could make him wait longer before we make love.

I notice when he won’t talk anymore, and our bodies meet again, they don’t fit right. Our parts are mismatched, reconfigured over all the time that we did not make love.

It’s as if the form of some nymph lingers, like liquid locked into his every crevice, so he cannot mold to me. I used to dream about how we’d make love.

The mind may maneuver memory, but the body never forgets. Athena showed me how my husband and Calypso made love.

I feel the shades of women he promised to remember drape their bodies over me, reminding

me he has forgotten them for my sake as we make love.

I see in his dark eyes he didn't anticipate me changing. He studies the extra layers I wove between the suitors and myself, reasoning with them as we make love.

After the crucial moment where hip kisses hip, he's already orating. Ordeals with sirens and cannibals, all his men lost, and I understand it doesn't matter why we make love.

I crave the sound of my own voice. I interrupt him, *You're not the only one with a story to tell*. My nostos is the sound of someone listening—the quiet sound that love makes.

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The Decade of Roma Inclusion? An Analysis of Discriminatory Practices and Failed Programs

Philip F. DiSanto

Introduction

The European Union has long been considered a champion of human rights, protecting the vulnerable and oppressed both within its own borders and throughout the world. According to *EU Focus*, an official publication of the European Union Delegation to the United States, “Human rights concerns underpin every internal and external EU policy, including external assistance, development cooperation, and trade. Special attention is paid to the rights of women, children, and minorities, and to the protection of human rights defenders” (2009). Internally, the EU seeks to develop and implement human rights policies through some of the major institutions which compose the government—The European Council, the European Commission, and the European Parliament. Each branch of the EU government serves a unique role in actively promoting human rights through the Working Party on Human Rights (COHOM), Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and various committees, resolutions, reports, and missions (EU Focus: Advancing Human Rights Worldwide, 2009). The *Common Foreign and Security Policy*, in particular, enables the EU member states to coordinate and agree upon policies for stamping out human rights abuse and discrimination both at home and abroad.

The European Union also cooperates with and works through a number of major international organizations to promote human rights across the globe. At the United Nations, one of the largest proponents of human rights at the international level, the EU plays an

active role in human rights policy-making through the UN Human Rights Council and the General Assembly's Third Committee. Furthermore, every EU member state is active in the affairs of the Council of Europe (COE) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)—two organizations which seek to peacefully resolve conflict and enforce human rights as based on the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. For the enforcement of various conventions and punishment of human rights abuses, the European Union relies on the European Court of Justice which holds jurisdiction over EU member states, the European Court of Human Rights which enforces the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights under the Council of Europe, and the International Criminal Court (ICC), which holds jurisdiction over individuals in countries that are party to the Rome Statute (EU Focus: Advancing Human Rights Worldwide, 2009).

In spite of this “special attention” paid to human rights issues in policy-making, the EU has recently been faced with a challenge to its stance against abuse and discrimination—a challenge which stems from the policies of its own member states and general behavior toward the ethnic Romani people. The Romani people have historically been discriminated against across the European continent beginning with enslavement in various Romanian principalities and culminating in more recent persecutions, such as the Holocaust or *Porrajmos* (Crowe, 2007; Romanies and Holocaust, 2004). Based on this dark history, the European Union would be expected to make a special effort to stamp out discrimination against the Romani people; yet in many instances, policies of member states or general sentiment amongst the population has led to blatant human rights violations within the boundaries of the EU itself. Discriminatory practices against the Roma (or “Gypsies”) in France, Germany, Italy, and other member states often constitute not only grave violations of the rights of EU citizens, but also greater violations of international human rights conventions.

A Brief History of the Romani People

A proper understanding of the history of the Romani people and the discrimination that they have faced both in Europe and abroad are essential to an analysis of their

predicament in modern day Europe. The Romani people are believed to have arrived in the Balkans, Greece, Serbia, and the Romanian principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia by the fifteenth century. Although they are believed to have originated in the northwestern regions of India, the Roma migrated to Europe directly from Tehran, Constantinople, and other major cities in the emerging Ottoman Empire (Radu, 2009). Indicative of their origins, some scholars believe that the name “Romani” ultimately derives from a form of the Old Indo-Aryan word *dōmba*, a word which had for centuries been used to refer to migratory people of low social caste in India and parts of the Middle East (Elšík, 2009). While the name of the Romani people has slowly evolved over time, this original name indicates the persecution that they may have faced even in their earliest days. Due to their cultural roots in Hinduism, in addition to their migratory nature and mysterious background, the Roma were also rejected and discriminated against very soon after their arrival in Europe. Around the year 1500, widespread abuse of the Roma had become prominent and officially endorsed—the Roma were feared as Ottoman spies or miscreants and, as a result, they were frequently executed, maimed, deported, or enslaved (Radu, 2009).

While enslavement in Wallachia and Moldavia continued for several centuries, persecution of the Romani people in Western Europe varied in severity and method. With the Age of Enlightenment came a new policy for the treatment of Roma—forced and often violent assimilation. Such attempts at forced assimilation included legal punishments for using “Gypsy language,” forbidding marriage amongst the Roma, and removing children from their homes to be brought elsewhere and raised in a more “acceptable” household. While some instances did result in Roma assimilation with the general population, more often than not they continued to travel, and did so with more fervor to avoid the sure persecution that they would encounter wherever they settled (Radu, 2009). In general, this policy did very little to effectively assimilate the Romani people with the rest of Europe, and most likely contributed to their continued migratory lifestyle.

However, it was not until the early twentieth century that the Roma were faced with the most catastrophic incident of persecution in modern times—the *Porrajmos*. The *Porrajmos* is a Romani term coined and put into usage by scholar Ian Hancock to describe the events of the Holocaust with an emphasis on the Romani people, and when used in its full form—*Baro*

Porrajmos—it translates to “The Great Devouring” (*Porrajmos as Holocaust*, 2006). In many ways, the plight of Gypsies in the Holocaust was incredibly similar to that of the Jewish people and followed the same road to a “Final Solution” that the Nazis had paved. Beginning in 1933, the Gypsies were forcibly relocated to Zigeunerlager in Germany—camps which could be compared to the Jewish ghettos or early concentration camps. The purpose of these camps was to register Gypsies with the Office for Research on Race Hygiene and Population Biology, efficiently revoke German citizenship, and forcibly sterilize Romani women. Furthermore, as World War II progressed in the early 1940s, Gypsies were systematically deported to the East and prohibited from “wandering” through certain areas of Europe in preparation for transportation to and extermination at camps such as Auschwitz-Birkenau and Treblinka (Milton, 1991). In such instances where Roma were not deported to extermination camps, they were killed on sight by the Nazi Einsatzgruppen, whose professed goal was the extermination of Jews, Gypsies, and political enemies (The Nizkor Project, 2009). Some scholars estimate that the total number of victims of the *Porrajmos* ranges anywhere from 0.5-1.5 million (*Romanies and Holocaust*, 2004; Radu, 2009).

Following the *Porrajmos*, the Roma were spread throughout Europe in much the same fashion as they always had been. Concentrated in Eastern and Central Europe, Roma experiences under the communist regimes of the 20th century were varied. Those who managed to survive leading a modest lifestyle were frequently those who had accepted a need to assimilate. However, the vast majority of Roma continued to lead a migratory lifestyle that was in line with their culture and tradition. As a result, many Roma fell victim to policies of forced sterilization, relocation, and general oppression. The lives of Roma were no better after the fall of those same communist regimes which resulted in new outbreaks of violence and persecution. Although the rise of the European Union would seem to give hope to those looking for an end to discrimination and persecution, the vast majority of Roma who hold EU citizenship still live in unmatched poverty and face discrimination from much of the population (Radu, 2009).

The Romani People in the European Union

With the establishment of the European Union and the furthering of the Union with the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009, Europe has been forced to address a new set of challenges surrounding the Romani people. The term “new” is used loosely, as many of the problems confronting the EU today have historically surrounded the Roma. However, these challenges are “new” because the European Union is unlike any government of the past—a supranational authority dedicated to the fundamental rights of all citizens and the protection of human rights across the globe. At the heart of the current debate regarding the Roma is the right to a “freedom of movement” as outlined in the Treaty on the European Union which reads:

The Union shall offer its citizens an area of freedom, security and justice without internal frontiers, in which the free movement of persons is ensured in conjunction with appropriate measures with respect to external border controls, asylum, immigration and the prevention and combating of crime. (1992, pp. 5, Article 3, Section 2)

This stipulation of the Treaty on the European Union is crucial because it has resulted in the returned free movement of Roma across the entire continent of Europe—often from less economically developed member states to more highly developed states such as France and Germany. In response to this “free movement” which has recently taken the form of mass immigrations from Romania and Bulgaria to the richest countries of Europe, the governments of certain member states have implemented policies of forced repatriation and deportation—policies which have come under ever increasing scrutiny from the European Commission and international human rights organizations (Bennhold & Castle, 2010; Lellouche, 2010).

While the Roma may exercise freedom of movement between member states as citizens of the European Union, this freedom of movement is not entirely unrestricted. Ten EU member states have put special rules in place requiring migrants to obtain a work permit within three months of establishing residence in that particular state. Should migrants overstay that period of time without obtaining a work visa, they are considered to be holding residency illegally (*Q&A: France Roma expulsions*, 2010). However, the member states that are currently under fire for their anti-Roma policies are not being condemned for enforcement of these

special provisions. Violations of the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union* have been alleged due to the manner in which authorities are selecting immigrants for expulsion. Some governments have pushed a policy which targets Roma and the shanty towns that they establish on the outskirts of major cities, deporting those who are found to be in violation of immigration laws and arresting others for minor offenses. “Collective expulsions” are directly prohibited by Chapter II, Article 19 of the *Charter of Fundamental Rights*, and Chapter III of the *Charter* goes on to forbid “Any discrimination based on any ground,” including “membership of a national minority,” putting certain member states in direct violation of EU human rights laws (European Convention, 2000).

Beginning in 2006 and coming to a peak immediately following the admission of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU, member states have been enacting strict legal measures and conducting police campaigns designed specifically to crack down on the influx of Roma immigrants. In one of the more recent acts of extraordinary discrimination, the Italian government declared a state of emergency in 2008, using this as grounds to round up and expel en masse thousands of Roma immigrants. Furthermore, the Italian parliament enacted legislation which made illegal immigration an offense punishable by up to four years in prison and/or deportation. In an additional attempt to track and prosecute citizens of a Roma background, the Italian government began a census which requires all Roma over the age of 14 to be fingerprinted and photographed (Pisa, *Italy declares state of emergency*, 2008). The Italian government has faced little opposition from its citizenry due to a recent upsurge of nationalism and general lack of sympathy for the Roma people. In a stunning example of the lack of concern the Italian people have shown for the Roma, *The Telegraph* reported an incident in which two Roma children were plucked from the ocean by beachgoers after drowning, laid on the beach, covered with towels, and left alone. The same beachgoers were later photographed sunbathing and playing football immediately adjacent to the corpses of those children (Pisa, *Italians sunbathe*, 2008).

In a more recent example of discriminatory immigration policies, the French government has come under fire for prosecuting and deporting thousands of Roma outside of Paris and other major cities. Following a clash between French Roma and police in the town of Saint Aignan which was in response to the shooting death of a Roma man who drove

through a police checkpoint, French President Nicholas Sarkozy called for the demolition of illegal Roma camps throughout the state and the forcible repatriation of those who were found to be in violation of immigration laws (*Q&A: France Roma expulsions*, 2010). While the majority of French ministers insist that this policy of “voluntary returns” is “decent and humane,” many human rights groups and advocates in Romania and Bulgaria have voiced concerns and outright indignation at the route the Sarkozy government has pursued. While those who are flown back to their home state are compensated by the French government, very few believe that these are “voluntary returns.” In immediate response to these new policies, the UN’s Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination voiced strong opposition to the Sarkozy policies, stating that “racism and xenophobia were undergoing a ‘significant resurgence’ there.” They were immediately joined by similar critics in the French Human Rights League (Fraser, 2010).

In spite of these criticisms, the French government continued to intensify its efforts to deport the migratory Roma people through August and September 2010, attempting to expand the list of offenses for which Roma people would be deported to Romania and Bulgaria. Furthermore, French Secretary of State for European Affairs Pierre Lellouche has attempted to shift blame from the French government onto the Romanian government for failing to address the needs of the Roma minority at home. In an additional attempt to quell outrage from critics, Immigration and Integration Minister Eric Besson repeatedly reassured the European Commission that the French deportations were voluntary and did not target the country’s Roma minority (Crumley, 2010). However, less than two weeks following Besson’s reassurances to the European Commission that French actions were in compliance with the EU’s governing documents, it was revealed that internal French directives explicitly named the Roma minority as the target of the recent police campaign. The European Commission immediately reacted by threatening legal action against the French government for human rights abuses. Viviane Reding, the European Justice Commissioner, employed particularly harsh language in reference to the French policies, claiming that “...this is not a minor offence... After 11 years of experience in the Commission, I even go further: this is a disgrace” (BBC News, 2010; Bennhold & Castle, 2010). In spite of such harsh language, the threatened legal action was dropped after France agreed to comply with the 2004 EU directive on

freedom of movement (*Q&A: France Roma expulsions, 2010*).

Backlash Against Discriminatory Policies

Since these discriminatory policies began to make headlines, both the member states enacting the policies and the European Union itself have come under intense criticism from outsiders, especially the United Nations and various non-governmental organizations which work towards the furtherance and protection of human rights. Prominent arguments against the French actions focus on rights guaranteed by the fundamental governing documents of the European Union. Perhaps the most convincing argument against these deportations is based on Chapter III, Article 21 of the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union* (2000):

1. Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited.

2. Within the scope of application of the Treaty establishing the European Community and of the Treaty on European Union, and without prejudice to the special provisions of those Treaties, any discrimination on grounds of nationality shall be prohibited.

It is upon this provision that EU Justice Commissioner Viviane Reding's calls for immediate legal action against France were based. Furthermore, the French circular which specifically targeted Roma immigrants has served as evidence for human rights groups that have long suspected France of ethnic discrimination and xenophobic practices. There have also been significant outcries against France from domestic organizations and officials. One of the first organizations to condemn the French government was the legal defense group Gisti, which submitted a complaint to France's State Council alleging discrimination and collective expulsion soon after the release of the internal circular (Lauter, 2010).

While many NGO's and government officials have been involved with efforts to pursue legal action against the French government, efforts by *The European Roma Rights Centre* have been largely responsible for the continued condemnation and scrutiny of the

Sarkozy government. Following a series of legal briefings with EU and French officials, the ERRRC submitted a formal complaint to Commissioner Reding on September 27, 2010, alleging that the French government was guilty of “...repeated violations... of the Free Movement Directive, the Data Privacy Directive and the Charter of Fundamental Rights.” (The European Roma Rights Centre, 2010) The substantial evidence provided by the ERRRC, as well as other organizations and media outlets, forced the European Commission to address the issues in France. Previously, the Commission had only briefly addressed the deportations and refused to become directly involved. At the onset of the French policy in late July 2010, Reding claimed that “...when it comes to Roma and the possibility of expelling them, this is up to the member states to deal with—in this case France—and for them to decide how they are going to implement the law” (Phillips, Connolly, & Davies, 2010). This statement is in stark contrast with the language later adopted by the Commission when confronted with substantiated evidence of France’s numerous violations of EU law and would set a very poor precedent for other EU member states should this become the official stance of the Commission.

The deportations in France are indicative of a much more widespread and problematic trend throughout Europe. Following the French government’s announcement of the expulsions in July 2010, human rights groups have been criticizing both the French government and the European Commission for “turning a blind eye” to discrimination against the Roma in France and abroad (Phillips, Connolly, & Davies, 2010). While the policies of France have sparked widespread media attention, *The Guardian* (2010) also reports many other incidents of discrimination throughout the EU, including deportations from Denmark and Sweden, evictions from certain cities in Italy, German efforts to repatriate Roma to Kosovo, and widespread reports of physical violence against the Roma in Eastern Europe. Organizations such as Amnesty International have found these expulsions to be particularly troublesome when the Roma are deported to regions where they are sure to be met with discrimination, such as Kosovo. According to Sian Jones, an expert on human rights in Kosovo: “EU countries risk violating international law by sending back people to places where they are at risk of persecution, or other serious harm. The EU should instead continue to provide international protection for Roma and other minorities in Kosovo until they can

return there safely” (Amnesty International, 2010). In cases such as these, not only are EU member states violating the freedom of movement directive and anti-discrimination laws, but they are further damaging the EU’s stance on human rights by repatriating civilians to regions where they face serious risk of physical violence and abuse.

The Decade of Roma Inclusion

The widespread abuse of Roma in the European Union and in non-EU states in Eastern Europe has quite possibly developed into the most pressing domestic human rights issue that the European Union has faced since the Yugoslav Wars (1991–95). In response to the growing needs of the Roma community, the World Bank and the Open Society Institute organized a massive conference in June 2003 titled “Roma in an Expanding Europe” which brought together high government representatives from Central and Eastern Europe, the European Commission, the Council of Europe, the United Nations Development Programme, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and prominent Romani leaders to discuss cooperative programs to alleviate pressing problems. The *Decade of Roma Inclusion* which sprung from this conference but did not begin until 18 months later did not initially gain much support from new European leaders and suffered chronic problems with organization and efficiency (Nicolae, 2005).

However, even with the development of “Decade Action Plans” by participating governments and the establishment of the Roma Education Fund (REF) and other programs, the Decade has continued to produce little to no socio-economic improvement for the vast majority of Roma people. While some progress has been made in developing programs for education and healthcare, inefficient social inclusion programs and the lack of a “coherent strategy” has resulted in the widespread failure of most initiatives. According to the Roma Civic Alliance of Romania (2010) “The absence of a coherent strategy for the social inclusion of Roma continues to be a general trait of the actions undertaken by the Government during the first half of the Decade for Roma Inclusion.” (p. 52) This analysis is troublesome and seems to be characteristic of many of the programs of participating states throughout Eastern and Central Europe midway through the Decade. The Roma Civic Alliance of Romania also

expressed concerns that the migration of Roma from eastern EU member states towards the West has resulted in the exploitation of the Roma by organized criminal networks (p. 53).

Over the course of the past few years, Roma advocates have turned towards the European Union in the hope that they will develop an “EU Roma Policy” that is focused on the same goals as the *Decade of Roma Inclusion*. According to the Decade Watch (2009) Mid Term Evaluation, some headway is being made with both the Council of Europe and the member states of the EU. While the EU has begun to develop an “Integrated European Platform for Roma Inclusion,” they have also come under criticism from the European Roma Policy Commission for making the same mistakes as the *Decade of Inclusion* itself—a failure to formulate a coherent strategy for addressing important issue areas (Decade Watch, 2010, p. 28). Furthermore, the inability of the European Commission and other governing institutions to formulate such a strategy has come under even more intense fire as member states such as France, Germany, and Italy continue to pursue discriminatory policies against the Roma.

The Future for European Roma

While many attempts have been made to rectify discriminatory policies and socio-economic factors which put the Roma people at a perpetual disadvantage, these programs have thus far been unsuccessful. It is certainly a positive sign that many NGOs, international organizations, and regional governments have identified important problem areas and are working towards progress on associated issues. However, the recurring inability of institutions to develop a “coherent strategy” for tackling these problems has resulted in the failure of most initiatives. Furthermore, attempts at either assimilation or the improvement of the Roma community’s socio-economic standing continue to be complicated by centuries of racial prejudice and discrimination. These issues have come to a dramatic crescendo over the course of the past year as French authorities, among others, have shown just how deep seated some of these prejudicial tendencies are. More importantly, however, the actions of the French government have proved to be a real test for the European Commission—a test which has resulted in mixed ratings for the world’s most powerful proponent of human rights.

In spite of the failures and disappointments that have riddled the past few years

of human rights advocacy for the Roma people, it is difficult to foresee either a continued decline in the socio-economic wellbeing of the Roma or an accentuated discrimination against them. It is more likely, perhaps, that we will see a gradual improvement in the condition of the Roma over an extended period of time. Even this conservative prediction, however, will require changes within important European institutions to facilitate change in the treatment of Roma and general improvements in their living conditions. It must therefore be the responsibility of the European Union, the only institution that is reasonably capable of encouraging these changes, to take as firm a stance at home as it does abroad in the protection of fundamental human rights.

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The Role of Textiles as Symbols of Power: Representations of Women as Goddesses in Ancient Greek and Renaissance Art

Lozana Mehandzhiyska

Since the rediscovery of classical philosophy, literature, and art during the Renaissance, the Western world has been heavily influenced by the ancient Greeks in all aspects of culture. The influences in visual art have been particularly celebrated. Renaissance artists borrowed not only the techniques for realistic representation, but also concepts and subject matter from their ancient predecessors. Some of the most famous masterpieces of the Renaissance represent scenes from Greek mythology, and one of the most popular artistic subjects became the nude female body in the guise of goddesses from the Greek Pantheon or allegorical figures.

Renaissance scholars also studied the works of Greek philosophers, scientists, and poets, and constructed notions about Greek society that prevailed for many centuries in the Western world. But with the advent of modernism and post-modernism in the late 19th and 20th centuries, scholars began to question some of the established interpretations of classical sources. It became evident that many orthodox notions of classical culture had in fact been heavily influenced by contemporary social biases. One of these orthodoxies influential in the development of western visual culture is the status of women in ancient pagan societies and classical Greece. The ideas of “oriental seclusion”¹ and the low status of women in ancient Greece were asserted and circulated in western thought for many centuries before modern scholars began examining the fallacies of these generalizations. In her comprehensive paper on “Ideology and ‘The Status of Women’ in Ancient Greece,” Marilyn Katz specifies that

¹ Marilyn Katz. “Ideology and ‘The Status of Women’ in Ancient Greece.” *History and Theory*. Vol. 31, No. 4.

“beneath the question of their [women’s] purported seclusion we can detect the operation of a specific politico-philosophical framework.”² This framework involves the fact that women in Renaissance Europe were very much subjected to male domination.

One of the most influential factors which contributed to these conditions was undoubtedly Christianity, which viewed women as lesser, incomplete beings, created from a part of the male body. This view gave a divine justification for the ruling patriarchal order of society. Women had no power in Christian religion or ritual, and in society their most vital duty was to obey the sanctity of marriage and the will of their husbands. Since Renaissance culture was purportedly modeling itself on classical culture, the lower status of women in Renaissance Europe was more firmly established by using ideologically constructed notions of classical culture. Picking specific fragments of classical sources (which also presented only a male point of view) to use as examples, Renaissance scholars considered women little more than slaves to their husbands in classical Greece. In his study “The Renaissance Notion of Woman,” Ian Maclean establishes that the neo-Aristotelians of the Renaissance who used some of Aristotle’s writings to justify the degeneracy of the female sex through mock science “do not even really agree as to what really is the opinion of Aristotle.”³ Their conclusions were guided more by their own biased opinion than by objective examination of the existing source material.

As a result, in visual art, classical influences were plentiful. Paintings of sumptuous females dubbed as Greek goddesses were particularly popular, but these goddesses conformed more to the ideology of Renaissance society than to the reality of Greek culture. Naked and seductive, created to please the males represented in the images, or the implied male viewer, these goddesses were very far removed from the true images of the goddesses and their role in Greek society.

A comparison of various representations of the scene of Paris’s judgment in Greek vase paintings to paintings by Renaissance masters shows a dramatic divide. In almost all Greek images, the three most powerful goddesses of the Pantheon—Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite—dressed in heavy garments and splendidly adorned with their attributes of power, stand tall before Paris. In Renaissance masterpieces, on the other hand, they are universally

² Katz, p. 77.

³ Ian Maclean. *The Renaissance Notion of Woman*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980. p. 36.

portrayed naked and for the most part stripped of their attributes. The removal of their clothing and the reduction of these powerful deities to mere objects of male sexual desire is also evident in other paintings which present these same goddesses in different contexts both in groups and alone. Even if the context of the beauty contest is removed, the goddesses in Renaissance paintings are still represented as beautiful objects to please the male viewer.

Furthermore, in Greek art, the most frequently represented goddess on vase paintings is Athena. However, she is a rare presence in Renaissance paintings, except in scenes of Paris's judgment. The goddess who is portrayed in the nude in Greek art as well as Western art is Venus/Aphrodite, who is, after all, the goddess of beauty and love. The proliferation of paintings of Venus/Aphrodite during and after the Renaissance in Western Europe compared to the negligible number of paintings of other goddesses speaks of the necessity for an excuse to portray the nude female body. In fact, the ideological constructs surrounding classical culture were so strongly rooted in the Western world that the name of the painting alone was enough to secure its place in the most respectable salons. If a nude was named Venus, it was praised as a high accomplishment of academic art, but a nude alone without the protective and respectable halo of Greek mythology was considered scandalous. However, this understanding that portraying nude females is in accordance with Greek traditions reveals an ideological bias that was prevalent in the Western world until recently, and a failure to understand the deeper implications of the role of women in Greek society.

Textiles and garments were critically important to the status of women in ancient Greek societies, and the neglect of this important connection in Renaissance scholasticism has in many ways accounted for the orthodoxy of the inferior status of women. In this context, the removal of the clothing from the bodies of the goddesses in Renaissance paintings not only renders them as sexualized objects, but also strips them of the main source of power that Greek women wielded. Textiles are integrally connected to what can be established as the three main spheres of power accessible to Greek women in antiquity—religion, economy, and the private realm of the household, the so-called *oikos*. The fact that women had no power in the public spheres of politics or law has been used throughout the centuries to solidify the notion of their inferior status to men. However, this theory neglects critical features of Greek society, and focuses too much on what S. C. Humphreys specifies as a generalized idea of

“male domination.”⁴ However, taking into consideration particular features of Greek culture, it is clear that women had a very important place in society, having specific responsibilities within their areas of power and expertise.

I. Textiles and the Oikos

Just as Phaeacian men excel the world at sailing,
Driving their swift ships on the open sea,
So the women excel at all the arts of weaving.
That is Athena's gift to them beyond all others—
A genius for lovely work, and a fine mind too.
(Homer, *Odyssey* 7.125-129)

Within the realm of the household, women had to produce all the necessary textiles which were “synonymous with the domesticity of civilized life.”⁵ A woman's ability to spin and weave textiles was the most important skill she had to acquire before she entered the new household of her husband. The young bride would be completely covered in fine garments and jewelry for her wedding so that the clothing would signify that “the young woman herself was...through her weaving skills and hard work, a source of prosperity to her new husband's household.”⁶ The wedding ritual also required the bride to present her bridegroom with a tunic, a *chlanis*, which she herself had woven. A young mother who survived childbirth offered her clothes to Artemis in gratitude, and if she died, her clothes were dedicated by her relatives to Iphigenia. Women prepared the clothes for their newborn children as well as the shrouds for deceased family members.⁷ The high value of these textiles contributed to the increased prosperity of the household, but they were also a source of independent wealth for women.

In her essay on textiles in ancient Greece, Ellen D. Reeder suggests that “A woman's garments were not merely testimony to her skill and industriousness. They also came to be viewed as an extension of her being, inextricably merged with her.”⁸ In Euripides' play *Ion*, Kreusa recognizes the youth Ion as her son when he shows her the cloth she wove for him as an infant. In the play *Electra*, Electra is asked to identify a stranger as her brother by a

4 S. C. Humphreys. “Women's Stories.” *Pandora*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995. p.103.

5 Ellen D. Reeder. “Textiles.” *Pandora*, p.200.

6 Ibid. “Textiles.” p. 201.

7 Ibid. “Textiles.” p. 202.

8 Ibid. “Textiles.” p. 201.

cloth she had once woven for him as a child. Such mythological references lead to Reeder's conclusion that "Textiles were so intensely viewed as an extension of a woman's self that it was thought that the natural state of a female was to be clothed, whereas that of a man was to be nude."⁹ This understanding seems to be the general convention for Greek vase painting, but the reverse is true of Renaissance paintings of similar scenes.

As extensions of the female self, textiles become powerful expressions of the will. Examples of mythical female figures such as Medea and Deianira demonstrate the use of clothes dyed with poison as instruments of deadly power equal to men's swords and spears. Thus, through a product of their own creation—textiles—women wielded great power within the private realm of the *oikos* rivaling that of men.

II. Textiles and the Economy

The manufacturing of textiles on a larger scale, as in the work of slaves or servants for larger households, determined the importance of women in the economy as suppliers of goods for trade. The Trojan women who were allotted to the Argives after the defeat of Troy were viewed as prizes and as assets to increase the wealth of their new masters. This powerful role of women in the economy was also connected to their exclusive rights to the management of their households. While men were away at war, which was indeed quite often in ancient Greece, women were in charge of managing property and ensuring the increase of the wealth of the *oikos* which included not only the production of textiles, but also the management of food resources, land property, and farms belonging to their husbands.

The time and patience required to master the craft of spinning and weaving, and the time required for the process of spinning not only occupied most of the time of the Greek women, but also connected them with notions of intelligence and knowledge, in the sense of wisdom, planning and forethought.¹⁰ This is why women were fit to manage the wealth of their husbands, and examples from Greek mythology link powerful women in charge of their husbands' property with textiles. Some of the most prominent heroines include Penelope whose skill at the loom and intelligence saved Odysseus' kingdom from the claims of many

⁹ Reeder. "Textiles." p. 201.

¹⁰ Reeder. "Textiles." p. 202

suitors, as well as Clytemnestra who ruled while Agamemnon was away at war. Clytemnestra even took up a lover, and her power culminated in the violent murder of her husband. In some versions of the myth, she first entangles him in a net to prevent his escape from the deadly stabbing she inflicts.

Symbolically, the connection between textiles and the capacity for forethought accounted for the mythological image of the three Fates, or Moirai, who spin, weave, and cut the threads of all human lives. Not even the gods can change the direction of life and death meted out by the Fates.

III. Textiles and Religion

The third sphere where textiles signify female power is religion which is also a public realm on a par with politics and law. This is also the realm where women in ancient Greece had far more power than women in western societies. In the Greek religion, there were no fewer important female goddesses than there were male gods. These goddesses were very powerful and were highly respected by all members of society. Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite were especially powerful, and were feared, honored, and worshipped by all Greeks. In comparison, Christianity was essentially centered around a single all-powerful male God who created everything alone. In the very beginning of the Bible, the most widely distributed book in the Renaissance and pre-modern Europe, women are pictured as inferior to men, the source of all evil, and the reason for man's downfall. In ancient Greek cosmogony, on the other hand, the very creation of the world was only possible through Gaia, the original life-giving female force.

In ancient Greece, women also were allowed to hold special high priestly offices; in fact, some of these offices were available only to women. In her paper "Male and Female. Public and Private. Ancient and Modern," Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood establishes that "Women were not hierarchically subordinate to men in polis cult. Even when a cult had more than one important priesthood the woman priestess was not in a subordinate position. She had her own area of authority on which male priests were not allowed to impinge."¹¹ As an example she quotes Demosthenes on the occasion when the Athenian *demos* punished the

¹¹ Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood. "Male and Female. Public and Private. Ancient and Modern." *Pandora*. p.116.

hierophant Archias for performing a sacrifice at the Haloa festival which belonged to the priestess alone.¹² In Christianity, on the other hand, women cannot hold any priestly office and are not allowed in the inner sanctum of the church.

In a fragment of Euripides' play *Melanippe Desmotis*, an unidentified speaker states that women are superior to men because women keep the *oikos* clean and prosperous, and, most importantly, because they hold the most important roles in religion such as the oracular office of the Pythia.¹³ Because this source is a fragment, it is difficult to judge the context of the claim, but it might be considered at least as a theatrical exaggeration of a statement that is, at its core, true. Sourvinou-Inwood further claims that the wellbeing and survival of the whole *polis* depended on the proper actions of the women who held high priestly offices, and that the active role of women was necessary for proper communication with the divine, especially in the important *polis* cults such as the cult of Athena Polias, the Eleusinian cult of Demeter, and the cult of Artemis Brauronia. Sourvinou-Inwood concludes that "The very fact that it was a woman, the priestess of Athena Polias, who offered prayers for the polis to the most important poliad deity in the most important polis cult could not but affect the perception of women's importance in the scheme of things."¹⁴ In "Women's Stories," S.C. Humphrey connects Aristophanes' heroine Lysistrata with a real historical figure—the high priestess of Athena Polias, at the time, Lysimache.¹⁵ This connection affirms the high authority that the priestess held and her potential power to influence public life beyond the religious context.

The goddess Athena was a particularly powerful symbol of the important role of females. She was the goddess of wisdom, courage, and military tactics, and at the same time, she was goddess of craftsmanship, especially the craft of weaving and textile production. It is not surprising then that her cult was administered by female priestesses, and that textiles had a prominent role in the sacred rites of the cult.

During the culmination of the most important festival of Athena, the annual Panathenaia, Athena was presented with the gift of a woven cloth, a *peplos*, which had a special woven design depicting the Gigantomachy and particularly Athena's role in it. Athena's statue was then undressed and redressed with the newly woven garment. The ritual of the

¹² Ibid. pp. 116–117.

¹³ Ibid. p. 114.

¹⁴ Inwood. p. 115.

¹⁵ Humphreys. p. 105.

presentation of the *peplos* is depicted on the central section of the east frieze of the Parthenon, illustrating the central role of the ritual in the cult of Athena. The presentation of the *peplos* is connected to a long tradition of dedicating garments in religious contexts, during festivals, or to mark important events in one's life, such as childbirth.

Preparations for the Panathenaia began nine months in advance during the festival of the Chalkeia when a loom was set up and weavers and designs were chosen for the production of the new *peplos*. At the same time, four unmarried Athenian girls were chosen to be Arrhephoroi; they spent the next eight months living in seclusion on the Acropolis, and wore special white garments. Two of these girls were selected to partake in the weaving process while all four girls took part in a sacred ritual in which they carried baskets with unknown contents from the temple of Athena to the temple of Aphrodite and back.¹⁶ The annual undressing, bathing, clothing in a shroud, and finally redressing with the newly woven *peplos* of the ancient olivewood statue of Athena Polias bore connotations of life, death, and renewal. In this context, the manufacturing of textiles defined female identity in terms of women's roles in religious cults as well their natural role as givers of life.

Comprehensive recent studies on the roles of women in ancient Greek societies have revealed how cultural determinism has shaped and colored our understanding of classical culture. Ambiguous interpretations of oftentimes limited and fragmented classical sources guided the culturally biased and ideologically tainted ideas of Renaissance and pre-modern Western societies about Greek culture. These ideologies are evident in the rendering of females in Renaissance art. Weak, subdued, stripped of their traditional independent source of wealth and power—textiles—the Greek goddesses of Renaissance paintings embody a notion of women created solely to serve and deliver pleasure to their male companions.

The combination of developments in deconstruction theories, gender studies, as well as extensive archeological discoveries have produced a more subtle and complex picture of the daily life of the ancients. It is no longer universally accepted that Greek women were 'secluded' and 'powerless' in a male dominated society. Still, it is important to keep in mind the dangers of being influenced too much by the current ideology of democracy which includes far more freedom and rights for women. The conditions of Greek society were different and not easily

¹⁶ Ellen D. Reeder. "The Plynteria and the Arrhephoroi, with the Panathenaia and the Parthenon." *Pandora*. p. 247.

comparable to the conditions of modern societies, even in the same geographical regions. Some scholars argue that Greek women had great power and influence only in the religious sphere; others are convinced that female power was limited to the boundaries of the *oikos*, and some present the case of an ancient Greek society where women enjoyed great liberties in many spheres. The evidence from visual art paints images of strong women who held very respectable roles in religious as well as everyday domestic activities. Yet a complete picture of reality is difficult to reconstruct from the fragmented sources available.

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Love and Confidences: Emotional Revelations and the Sharing of Secrets

Emily Ladau

For the majority of the female characters in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility*, love and marriage are the dominant topics of conversation. Their seemingly ceaseless conjecture and scrutiny concerning relationships serve as the driving forces of the plots in both novels. Though a fair amount of such discussion is conducted publicly, it is the dialogue between characters that occurs privately which brings out much of the conflict in each novel. The way in which such confidences are shared is demonstrative of the bond, or, in some cases, the lack thereof, between the characters discussing the secrets. Furthermore, while the social exchange of secrets in Austen's novels is not female-exclusive, it reveals much about how female characters conduct themselves in regards to romantic relationships.

Sharing confidences is a key plot element in both *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice*, as it effects major changes in some of the characters. In *Sense and Sensibility*, Lucy Steele maliciously confides in Elinor about her engagement to Mr. Ferrars with the intent of deterring Elinor's romantic feelings towards him, as well as making it known that Mr. Ferrars belongs to her. Lucy's secret plagues Elinor until she finally confides in her sister, Marianne, about her emotional distress. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr. Darcy reveals his love for Elizabeth and upon learning it is unrequited, divulges secrets about his own behavior and about Wickham as a means of defending himself to Elizabeth. Elizabeth's feelings gradually transform when she learns Darcy's secrets, and she is compelled to confide in her sister, Jane, about the truth of Wickham's past and her romantic feelings towards Mr. Darcy. Thus, confidences serve two specific functions: as strategic maneuvers used by Lucy and Mr. Darcy to influence feelings, and as a means for Elinor and Elizabeth to reveal their constrained, inner emotional turmoil.

Confidences, generally meant to be shared between friends, illustrate that friendship between females is not always genuine, but sometimes tactical and calculated. As Christine Palumbo-DeSimone explains about female authors of the nineteenth century: “Female friendships provided women artists with an ideal mechanism for conveying meaning, because women’s friendships were both so integral to women’s lives and singular in their quality and intensity” (82). Austen employs friendships as a plot device among the women in her novels, though some of these friendships are sometimes false. One such example is the friendship that Lucy tries to establish between herself and Elinor in *Sense and Sensibility*. While out for a walk with Elinor, Lucy cunningly steers their supposedly friendly conversation towards the discussion of Mrs. Ferrars – the mother of the man whom Elinor loves. At first, Lucy tries to come across as hesitant to reveal what inspires her to broach the subject of Mrs. Ferrars, leaving Elinor on edge. She prattles on mysteriously, saying: “I am sure you think me very strange, for inquiring about her in such a way...but perhaps there may be reasons” (Austen 71). According to Dr. Georg Simmel, such “tension between divulging and withholding knowledge is constitutive of social relations” (qtd. in Gunthner and Luckmann, 331). That is to say, confidences are a central aspect of socialization, as they keep the listener hanging on to the conversation, waiting to gain more information. Unfortunately, the information shared in confidence is not always positive. In fact, as William Deresiewicz notes: “As for the convention of girlish correspondence, what we find instead in Austen are false friendships exposed by the neglect or mendacity of such correspondence” (519–520). Not all communication between females is genuine, as is evidenced by Lucy.

Lucy chooses to divulge information to Elinor, acting as though she is giving Elinor the honor of seeking her advice. She says:

I cannot bear to have you think me impertinently curious. I am sure I would rather do anything in the world than be thought so by a person whose good opinion is so well worth having as yours. And I am sure I should not have the smallest fear in trusting you; indeed I should be very glad of your advice how to manage in such an uncomfortable situation as I am. (Austen 71)

By beginning their conversation in this way, Lucy underhandedly directs Elinor to open herself up to the role of her confidante. In other words, Lucy appears to have prior

knowledge of Elinor's love of Mr. Ferrars, so she capitalizes on this to pique Elinor's interest, conversationally leading Elinor into a perfect opening to disclose the secret engagement to Mr. Ferrars. Therefore, Lucy's decision to confide in Elinor seems to be a clever strategy. Lucy then proceeds to blindside Elinor with an obviously, though hidden, hostile confidence. She reveals to Elinor that she may soon "be very intimately connected" to Edward Ferrars' mother (Austen 71). By revealing that she and Mr. Ferrars are to be married in a way that is supposed to be subtle, but comes across as intentionally taunting, it is as though Lucy is attempting to evoke jealousy in Elinor while also conveying an unspoken warning to stay away from her future husband.

Of course, Lucy makes it appear as though her reasons for confiding in Elinor are completely innocent rather than meant to upset her. As she explains to Elinor:

I was afraid you would think I was taking a great liberty with you...in telling you all this. I have not known you long to be sure, personally at least, but I have known you and your family by description a great while; and as soon as I saw you, I felt almost as if you was [sic] an old acquaintance. (Austen 73)

Hence, the way in which Lucy shares her secret essentially acts as a test of Elinor's ability to maintain her sense and composure, in spite of being taken aback by the distressing information she receives. However, as Stuart M. Tave elucidates:

[T]he effect is devastating, an emotion and distress beyond anything [Elinor] has ever felt before. It takes a while before she is convinced, because Lucy is not trustworthy and Elinor is certain of Edward's love; therefore, as she learns the truth, step by step, the effect upon her is all the greater by her very strength of mind and therefore she is 'most feelingly sensible' of every fresh circumstance that favors Lucy's veracity. (78)

Essentially, Lucy sends Elinor into a lengthy bout of internal emotional chaos. Unfortunately for Elinor, although Lucy should not be trusted, she is truthful about her engagement to Mr. Ferrars. While Lucy acts as though her intentions are innocent, it is clear that she establishes this faux friendship between herself and Elinor solely to help her own cause and keep Elinor away from Edward.

While Lucy has a strategic reason for revealing her engagement to Elinor, she trusts

Elinor not to give away her secret. In his study of secrets as a speech act, Dr. Simmel sheds light upon Elinor's predicament: "just as human sociation depends upon the human faculty of speech, so are its forms determined by the ability to preserve silence" (qtd. in Gunthner and Luckmann 329). Although Lucy sparks an emotional struggle within Elinor by revealing her secret, she sweetly conveys that she has complete faith in Elinor to keep her secret. This begins what Tave refers to as the "major test" in Elinor's life (106). Despite her suffering, Elinor keeps Lucy and Mr. Ferrars' engagement to herself for four months. It becomes Elinor's responsibility to keep Lucy's secret since it is kept private due to Mrs. Ferrars' disapproval. Thus, as Tave points out: "The information has been entrusted to her in confidence, for selfish reasons and with the intention of wounding...but that does not lessen Elinor's obligation" (107). Moreover, breaking Lucy's confidence would also lead Elinor to freely express her emotions which is not in her nature. Even so, "Elinor's sense does not lessen her depth of feeling, though it makes her painfully conceal and suppress her feelings" (Brown, Clements, & Grundy). Therefore, Elinor also keeps Lucy's confidence because she does not want to burden anyone with her feelings—especially her sister, Marianne. Tave asserts: "By not revealing her secret, she can save...Marianne from the affliction of her own suffering" (107). Interestingly, Elinor is at once protecting a false friend and a sisterly bond.

Once Mrs. Jennings returns with the news that the engagement has become public, Elinor can no longer hold back for the sake of protecting Marianne's emotions, and thus confides in her sister about her feelings in regards to the secret she's keeping for Lucy. This is quite challenging for both Marianne and Elinor, as Elinor is the stronger one in the relationship, while Marianne is distraught at the thought of Elinor facing Lucy's engagement on her own. However, Elinor points out to Marianne that "[I] very often wished to undeceive [you]...but without betraying my trust, I never could have convinced you" (Austen 141). Here, Elinor illustrates her need to uphold her social obligation. She then explains to Marianne:

It was told me...in a manner forced on me by the very person herself, whose prior engagement ruined all my prospects; and told me, as I thought, with triumph.

This person's suspicions, therefore, I have had to oppose, by endeavouring to

appear indifferent where I have been most deeply interested. (Austen 142)

Elinor thus acknowledges her realization that Lucy selected her as a confidante on purpose, and shares with Marianne how difficult it was to hold herself together while she was actually on the brink of falling apart. At first, Marianne struggles to wrap her mind around what Elinor tells her. As Tave explains: “To her Elinor is happy, happy Elinor who can have no idea of what Marianne is suffering. . . . Marianne is the weight Elinor must support under the mounting pressures of her own secret” (108). By telling Marianne of her unhappiness, it seems that Elinor relieves herself of a great burden because she is no longer responsible for keeping a secret for Lucy while simultaneously overcoming heartache without support from anyone. Consequently, she can move forward with her life.

Just as Elinor faces the plight of an emotional struggle after Lucy’s confidence, so too does Elizabeth face a great emotional challenge in *Pride and Prejudice* due to Mr. Darcy’s unexpected confession of his love for her. Although Elizabeth feels a fleeting moment of remorse, she ultimately rejects Mr. Darcy’s proposal. This rejection is likely caused by three problems: Mr. Darcy’s infuriating degradation of both Elizabeth and her family, and Elizabeth’s belief that he is to blame for ruining her sister’s chances of marrying Mr. Bingley and for causing Wickham’s bad financial situation. Mr. Darcy certainly does not help his own cause after proposing, as he mocks Elizabeth for her low social status: “Could you expect me to rejoice in the inferiority of your connections? To congratulate myself on the hope of relations, whose condition in life is so decidedly beneath my own?” (Austen 316). Such disrespectful comments about her inferior social status and the general disgust she harbors towards his actions lead to Elizabeth’s angry refusal of Mr. Darcy’s proposal. Consequently, as Walter E. Anderson asserts, Mr. Darcy “realizes how much he must change in order to deserve Elizabeth” (370). Therefore, he chooses to follow his failed proposal with a letter to Elizabeth, confiding in her as a mechanism of self-defense in the hopes of clearing his name.

Initially, Elizabeth falls for Wickham’s false confidence about Mr. Darcy’s supposedly wrongful withholding of a parish that Mr. Darcy’s father had promised to bequeath to Wickham. To set the record straight about this debacle, Mr. Darcy must swallow his pride. So, even though Mr. Darcy’s letter is not a form of confidence within dialogue, he triggers

a turning point in Elizabeth's feelings for him by sharing this private history with her. In the letter, he reveals two secrets: his side of the stories concerning Wickham, as well as that of Jane and Bingley. Although the letter is not particularly romantic, it can be read as a sign of the depth of Mr. Darcy's love for Elizabeth. He descends from his pedestal and places his trust in her, admitting that her judgment of him is correct. As Anderson elucidates:

Elizabeth is mistaken about certain facts, but her character is sound, as Darcy makes clear in his confession to her near the close [of the letter]: 'What did you say of me, that I did not deserve? For, though your accusations were ill-founded, formed on mistaken premises, my behaviour to you at the time, had merited the severest reproof. It was unpardonable. I cannot think of it without abhorrence.'
(371)

Anderson goes on to explain that Mr. Darcy's confession in turn sparks Elizabeth to re-examine her notions of him. He contends: "[Darcy's] explanatory letter causes [Elizabeth] to recognize her own headstrong errors" (Anderson, 371). This leads Elizabeth to reflect and reconsider her feelings towards Mr. Darcy.

These feelings towards Mr. Darcy remain muddled for some time, as Elizabeth mulls over what he has revealed in his letter. However, as Tave notes:

The discovery she makes in the receipt of Darcy's letter is less in the new information he offers than in a self-discovery that allows her to see what has always been before her. What she now begins to comprehend is a reality to which she has blinded herself because the appearance was so much more pleasing. (129)

In effect, the confidences revealed in Mr. Darcy's letter inspire a gradual epiphany within Elizabeth, paradoxical though that may be, as she reevaluates feelings towards him. As Elizabeth goes through this period of self-discovery, she also struggles to decide whether she should divulge the details of the letter to her sister, Jane. She hesitates not only because she is unsure of how she feels about Mr. Darcy, but also because his confidences hold incriminating information about other people. This brings into question the morality of sharing Mr. Darcy's confidence with Jane. Gunthner and Luckmann describe how morality factors into keeping secrets, explaining: "there is knowledge that refers to matters that tend to be morally sensitive....It is therefore more likely to be treated with discretion" (329). Nevertheless, Elizabeth finally chooses to seek out Jane as a confidante.

Confiding in Jane, Elizabeth begins to sort out her true emotions towards Mr. Darcy. Thus, the bond between Elizabeth and Jane plays a fundamental role in the transformation of Elizabeth's perception of Mr. Darcy. As Luise Eichenbaum and Susie Orbach contend: "For many women, intimate relationships with women, friends, [and] sisters...are a bedrock of stability in their lives...There is an exquisite intimacy of female friendship, the sharing experience, of daring, of pain, of challenge" (qtd in Palumbo–DeSimone 109). That is to say, Jane is a trustworthy outlet for Elizabeth. Despite Jane's attempts to empathize with how Mr. Darcy must have felt after Elizabeth's rejection, Elizabeth appears more concerned with justifying her actions and seeking her sister's approval. Rather than firmly stand by her response to Mr. Darcy, she asks Jane: "I am heartily sorry for him; but he has other feelings which will probably soon drive away his regard for me. You do not blame me, however, for refusing him?" (Austen 332) It appears that as soon as Mr. Darcy breaks the silence about his love for Elizabeth and gives her the letter, she feels compelled to resist the reality of Mr. Darcy's feelings by rationalizing her rejection to Jane. By confiding in Jane, Elizabeth hopes to receive validation for rejection of Mr. Darcy. Essentially, "women's friendships formed the basis of... 'essential integrity and dignity'" (Palumbo–DeSimone 83). That is to say, Elizabeth looks to Jane as a guide as to whether rejecting Mr. Darcy is an honorable, rational decision. However, if Elizabeth were truly immune to Mr. Darcy, she likely would not have been so keen to obtain Jane's understanding and reassurance in the first place. Furthermore, Elizabeth must take into account Mr. Darcy's trust in her to keep the secrets of his letter, and she must be sensitive about Jane's feelings for Mr. Bingley.

However, when Jane shows pity towards Mr. Darcy, Elizabeth immediately tries to take on a studied, nonchalant disposition, saying:

Oh! no, my regret and compassion are all done away by seeing you so full of both. I know you will do him such ample justice, that I am growing every moment more unconcerned and indifferent. Your profusion makes me saving; and if you lament over him much longer, my heart will be as light as a feather. (Austen 332)

Talking to Jane allows Elizabeth to partially free herself from the weight of budding romantic sentiments towards Mr. Darcy that she cannot yet accept or understand. That being said, Elizabeth's statements to Jane about her lack of care or regret for Mr. Darcy are ironic,

since she clearly cares enough to go out of her way to explain that she only feels no need to care anymore because Jane has supposedly taken over her burden.

Throughout the latter half of *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth's emotions gradually shift from anger to the alleged indifference she shares with Jane to a sure sense of the love she feels for Mr. Darcy. Elizabeth's love for Mr. Darcy grows ever stronger following her confidence in Jane. For example, while Elizabeth tours Mr. Darcy's home, the Pemberley estate, where she contemplates what it might be like to be his wife, she learns much about his good nature. Furthermore, Elizabeth learns that Mr. Darcy has come to the rescue of Wickham after he marries her younger sister, Lydia. As she realizes that Mr. Darcy has a kind heart beneath his harsh façade, she moves past her prejudices towards him, until finally her love has grown strong enough to confess to Mr. Darcy that she is in love with him. He still loves her, of course, and they decide to marry, but Elizabeth knows that this will come as quite a shock to her family. Therefore, she again chooses to confide in Jane before divulging Mr. Darcy's second proposal to anyone else. This time, however, it is clear that Elizabeth is not seeking approval for her rejection but support for her decision to marry Mr. Darcy.

Based on Elizabeth's reaction to Mr. Darcy's previous proposal, Jane is extremely skeptical that her sister is actually serious. As Tave explicates:

When Elizabeth is engaged and opens her heart to Jane, the reaction is...absolute incredulity: 'engaged to Mr. Darcy!... impossible.' Jane's disbelief...is not that she thinks Darcy without a single quality to make him a desirable husband... She thought it impossible because of Elizabeth's dislike, and even now, she cannot approve, however great and desirable it seems, if Elizabeth does not really love him quite well enough. (136)

As Elizabeth tries to convince her sister that she is telling the truth, Jane asks: "My dear, dear Lizzy, I would—I do congratulate you—but are you certain? forgive the question – are you quite certain that you can be happy with him" (Austen 413)? Whereas Elizabeth was asking Jane for reassurance after the first proposal, Jane is now the one who appears to be unsure. Thus, Elizabeth's confidence in her sister functions as a means of assessing how the rest of her family might react. In addition, it finally allows Elizabeth the chance to speak freely of her love for Mr. Darcy. Following her confession to Jane, Elizabeth reveals her engagement

to her father. He has much the same reaction as Jane, but Elizabeth has to expand upon her defense of the engagement by revealing to Mr. Bennet that Mr. Darcy is responsible for saving Lydia's marriage to Wickham. Moreover, Tave points out that Mr. Bennet is genuinely concerned whether Elizabeth will find happiness in marrying Mr. Darcy. He says to her, "My child, let me not have the grief of seeing you unable to respect your partner in life" (qtd. in Tave 138). That being said, when Elizabeth expresses just how happy she believes she will be with Mr. Darcy and how her opinion towards him has changed, her emotional transformation is complete.

Secrets play a key role in the lives of Elizabeth and Elinor. Both characters experience private exchanges that lead to life-altering discoveries and self-reflection. In spite of myriad twists and turns that Elizabeth and Elinor must go through to find romance, Jane Austen ensures that both characters have confidantes to whom they can turn along the way. While Jane's confidence serves as a tool for Elizabeth to figure out her emotions, Marianne's confidence provides an emotional outlet for Elinor. Even through the chaos caused by all the secrets, both Elizabeth and Elinor ultimately reach their much sought after happy endings.

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A Photographer in Thailand

Julius Constantine Motal



The Infinite Buddha

Julius Constantine Motal

Why does one travel? There isn't one answer. The world is as big as it is small, and even for the worldliest among us, there is still something to discover. As a writer and photographer, I consider the world a continuing source of inspiration, and in January 2011, I had the good fortune to spend two and a half weeks in Thailand, a region I had always heard of but had never experienced.

A friend had asked me about six months prior to the trip if I would be interested in going to Thailand. The question seemed spontaneous, and despite how attractive the idea seemed, I didn't say yes immediately. I had originally intended to spend a semester in Japan, but I later took my friend up on her offer, and the travel process, with all its forms and

payments, was set in motion.

For a while before the departure, Thailand loomed in the distance as some far off, intangible entity. Pictures can only do a country so much justice, so I didn't particularly bother doing research, so to speak, before going there. I left it to my imagination to fill in the blanks about what the country was and what I would experience there. Of course, I had some sense of what I would be doing there, but no explanation of the experience was sufficient.

I should mention that I wasn't going to a Phuket resort for two and a half weeks. The trip was more intimate than that. The friend whom I traveled with is Thai, and we were going to venture throughout Thailand with her family. The intimacy was between the country and me.

When the day of my departure approached, I put together my photographic equipment. Although I had been doing photography for several years, I didn't have formal photographic training: everything I knew was a result of experience. Thailand was a brand new vista, a marked difference from the concrete jungle of New York City where I had done nearly all of my photography. I had a sense that I would be overwhelmed during my time there, not necessarily with culture shock. Rather, I would be exposed to brilliant scenery that only Thailand could afford me.

Upon arriving, I was slow to start photographically because I needed to feel the world I was in before I could view it through a lens as I so often do. As I ventured to the hotel where I spent my first night, and in my subsequent travels across Thailand, I found the country to be raw and earthy, and the people more in sync with life and the world around them.

From the bustling streets of Bangkok to the island serenity of Koh Pitak, I was engrossed in everything I experienced. Granted, traveling with a Thai family provided unparalleled insight into the culture, but as close as I was, I was also distanced. The interesting thing is that the Thai word for foreigner is *farang*, which specifies a certain type of foreigner, a Westerner. The word sounds an awful lot like foreign, but I can't be sure if there's any etymological link. So, I was both a part of and apart from Thailand.

As I became more comfortable with my surroundings, I began to press the shutter. I started to look at Thailand from a 50mm perspective, a 135mm perspective, a 28mm perspective, and several other focal lengths depending on what the photograph needed. Each

frame was its own microcosm, a slice of the greater Thai landscape. I communicated with the environment in the best way I knew how, through the lens. I saw beauty through the lens, and I sought to bring that beauty home.

Perhaps the greatest beauty I experienced was on the island of Koh Pitak. We did a woefully short homestay with the fishing village there, and it was the most soothing experience I've ever had. There are about 42 households and they sustain their community on fishing and coconut farming. The island had the necessary amenities, but nowhere did I see a flat screen television, a home entertainment system, or gadget of some kind. The people lived and breathed that island, and I did, too, for two days. The island breeze blew along the coast, and I felt calm. I was enamored with the simplicity of it all. One of the inhabitants goes squid fishing every night, weather permitting, but that wasn't always the case. He had attended university and graduated with a degree in engineering, but he was unsatisfied with the work he had done in Bangkok. He left the city, returned home to his island, and has been squid fishing for several decades now.

The world I experienced and the scenes I photographed were tranquil. It may be hard to think of a bustling city as peaceful in the strictest sense, but it had its own peaceful beauty. While my knowledge of Thai culture is limited, I imagine that a part of that tranquility stems from Buddhism. Nearly all of Thailand is Buddhist, and from my understanding of Buddhism, fear is not a part of its dialogue unlike the Christian dialogue that is so strong in America. The tranquility was warm and inviting, and I was terribly sad to leave it.

My time in Thailand was brief. The two and a half weeks I spent there affected my worldview, my weltanschauung. Engaging another culture is fundamental to gaining a deeper understanding of one's own. How exactly the trip changed my worldview, I can't say. I'm still sorting that out nearly a year later. Traveling is one of the greatest things in this life, and I plan to return one day. Until then, you might run into me and my camera somewhere else on the globe. Happy travels.



Giant Tears

Julius Constantine Motal

Artemis Ephesia and Sacred Bee Imagery in Ancient Greece

Katherine Correa

Artemis Ephesia is not the same Artemis that the Athenians or Spartans would have known during the classical era; rather, Artemis Ephesia of the 5th century BCE predates the classical portrayals of Artemis by several hundred years. While the classical Artemis was known for simultaneously embodying the paradox of aggressive hunter and graceful woman, the ancient Artemis of Ephesia was known as the chthonic mother of all the living, and was a more animistic, earthy goddess. Although there have been centuries of speculation as to what the breast-like protrusions that adorn the chest area of the cult statue (figs. 1 and 2) symbolize, I have concluded that research on this feature of the statue has proven indecisive and too clouded by preconceived modern notions. Therefore, I have chosen to focus my study on the bee images that decorate the legs of the cult statue of Artemis from Ephesia in an attempt to understand the nature of womanhood in ancient Ephesos and the role of priestesses in sacred worship.

Before examining Artemis Ephesia closely, it is important to address preconceived and “Western” ideas that we have about mother goddesses and bees. Currently, bees are known as symbols of industriousness, individual citizenship within the collective whole, and fertility. Bees are also widely regarded as symbols of new life, because they aid in the pollination of flowers and herald the coming of spring. However, in order for us to properly understand the ancient Greeks, we must resist this popular stereotype of “the busy little bee,” a perception of the bee that was coined by 18th century English poets as opposed to that of the ancient Greeks. As James Johnson writes in “That Neo-Classical Bee,” the notion of the bee as ‘always industrious, always orderly, and always moralistic’ bears little relevance in regards to the ancient Greeks, though of course they would have recognized the bee as a hardworking creature” (263). Thus, we must resist our modern lens and look into the ancient

past without tinted perceptions. Indeed, one way to reach an understanding of ancient thought is to search the intricate web of mythology for clues.

Bees play a crucial role in the myth of Zeus' birth. According to one version of the story, Rhea, the mother goddess of all the living, gave birth to Zeus in a cave on the side of Mount Ida. It is said that bees living within the cave nourished the divine infant, buzzing around him and feeding him sweet honey. Another version of the myth claims that a woman, the daughter of King Melisseus of Crete, brought honey to the infant Zeus's lips and was afterwards given the title of the first priestess of the Magna Mater rite by her father (Elderkin 204). It is evident, then, that the role of bees in sacred worship of the mother goddess is deeply rooted in mythological tradition.

The study of ancient culture also yields clues. The image and nature of Artemis Ephesia as a goddess associated with bees was crafted and borrowed through the process of cultural diffusion. Given the reality that every ancient culture is known to have had a mother goddess of some sort, Artemis Ephesia became a blend of ideas from nearby regions, most specifically Egypt and Anatolia. In Egypt, the bull god Apis was associated with bees, and the Latin word for bee, "apis," derives from that source. Bees were also a symbol in Egypt of Osiris, the sun god (Iles, "Priestesses of the Bee, Melissa"). It is also suspected that the Anatolian mother goddess Kybele was the image from which Artemis derived; however, other sources say Artemis is more similar to Rhea. Most surprising is the appearance of bees in the religious rituals of the Mayan culture whose people most likely never came in contact with the Ephesians. *National Geographic* writer Stefan Lovgren states that the Mayans had a revered and sacred beekeeping tradition in which the harvesting of bees was a key religious ritual. According to Lovgren, the Mayan word for bee, "xunan kab," also means royal lady which is similar to the idea of the "xoanan" or cult statue in prehistoric Greece. The truth is that no one deity exists on its own; they are each a subtle blend of cultures that have come into contact with one another or at least have shared similar values within their societies.

A further look at etymology reveals the intimate connection between bees and the sacred role of priestesses. In Greek, the word μέλι or "meli" signifies honey, and the word Μέλισσα or "Melissa" means honey bee. Therefore, it is delightfully amusing to find the connection

between the word for “bee” and the word for priestess, “Melissa” or “melissae” in the plural. Clearly, this linguistic connection developed directly from the two versions of the myth of Zeus’s birth. According to Lillian B. Lawler’s scholarly article “Bee Dances and the ‘Sacred Bees,’” the title “melissa” was used to distinguish priestesses within all female deity cults, including the cult of Artemis Ephesia. It seems that the priestesses of Demeter, Persephone, and Dionysus were called “melissae” and would have therefore revered the bee as a sacred symbol as well. The common denominator in all of these cults is a strong reverence for the power and caring gentleness of the matriarchy. Just as bees have a Queen mother as the beloved figurehead of a colony, so too the people of ancient Greece would have chosen a female deity (in the case of Ephesos, Artemis) to be the mother guardian of their city (LiDonnici 394). In fact, according to the G.W. Elderkin’s essay “The Bee of Artemis,” the name of the city Ephesos derives from the Lydian adjective “Ibsimsis” meaning “rich in bees” (205).

Some of the most important clues concerning the link between sacred worship and bees come from the city of Minoan Crete where beekeeping was a carefully practiced art. However, in Minoan Crete, the bull was the most revered animal and a frequent symbolic form taken by Zeus and Poseidon. Although bull imagery was the primary mode of sacred expression in Minoan Crete, there is evidence to believe that bees were also a revered symbol in this culture. In “Bees, Bulls, and Bugonia,” scholar Julian D. Corrington writes that the ancient Greeks believed that bees spontaneously generated from the carcasses of deceased bulls. B.G. Whitfield confirms this belief stating that to preserve the essence of the bull within the bees, a ritual “closing of the ears and nostrils of the beast seem[ed] to have as an aim the preservation of the soul within the carcass” (117). Furthermore, one of the words commonly used for bees, “bugonia,” was derived “from bous, ox, and gony, progeny” (Corrington 99). Therefore the bee, and by extension, Artemis herself, would have been a revered symbol of life, death, and resurrection, an idea that eventually became central to the Christian tradition.

Given the knowledge that bees were seen as the “soul” of the bull, the sacred portrayal of Zeus, anthropologists made the connection that the priestesses of Artemis, too, would have been viewed as guardians of the soul, especially of those souls embarking on the passage to the afterlife. In a fragment, Sophocles artfully connected death and bees with his poetic phrase, “The swarm of the dead hums” (Elderkin 213). One of the most

physical connections between the bee and the underworld is found in the “tholos” tombs which can be found at Mycenae and Ephesos. G.W. Elderkin writes, “it may be that the great beehive tombs of the Minoan-Mycenaean age were so shaped, in imitation ...of actual beehives, because of the importance of the bee and its honey in the destiny of the dead” (207). Elderkin also writes that these beehive shaped tombs, which contained many generations of bodies, were referred to by the historian Pausanias as “treasuries,” thus illustrating the subtle pun connection between “treasuries” of bee coins in Ephesos and the treasury of buried bodies (205). Whether or not honey was used to preserve the dead in Ephesos or Mycenae is uncertain, but it is very likely that the priestesses of Artemis at the Temple would have used honey in their rituals involving burial ceremonies.

Although there are scarcely any details known about the nature of Artemesian worship in Ephesos, it is not a rite that has been completely lost to the past. In the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, the ancient writer documents some ritual practices of priestess figures that may help us construct an understanding of what ritual worship of the “melissae” might have been like. The hymn describes the priestesses and their rituals rather vividly:

There are certain sacred sisters, three virgins lifted on swift wings; their heads have been dusted with white meal; they live beneath a cliff on Parnassus. They teach their own kind of fortune telling...the sisters fly back and forth from their home, feeding on waxy honeycombs and making things happen. They like to tell the truth when they have eaten honey and the spirit is on them; but if they've been deprived of that divine sweetness, they buzz about and mumble lies. (*Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, vv. 552-563)

This passage gives several vital details which give us insight into the priestesses at Ephesos. First, the phrase “there are certain sacred sisters” indicates that the priestesses shared a close womanly bond with one another. Whether the priestesses were sisters by blood is uncertain, but even if they were not, the phrase indicates that their existence was exclusive and confined, intimate and private, in the way of sisterly bonds. Matching evidence has been discovered in Eleutherna, Crete, where an entire matriline of priestesses was discovered, proving for certain that these priestesses were literally sisters. In Eleutherna, evidence of bee imagery has been found in a 24 carat gold piece which portrays a figure that is half-woman and half-bee. A gold plate engraved with a similar image of half-woman, half-bee has been

found in Rhodes, but since these pieces have been found individually and without any explanation accompanying them, it is difficult to determine whether they were used as jewelry or for some other decorative or ritual purpose.

It is also significant that three virgins are present. In “the Bee Maidens of the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*,” Susan Scheinberg writes that in Greek mythology “female triads at times serve as nurses” (2). While it is no surprise to discover that the themes of nurturing and life-giving care are connected with Artemis Ephesia, such concrete and written evidence from the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* is more concrete proof of such an ancient mindset, rather than the vague speculation that Artemis’s “many breasts” signify her magnified and universal motherhood.

Clearly, the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* shows an interesting connection between the priestesses and “fortune-telling,” though a more accurate word to describe their sacred activities might be divination. In “Bee Dances and the ‘Sacred Bees,’” Lillian Lawler reminds the modern audience that “man’s use of honey in prehistoric times, before he had wine, [was] to produce intoxication or ecstasy” (105). The frenzy of the bee maidens in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* makes much more sense in the context of mead, a fermented drink made with honey, which would have caused confusion and possibly hallucination. Once intoxicated with the mead, it is possible that the priestesses would try to communicate with the dead in order to obtain the secrets of the future from those who had already passed on.

Additionally, Lawler suggests that the “buzzing about” or “swarming” (105) of these bee-maiden priestesses might have quite literally taken the form of a dance. Since bees do indeed dance in nature in order to communicate with the rest of the colony, it is not impossible that at the great festival of Artemis, called the Ephesia, ritual dances resembling bee movements were performed by the priestesses. According to Irene Ringwood Arnold’s study “Festivals of Ephesus,” the historian Xenophon recorded that “it had become traditional at this festival for young women to select their fiancées, and young men their brides” (76). Perhaps the priestesses had a role when it came to these matrimonial encounters and danced with the virgins who participated in the festival.

While there is still much that remains undiscovered and unknown regarding the

priestesses of Ephesos at the Temple of Artemis, it is exciting to learn that bee imagery in Ephesos extended beyond the superficial and connected to the themes of motherhood, life, death, rebirth, and sacred understanding. In priestess cults throughout Greek territories, honey was said to be the fluid which was the sweet ambrosia of the gods, “a sacred liquid that reached the seat of consciousness” (Scheinberg 16). Indeed, it is the presence of the bee image itself that allows us, as 21st century investigators, to reach that very same consciousness that the Greeks were in tune with. We need only listen to the hum of those who have gone before us in order to gather, in the true fashion of bees, the sweet trail of nectar that the ancients have left behind for us to follow.

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**Fig. 1 Cult Statue of Artemis, 1st century AD
Ephesus Museum of Selçuk, Turkey**



**Fig. 2 Base of the Cult Statue of Artemis Ephesia (side view)
Ephesus Museum of Selçuk, Turkey**



The Last of the Mohicans and the Values of the American Frontier

Kyle Blackmer

In a now famous essay, Frederick Jackson Turner detailed the importance of the frontier to American culture. Within his aptly nicknamed “Frontier Thesis,” Turner described the uniquely American characteristics and attributes developed where the line between civilization and wilderness blurred. These traits, according to Turner, developed into crucial aspects of our national identity and became the foundation of our country’s values. Frederick Jackson Turner, however, wrote at a time when the American frontier had all but disappeared. Foreshadowing the comments of Turner, in a sense, James Fennimore Cooper depicts the relationship between the frontier and a blossoming system of American values in his classic novel *The Last of the Mohicans*. More and more during the time period in which Cooper was writing, America and Americanism were being defined not in the cities and markets of the East, but by the pioneers and expansion of the West. This “neo-Americanism” is captured within Cooper’s story and the values of the frontier are laid out in the actions of several of his characters.

In order to portray American frontier values more clearly, Cooper utilizes a large and diverse cast of figures. The three white characters who are most thoroughly characterized in the novel are the naïve and clumsy David Gamut, the chivalrous and brave Duncan Heyward, and the clever and lethal Hawkeye. Each of these men represents different aspects of Americanism, but those traits most favorably depicted by Cooper fall within the values of the frontier: courage, resourcefulness, determination, pragmatism, ingenuity, and self-reliance. The characters and character traits chosen by Cooper are telling of the frontier’s role in shaping and configuring American ideals.

Least representative of the frontier lifestyle is the evangelical minstrel David Gamut.

Given to breaking out in song spontaneously—often leading the enemy directly to the group’s location – Gamut is more of a liability than anything else throughout the narrative. With his book of psalms and his pitch pipe, David is far from home in the wilderness and this makes him a perfect foil for some of the other, more rugged characters. There are some very favorable aspects of Gamut’s person, and several times he performs an important role in the security of his troupe. But he is still most effective in portraying a set of values that America was moving away from during the early part of the nineteenth century.

David Gamut represents a much more metropolitan, European set of values. He is almost entirely dependent on the support, guidance, and protection of the other men in the group—primarily Hawkeye, Chingachgook, and Uncas. In this way, David is representative of the cities of Europe and of the coast, which depend on the American West and South for food and raw materials. He is very gentlemanly and focuses much of his energy on more ethereal things. Faith and spirituality are his predominant virtues and they shape his actions more than anything else. Very devoted to scripture, David spends much of his time in praise and worship, almost ignorant of the dangers around him. While hiding from vicious pursuers among the caves of Glen’s Falls, Gamut cannot help but sing his zealous songs, and consequently compromise his company’s place of refuge. Although the first half of the nineteenth century was the time of the birth of American evangelism and tremendous growth in spirituality, the completely impractical and dangerous actions of David Gamut do not represent American values, which were becoming more earthy in nature despite the national resurgence in religious fervor.

More representative of this “neo-Americanism” is one of the most central characters of this tale, the young military officer Duncan Heyward. Entrusted with the responsibility of delivering Alice and Cora to their father and his superior, Colonel Munro, the British Army Major exhibits the characteristics of loyalty, bravery, and chivalry. Heyward will do anything in order to protect his precious cargo and assure that they reach their destination safely, especially after he falls in love with the fair, young Alice. This enchantment shapes his actions throughout the better part of the journey and greatly distinguishes him from the other characters, who are without such motivations of the heart.

Heyward's love causes him to do things and make decisions that are not entirely logical, many times putting himself in harm's way. On one occasion, when Alice, Cora, and Gamut are held captive within an entire settlement of Hurons, Heyward allows his senses of duty, loyalty, and love to overcome any sense of reason that he might possess. In an almost suicidal attempt at rescuing the prisoners, the officer disguises himself as a Huron and infiltrates the camp. The bravery of this operation greatly exhibits the American values of courage and loyalty. The cavalier nature of Heyward's mission, however, is hardly representative of the pragmatic and realistic approach of the novel's frontier characters.

Heyward's passion is further evidenced during the several instances of the girls' rescue within the story. Multiple times, Heyward displays Gamut-like qualities of emotional outburst when he weeps for the young women. This is something that the Indians—the most frontier-oriented of all humans—would certainly never do. This emotional connection distinguishes Heyward, and all white men from the natives, who are completely stoic and seemingly without any passion at all. Caring and sympathy are European sentiments that not even the frontier can completely remove from white settlers and pioneers. Even Hawkeye retains some level of caring and emotional connection, as he too cries with the passing of his friends at the end of the tale.

And Hawkeye (the oddly named Natty Bumppo) is the undeniable hero of *The Last of the Mohicans*, as in several of Cooper's other novels. A man of many titles and even more skills, Hawkeye is best known for his deadly precision with the rifle called "killdeer" by the Mohicans and "la longue carabine" by the Hurons. A former military man, Hawkeye has lived in the wilderness with his companions Chingachgook and Uncas for several years, gaining from them and from his experiences many of his most useful qualities.

Hawkeye is the embodiment of the burgeoning American frontier value system. Equipped with all the skills needed to survive in the wilderness, Hawkeye is completely self-reliant, though he travels and lives with the support of his Indian friends. He represents a blend between wilderness and civilization that is becoming the identity of the United States the time Cooper was writing. Although he is "a man without a cross," and is of purely white lineage, he has adopted and absorbed many practices and attributes of the natives. He lives

off the land, is an incredibly brave and efficient warrior, and is levelheaded and logical in his decision-making. While Heyward is prone to impulsiveness, Hawkeye always analyzes the situation at hand before taking action. This does not mean, however, that Hawkeye is without a sense of adventure. Not to be outdone by Heyward's Huron masquerade, the veteran woodsman enters the settlement and steals a bearskin from a local shaman. He then dons the ferocious cloak and helps Duncan to save Alice. Clearly Hawkeye is not left behind when it's time to take action and his ingenuity and resourcefulness are key traits of the American frontiersman.

Hawkeye's famous, and frequently repeated mantra about being "without a cross" refers primarily to his religious ideology, one that is common to Americans during Cooper's time and which developed in great part due to the nature of the frontier. While Hawkeye was certainly not of the same spirit as Gamut, or even Duncan, spirituality still played an important role in his identity. As was the case with many frontiersmen, Hawkeye did not subscribe to any particular denomination or religious dogma. He knew that there was a God, but he did not practice or follow any particular faith or set of standards. This homemade spirituality was prominent throughout the frontier region because there were very few, if any, churches established there. As a result, pioneers often developed their own faith and followed their own morals. This is yet another example of the frontier forcing settlers to take the initiative and create for themselves, and a further reason why Hawkeye exemplifies the American frontier ethic.

Hawkeye, Duncan, and even Gamut, can be compared in many ways to an American who epitomizes the era in which Cooper wrote. Andrew Jackson was so influential in American politics and culture in the 1820s, 1830s, and beyond, that many historians have since labeled the time period "the Age of Jackson." Born and raised on the frontier of western Carolina, Jackson lost both of his parents at a very young age. He moved west to Tennessee, established himself, and earned great wealth; Jackson was the archetype of the American self-made man. Coming up from poverty, he led distinguished careers as a lawyer, a soldier, and a cotton producer, before pursuing his political ambitions, which led him to the nation's highest post. As a soldier Jackson showed leadership and bravery, but arguably his most courageous act came when he was challenged to a duel against a much faster shot. Jackson took a bullet to

his chest before defeating his opponent.¹

“Old Hickory” wasn’t without his soft spots, though. Just as Heyward fostered special sentiments for Alice and as even Hawkeye harbored emotions of his own, Jackson was very caring for his wife. When she died just before his inauguration, Jackson mourned intensely. This separated him from the stoic Indians, as it did Hawkeye and Duncan, and is a crucial exception to the otherwise tough and rugged American values established on the frontier. This devotion to his wife also had a tremendous effect on his spiritual life. While linking Jackson to the character of David Gamut would likely make the hardened warrior turn over in his grave, the connection of religion exists and is one that is important to garnering a proper image of American values. It is hard to imagine Jackson wandering the woods and singing psalms while riding a white horse, but he did leave room for God among his beliefs, hobbies, and vices. In this sense, Jackson was not truly a “man without a cross.”²

Jackson did represent one crucial frontier value that none of the main characters in Cooper’s novel portray. Even though many of the practices and ideals of the American pioneers were similar to those of the Indians, there was growing resentment for the Native Americans at this time period as the American population grew and speculators moved westward. Andrew Jackson may be best known for his Indian removal policy, which forced thousands of individuals, entire tribes, off their lands in favor of white settlers. Though Jackson himself was a product of the frontier and his life was molded in a fashion similar to theirs, he fought Indians mercilessly as both a soldier and a policymaker.³

Despite heated debate, Jackson’s Indian Removal Act succeeded in taking much land from Native Americans—especially in the southeast—and supported the desires of the American frontiersman. While Hawkeye is sympathetic toward the Indians, and Duncan and Gamut do not take a definitive stance, the overall tone of *The Last of the Mohicans* is one of the inevitable downfall of the Native Americans. Cooper himself describes in his introduction to the book from 1831, “the seemingly inevitable fate of all these people, who disappear before the advances, or it might be termed the inroads of civilization, as the verdure of their native forest falls before nipping frost.” Many believed that it was the destiny of America to push

1 Howe, Daniel Walker. *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc. 2007. p. 328-329.

2 Howe. p. 328-329.

3 Howe. p. 342.

the Indians off the land, and the men of the American frontier embraced this notion to the fullest.⁴

The fact that Andrew Jackson so exemplified frontier values and characteristics, and the similarities between his person and the characters of Hawkeye, Duncan, and Gamut, show how *The Last of the Mohicans* represents the “neo-Americanism” that developed during the first half of the nineteenth century. These American ideals of self-reliance, courage, ingenuity, spirituality, and compassion, were necessitated and created by the frontier itself. These were the values and the spirit that Frederick Jackson Turner feared were disappearing when he wrote at the end of the century. But in some ways this newly created national identity lives on today.

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⁴ Cooper, James Fennimore. *The Last of the Mohicans*. New York, NY: Penguin Books USA, Inc. 1986. p. 6-7.

The Public Enemy and the American Public

Joseph Bruno

Ever since they hit the silver screen, gangster films have captured the attention of the American public. One could even say that Americans have a fixation with this genre. But what is it about these films that make them so enticing to the average American? According to Edward Mitchell in his thought-provoking article “Apes and Essences: Some Sources of Significance in the American Gangster Film,” it is the relationship between recurring patterns of secularized Puritanism, Social Darwinism, and the Horatio Alger myth which provide this genre with a special place in America’s collective consciousness. And although Mitchell acknowledges that these patterns are at work in the genre as a whole, they define William A. Wellman’s 1931 film *The Public Enemy*. While tracking the life of Tom Powers, *The Public Enemy* raises crucial questions about crime and moral judgment, and together with the film’s various plot elements, these “recurring patterns” highlight these questions from different perspectives.

At first, the audience might not notice the film’s Puritan underpinnings. Noting Puritanism’s roots in Calvinism, Mitchell states that early Puritans believed mankind was destined for eternal condemnation. In “Adam’s fall, we all sinned” and only those lucky enough to be saved by God could avoid damnation (Mitchell 160). Considering the typical American gangster film, Mitchell notes that there “has always been something ‘fated’ about the main character” (162). No matter what the situation, the audience is always certain that “the gangster will ‘get his’” because “he has sinned” (162). Indeed, the main character in American gangster films commits countless sins ranging from theft and murder to adultery and sometimes rape. In Puritan fashion, the gangster is always fated to be punished for these sins, most often in the “form of an early and violent death” (Mitchell 162).

From the moment the audience first observes Tom Powers in *The Public Enemy*, it gets the feeling that he is fated to be a gangster. Within the first several minutes of the film, Powers engages in underage drinking, steals from a shopping center, and taunts his best friend's sister, Molly. However, Tom does not get away with these wrong doings and is whipped by his father, an event which eerily foreshadows the film's ending. Predictably, as Tom grows older, his involvement in criminal activities increases exponentially—he starts with petty theft and eventually commits murder.

As he commits more and more atrocities, the audience wonders when Tom will get his comeuppance. It is certain that Tom will be punished for his sins just as Adam and Eve were punished for eating the forbidden fruit—it is simply a matter of time. The moment Tom is kidnapped by rival gang members, the audience knows how the film will end. Even when Mike (Tom's older brother) receives an anonymous phone call informing him that Tom is coming home, the ending is never in doubt. Tom is already dead—the audience simply needs visual confirmation. Naturally, when Mike opens the front door, the image of Tom's badly beaten and lifeless body is disturbing; however, it is not surprising. As Mitchell suggests, the gangster is always fated to be punished for his sins; Tom is no exception. If Tom's brutal death does not confirm the existence of Puritan thought within Wellman's film, then the final shot certainly does. The image of Tom's body fades away and is replaced by a disclaimer: "The end of Tom Powers is the end of every hoodlum" (Wellman). Such a strong statement affirms Tom's fate and that of all wrongdoers in the American gangster film genre.

However, this ending raises an important question: how should the audience feel about Tom? Mitchell's discussion of Puritanism sheds light on this conversation. He notes that American gangster films (more so than any other genre) raise the dilemma of what constitutes 'good' as opposed to 'evil.' This same question is raised in Puritan teachings. In fact, Mitchell explains that for Puritans, life was an "attempt to avoid evil in what could be a winning game only by the 'grace of God'" (159). Following this Puritan logic, it only makes sense to view Tom as evil and thus, deserving of his death. Even though he seems sorry for his wrongdoings, as evidenced by his apology to Mike in the hospital, Tom must still be punished. Surely then, the audience should be satisfied with the film's ending. Or should it?

Though they are criminals, Mitchell explains that there is always something admirable about the main characters in American gangster films. He attributes this complication to a pattern of Social Darwinism persistent within the genre. Contending that nature favors the most cunning and dynamic of a species, Social Darwinism serves as a “rationalization for economic and geographic rapaciousness,” while simultaneously “numbing moral judgment” (Mitchell 160). After all, those who exploit the environment in order to survive and reproduce are only aiding the advancement of the species. In American gangster films, this concept continually resurfaces through depictions of crime-filled cities where, “danger constantly threatens” (Mitchell 163). Mitchell contends that within these circumstances, the audience finds the witty, cunning, and often illegal behavior of American film gangsters to be respectable.

In *The Public Enemy*, similar patterns of Social Darwinism emerge. For example, following Samuel ‘Nails’ Nathan’s accidental death, hundreds of people line the streets to witness his burial. The audience may well wonder how such behavior can be justified. After all, Nails was a murderer. What sets him apart from other degenerates, however, is his ability to thrive in an incredibly hostile environment. In a city filled with thugs and “pineapple-throwers,” Nails’ ability to climb up the ranks and become the most well-known gangster in all of “Gangland” is impressive (Wellman). Furthermore, his ability to scare off rival mobs is invaluable, especially for Paddy Ryan’s bootlegging business. Perhaps Paddy says it best when he boasts that “when Nails Nathan and his mob start on a job...it’s already done” (Wellman).

The audience can also apply the same logic to Tom Powers. While Tom deserves his brutal death based on Puritan standards, the audience can admire him from a Social Darwinist standpoint. When alcohol is banned during the Prohibition, Tom cleverly adapts to this newly altered environment by choosing to join Paddy Ryan in establishing a bootlegging business. Quite literally, Tom observes the restrictions imposed by the environment and exploits them for personal gain. Although illegal, Tom’s involvement with the business showcases the “energy, cunning and bravura” which Mitchell claims we find admirable in the main character in American gangster films (163). Taking up a tough racket, Tom does whatever it takes to survive such as intimidating local bartenders. As a result, he does more than survive; he thrives and acquires an impressive lifestyle filled with foreign cars, fitted suits,

and fine dining. Most inspiring however, is that Tom never wavers when rival gangs attempt to muscle-in on Paddy's business. Even after Nails Nathan's mob scatters and the environment turns increasingly violent, Tom informs Paddy that he "ain't yellow" (Wellman). Proving his point, Powers later singlehandedly kills several members of the Schemer-Burns gang (including Schemer himself). Murder is never worthy of praise; however, the audience admires Tom for his bravery and ability to survive even though he is ultimately kidnapped and killed.

The third pattern that informs *The Public Enemy* is the Horatio Alger myth. In most of Alger's nineteenth century novels for young adults, the main character's goal is to regain a form of rightful inheritance through using "manly fortitude and traditional values that Alger signified by 'pluck'" (Mitchell 160). However, Mitchell explains that no matter what happens, the "outcome is never in doubt" because Alger assures the plot will "turn on a stroke of 'luck,'" thereby allowing the hero to achieve his goal (161). For the main character in American gangster films, Mitchell holds that the Horatio Alger myth is always cut short. Surely the gangster experiences social mobility and increased monetary wealth; however, even though he may feel he is "restoring to himself some rightful position [or] status," he ultimately inherits "nothing but calamity" because "socially and financially he is a usurper" (Mitchell 164).

In the film, Tom unquestionably adopts the "social mobility and bank-book morality" that are offered to the American film gangster (Mitchell 164). However, the fruits of his labor do not rightfully belong to him. The only reason he rises through the criminal ranks and lives a wealthy lifestyle is because he kills, cheats, and steals his way to the top. As Matt and Tom suggest, perhaps Putty Nose taught them to be criminals almost a little too well. While Tom is granted Alger's 'pluck,' the essential stroke of 'luck' is completely absent. In truth, he simply doesn't deserve it—his life rests entirely upon blood, bullets, and beer.

The character of Tom Powers is complicated by the patterns of Puritanism, Social Darwinism, and the Horatio Alger myth which provide space for questions about crime and morality. In fact, in several respects, they clash with one another. Of course, this raises an essential question: how can these patterns account for *The Public Enemy's* significance, let alone the significance of an entire film genre? According to Mitchell, the answer is clear: these contradictory patterns seemingly replicate undecided American attitudes toward issues such

as moral judgment and the definitions of ‘good’ and ‘evil.’ Americans value hard work and honesty, but are not naïve enough to believe that life is simply cut-and-dry. Sometimes rules must be bent and lines must be blurred—Americans know this, yet they are still undecided about their feelings towards Tom and all American film gangsters. On the surface the audience dislikes Tom because he is a criminal, but deep down it respects his scrappiness and resolve. The result of these mixed emotions is indecision. And because they allow us to reflect on this complicated uncertainty, the patterns of Social Darwinism, Puritanism and the Horatio Alger myth ensure that Wellman’s film and the entire genre will always intrigue the American mind.

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Uncloseted Devotion: James Merrill's Departure from Proust in "An Urban Convalescence"

Frank Capogna

That the work of Marcel Proust was a great influence on James Merrill's early development as a poet is unquestionable. While Proust was not the only homosexual author to influence Merrill's development of his artistic persona and narrative voice (Verlaine, Auden, and Bishop are other prominent models), it was Proust who proved the most palpable influence to Merrill's defining himself as a homosexual in his poetry. His early collections are indebted to Proust in their strict adherence to the process of inversion and in the meticulous closeting of the authorial voice. However, in his third collection of poetry, *Water Street* (1962), and most notably the poem "An Urban Convalescence", Merrill approaches the Proustian model with some discernable ambivalence in an effort to represent more faithfully his own life and erotic interests with the unguarded sexual openness that Proust famously and delicately avoids. In Proust's novels, the closet becomes the restrictive natural habitat of the homosexual artist, and it is this very trope that Merrill leaves behind for the more openly sexual and autobiographical spatiality of his later works. Merrill's stepping away from the Proustian model correlates with his closet not just opening but collapsing in new directions, notably the imagined cosmogony and expansive vistas of his more mature verse. It is in "An Urban Convalescence" that the closet that is so readily associated with Proust in Merrill's early verse literally dissolves and Merrill's poetry opens up to the "general view" (*Collected Poems* 128).¹ Merrill's relationship to Proust is a dynamic process that continually develops through Merrill's career as the poet revises his early apprenticeship to the French novelist in order to create a more personal, confessional verse.

¹ *Collected Poems* will be hereafter abbreviated to *CP* in all parenthetical citations.

Beyond simple admiration or scholarly interest (Merrill wrote his undergraduate honors thesis at Amherst College on Marcel Proust), Proust acted as something of a ‘familiar spirit’ to Merrill’s development as a poet, novelist, and dramatist—not an unimportant role to a poet who placed such great importance on the ‘familiar spirits’ of his later work. Proustian reverberations can be recognized throughout Merrill’s artistic career in many of its overarching thematic concerns: his explorations of memory and experience, his complex engagement with the assimilation of autobiography into his art, and his early struggle of reconciling his sexuality within the popular heteronormalizing conventions. Perhaps Proust’s most enduring addendum to literary mythology is as the closeted and asthmatic aesthete, endlessly revising manuscripts of *À la recherche du temps perdu* and descending from his cork-lined bedroom in search of clarification of his memories. We imagine the rest of his time spent in reinterpreting these memories into fiction (this Proust is the one that Merrill was to adapt in “For Proust”).

That Proust was writing from the closet in the narrative voice of a closeted socialite is already a firmly acknowledged prosaicism of Proustian folklore. As Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick asserts in *Epistemology of the Closet*, it is this “authentically banal exposure of Proust’s narrator as a closeted homosexual” (223) that has become a bromide of Proustian criticism.² This aesthetic aloofness and sexual detachment so readily associated with Proust is contiguous with early Merrillian criticism as the poet’s lauded technical skill was considered attenuated by his impersonality and reconditeness. As Rachel Hadas writes, Merrill’s early works, though “[p]olished and beautiful... give the impression of being all dressed up with nowhere to go; they seem brittle in their artifice and impersonality” (178), a stifling distance established between artist and art, most protracted around issues of sexuality, that mirrors Proust’s. Indeed, Merrill’s early artistic output (in the production of not just verse but drama and prose as well) teems with Proustian resonances.

Many of the central figures of Marcel Proust’s *À la recherche du temps perdu* are recognizably modeled on figures from the novelist’s own life (perhaps most famously connecting Baron de Charlus with the poet and infamous dandy Robert de Montesquiou), and the process of trying to align each of Proust’s fictional contrivances with their numerous potential real life models is altogether exhaustive and dizzying. Merrill’s early novel *The Seraglio* (1957) falls into

² One may look to Justin O’Brien’s “Albertine the Ambiguous: Notes on Proust’s Transposition of Sexes” and Harry Levin’s rebuttal to O’Brien, “Proust, Gide, and the Sexes” for two discordant takes on how Proust’s inversion of the love-object is achieved.

similar trappings. The characters of *The Seraglio*, a novel as noticeably Proustian as it is Jamesian, are tenuous representations of figures from Merrill's own life. Francis Tanning, the homosexual son of the affluent and sexually capacious Benjamin Tanning, are natural analogs to the poet and his father, Charles Merrill, whose sexual voracity is expounded on in great detail in Merrill's memoir, *A Different Person*. Though Merrill writes explicitly in "The Book of Ephraim" that his father served as "Model / For 'Benjamin Tanning' in *The Seraglio*" (*Changing Light at Sandover* 13), any further or deeper connections between the art and the life become murky. Merrill's novel is as much a *roman à clef* as Proust's is, and as so, playfully invites autobiographical readings from behind the turbid façade of fiction.

The Seraglio is more oriented towards satire than revelation, and only a certain superficial depth of investigation into the position of the author with regards to the text is permitted by the novel. The poet, the life, and importantly for Merrill, the sexuality, are not excluded from his early work but encoded in a manner that is decidedly Proustian. While Francis' homosexuality is a central structuring unit of the text, attempts at uncovering an unequivocal correspondence between his sexuality and Merrill's prove flimsy at best. Indeed, much of Merrill's early work is predicated on this aseptic distancing of the poet from his art. Arthur Miller's vitriolic criticism of Merrill's 1953 play *The Bait*—"this guy's got a secret, and he's gonna keep it" (*A Different Person* 255)—holds true for Merrill's early verse: Merrill maintains a prudent distance between himself and his work and is tolerant of only a certain depth of autobiographical reading. Connections and correspondences between Merrill's characters and their real world counterparts can be made, but hard autobiographical facts about the poet and his life are disguised in the art. Such prevarications buttress the authorial closet for Merrill, a method unmistakably inherited from Proust.

As Justin O'Brien writes in his study of Proust's use of sexual transposition, Proust's sexuality was a "carefully hidden secret" during his lifetime, an actuality that is propitiously avoided in his novels by the transfiguring of the gender of the love object (934–937). Although Proust died while firmly embedded in the closet (at least in the public gaze), *À la recherche du temps perdu* functions in many ways as Proust's exploration of homosexuality. Such exploration is permitted through the process of transposing the gender of the beloved in order to create a nominally heterosexual narrator who observes the world of inverts. While in *The Seraglio* Merrill

posits the homosexual at the center of the narrative, in Proust one can find the homosexual almost anywhere else. Though their placement of the homosexual differs, both Proust and Merrill make an overwrought tableau, or spectacle, of queerness in their respective novels. *Sodome et Gomorrhe*, the fourth volume of *À la recherche du temps perdu*, is where Proust first introduces his readers to the ubiquitous race of inverts that pervade his fiction, a discourse the narrator delineates arduously and comprehensively around the bizarre and ritualistic meeting of Charlus and Jupien. Sedgwick aptly titles her reading of this scene in *Epistemology* “The Spectacle of the Closet” as Proust invests his narrator with a scopic, panoramic view of the scene – the narrator’s incarnation in the past is, for the first time in the novel, completely disembodied, a “vastly indeterminate, acrobatic, spying boy” (221). While the temporal Marcel is afforded the panoramic and all-inclusive voyeuristic lens to the nascence of this homosexual coupling, the present-day narrator extensively catalogues the characteristics of a myriad of types of inverts. In doing so, the entire section on the inverts becomes, as Sedgwick argues, utterly indecipherable. Though the narrator declares the scene itself to be “stamped... with a naturalness” (*Sodom and Gomorrah* 6), the passage’s abnormality is unassailable, a sentiment not at all derived from the fact that it is treating male homosexuality but from Proust’s parodic method of explication. Male homosexuality is made a spectacle of and set apart, autonomous of the Proustian laws governing heteronormative sexual relationships. Furthermore, the ritualistic interactions of M. de Charlus and Jupien are farcically comical:

...M. de Charlus’ pose having altered, Jupien’s, as though in obedience to the laws of an occult art, at once brought itself into harmony with it... Jupien, shedding at once the humble, kindly expression which I had always associated with him, had—in perfect symmetry with the Baron—thrown back his head, placed his hand with grotesque effrontery on his hip, stuck out his behind, struck poses... (5–6)

The scene reads less like lovers’ courtship and more like burlesque or even animal mating rituals. Proust’s depiction of invert object-choice in this scene is indisputably and spectacularly unhuman.

Indeed, *Sodome et Gomorrhe* marks an intriguing nexus in the treatment of homosexuality in *À la recherche du temps perdu*, as an unadulterated openness towards

homosexuality³ is explicated by the ostensibly closeted narrator. By creating such sharp divides between the heterosexual and homosexual spheres, both Proust and Merrill reify the spectacle of the homosexual by placing it in contrast to normative sexuality.⁴ The spectacle of Francis Tanning's homosexuality, established not only through the character's flamboyance and dandyism but in his internal struggles with queer self-definition and genital self-mutilation, is told from the safe distance of third-person narration. In the emotional conclusion of *The Seraglio*, Francis reaches a moment of self-acceptance: "He was it. He tentatively said so the first time, then once more with an exquisite tremor of conviction: 'I am It'" (303). While this moment can be easily interpreted as a moment of queer self-recognition, it also resonates with the early isolation of Merrill-as-artist from his work – Francis is not a he or a she but an "It," precisely because he is an object whose existence ends when the novel ends. In the same way that Proust's acrobatic spectator occupies every available space but that of the homosexual, Merrill induces a sterilizing distancing between himself from all direct notions of homosexuality, insisting that Francis Tanning remains an artistic object, not an authorial surrogate.

Merrill's early works are indeed redolent with this evasiveness regarding the manifestation of his sexuality in his art. The precocious poet not only avoids addressing his own homosexuality but also utilizes a typified Proustian transposition of sexes when referring to his lovers. "The Black Swan," the initial poem of *First Poems*, is redolent with images of transposition that are essentially Proustian. The poem is preoccupied with inversion and the establishment of binary pairs: the swan creates a "private chaos" in line three and inspires "splendor" in the fourth, is representative of both "love" and "submarine disaster", and the change of the swan's color from paradigmatic white to anomalous black is in itself inversive (*CP* 3). Inversiveness of this nature was very important to Merrill's early works, with images of mirrors the most recurrent; much early Merrill criticism is especially interested in pointing out the poet's obsession with establishing pairs in his poetry.⁵

3 Indeed, the opening of *Sodome et Gomorrah* is the first extensive discourse on homosexuality in Proust, though as a subject it is introduced far earlier. In the "Overture" of the first novel, *Du côté de chez Swann*, the much younger narrator plays the voyeur once more, this time witnessing the lesbians Mlle. Vinteuil and her lover.

4 The narrator's indoctrination to the world of the inverts in *À la recherche* is interwoven in the later Albertine novels, while Francis' homosexuality in *The Seraglio* is naturally foregrounded against his father's unassailable and all-consuming, though normative (at least in object-choice), sexuality, which Stephen Yenser refers to in *The Consuming Myth* as "Zeus-like" in scale (46).

5 Stephen Yenser, in *The Consuming Myth*, famously (and somewhat comedically) traces the roots of Merrill's preoccupation with the establishment of binary pairs to the doubling of letters in the poet's family name.

With the voyeuristic boy in mind, the scene Merrill constructs in “The Black Swan” is noticeably a pantomime of the opening of *Sodome et Gomorrah* in its making a spectacle of inversion. Much like the narrator of *À la recherche*, the boy is isolated from queerness, afforded a panoramic view without risk of engagement with difference. “The Black Swan” can be easily interpreted by a modern reader as anthemic of Merrill’s openness towards his sexuality and a broader recognition of the homosexual self in verse, a notion only buttressed by its placement as the opening piece in the first published collection of a poet who is now acknowledgedly homosexual. However, such a reading is anachronistic, as Merrill was closeted to most of the reading public when *First Poems* was released. Furthermore, textually “The Black Swan” is grappling with the acceptance of an unnamed difference, ‘queerness’ in its broadest sense. The eponymous swan is ambiguous and removed, a “question-mark on the lake” that “outlaws all possible questioning” (CP 3). The swan leaves no explicit textual breadcrumbs for either the reader or the blonde child watching from the shore to follow as to what its difference truly means: as Merrill writes, “the swan-song that it sings / Is the huge silence of the swan.”

This “huge silence” is the mantra for not only the black swan but Merrill himself in his early poems, where the nature of his own sexual difference is ultimately concealed. Timothy Materer relates the swan to the austere, Eliotic New Critical object that is removed and irreproachable: “Allusive and symbolic... [it] presents a ‘thing in itself,’... [offering] what T.S. Eliot called an ‘objective correlative’ (“Confession and Autobiography” 153). One may think back to Eliot’s claim in the foundational text of New Criticism, “Tradition and the Individual Talent” that impressions, experiences, and the author’s personality “may take no place in the poetry”, a subordination of the artist to the art (42). Marcel Proust himself also advocated a similar compartmentalizing disjunction between the man and the art he creates. In the essay *Contre Sainte-Beuve*, Proust famously writes that the “book is the product of a different self from the self we manifest in our habits, in our social life, in our vices” (99-100). Though his later verse would move away from it, Merrill’s early work is much indebted to this New Critical aloofness and impersonality espoused by both Proust and Eliot.⁶ “The Black Swan” is ultimately the work of a closeted poet, and it sets the tone for the ambiguity and evasiveness that define much of Merrill’s early work.

⁶ Merrill would later react against this New Critical disjunction between artist and art. As he said in a 1968 interview, Eliot’s influence on his contemporaries was in providing “something to react against... [Eliot gave] an illusion... of being infinitely in control of his materials: so much so, that you have the sense of the whole civilization under glass. As, indeed, Eliot’s poems are under glass for me” (*Collected Prose* 51).

Most of Merrill's early love poems are addressed to an ambiguous and otherwise ungendered "you" which would lead a contemporary reader to conjecture that the beloved of the poem is, as prescribed by tradition, a woman. Merrill explains in his 1993 memoir *A Different Person* that such masking resulted from a need to "conceal my feelings, and their objects. Genderless as a fig leaf, the pronoun 'you' served to protect the latter, but you couldn't be too careful" (141). The effect of Merrill's early prevarications was palpable: as Materer observes, "though Merrill's love poems were written to other men, a reader of that time would be likely to assume that they were written by a man to a woman" ("James Merrill's Polyphonic Muse" 208). In the rare early poem that was not addressed to the equivocal "you", the subject was invariably "she", masking the gender of the love-object – an inversion as much borrowed from Proust as from another of Merrill's influences, W.H. Auden, who guarded his gendered pronouns with a decided fervor. In *A Different Person*, Merrill recounts this stifling process of shifting the 'he' to the 'she' in the composition of "Some Negatives: X at the Château" (1959), written for then-lover Robert Isaacson: "I found myself fiddling with a poem. It began with some negatives of photographs I'd taken of Robert and ended by returning him—or 'her', as convention dictated—to the status of a perfect stranger" (206). Such a process finds its origins in Proust's technique in the construction of the character Albertine Simonet, the greatest love interest of Proust's narrator. In the fictive world of *À la recherche*, Albertine is indisputably assertive of the narrator's heterosexual desires. However, studies of Proust's life and work have obviated Albertine's heteronormalizing potential for the narrator. Albertine possesses noticeably masculine characteristics, and it is nearly universally acknowledged today that Proust's chief model in constructing the character of Albertine was his chauffeur and male lover Alfred Agostinetti. However effective, for both Proust and Merrill (in his early work), the transposition of the gender of the beloved is meant to ensure that the work resists any potential revelation of the artist's sexual difference.

While Merrill's early collections of poetry are clearly indebted to the Proustian model of creating an inversive art from the life lived, there are some indications in his early verse of his sexuality. One such indication is to be found in "A View from the Burning", from *The Country of a Thousand Years of Peace*, where Merrill's male narrator describes himself and a lover as "Two cupids cuddling in a cupola" (CP 95). Here, however, the image of homosexual

coupling is as playful as it is erotic, cuddling between boys as opposed to intimacy between men. The lovers are cherubic; the image Merrill creates is more suggestive of Raphaelite putti than mature male lovers. This moment, while not obviously homoerotic, is still perhaps the most homosexually suggestive in Merrill's first two collections. In *First Poems* and *The Country of a Thousand Years of Peace*, Merrill ensconces his sexuality through typified Proustian avoidance-techniques and gender inversion. It is in *Water Street* that the implied is finally and indelibly underscored, and Merrill discards the Proustian model and its chastic transposing of the gender of his lovers. Unlike Marcel Proust, James Merrill was to un hinge the closet door on his own volition.

If *Water Street* is acknowledged as the turning point in Merrill's poetry towards the personal verse he was to be venerated for, "An Urban Convalescence", the collection's opening poem, is perhaps the starting point of this monumental shift. *Water Street* is James Merrill's coming out; "An Urban Convalescence" marks Merrill's opening the closet door. Timothy Materer identifies the impetus for Merrill's move towards more openly confessional verse as "an urgency [that] came from the desire to write freely of his life as a homosexual" ("Confession and Autobiography in James Merrill's Early Poetry" 151). The poem is significant as an avowal of Merrill's faithfulness to himself and his sexuality, what Guy Rotella terms a "closeted declaration of alternative arrangements" (314). While Rotella is right in his affirmation of Merrill's engagement with "alternative arrangements" in "An Urban Convalescence," his assertion that Merrill is composing this poem while still ensconced in the closet is amiss: the poem does not preserve the closet but categorically dissolves it. What is not so clearly discernible in "An Urban Convalescence", however, is how utterly and complexly engaged it is with Proustian tropes. While Merrill actively separates himself from the Proustian process of closeting reality, he nonetheless reveals how deeply engrained Proust is in his own process. The narrative finds the poem's speaker (hereafter referred to as Merrill for simplicity's sake) ill and descending from his bedroom for the first time in a week, and follows him back up to his bedroom by the poem's end—a parallel path that Proust, another artist afflicted with illness, followed in "For Proust", also from the *Water Street* collection. However, in "An Urban Convalescence" it is certain that Merrill is not totally commensurate with Proust. What Merrill witnesses, when stepping down to his New York street for the first time

in a week, is the demolishing of a building. Merrill “join[s] the dozen” crowded in front of this “shrine of noise”—very different from Proust, holed up in his isolated and soundproofed bedroom. Merrill and Proust are aligned in that both are ailing and differentiated by their vastly incongruous actions, indicative of the twofold influence Proust had on Merrill’s self-definition as poet.

Merrill tries to reimagine what the newly-demolished building looked like, and a panoply of different images and associations flood his mind: “A single garland sways, stone fruit, stone leaves, / Which years of grit had etched until it thrust / Roots down, even into the poor soil of my seeing.” This type of piecemeal remembrance is an echo of several significant moments of *À la recherche du temps perdu*, most notably the drowsy narrator’s reconstruction of every room he had ever slept in, in the “Overture” of the first novel. Merrill’s question, “When did the garland become part of me?” is also resoundingly Proustian. This notion of appropriation is one that persists throughout *À la recherche du temps perdu*.⁷ Just as the *petite madeleine* dipped in tea jolts Proust’s narrator into his remembrance of things past, and Albertine contains the essence of Balbec for the narrator, Merrill goes through a string of associations engendered by the garland that leads him to the remembrance of a Parisian scene from many years past:

Transfixed by a particular cheap engraving of garlands
 Bought for a few francs long ago,
 All calligraphic and crumpled up to stanch
 Boughs dripping, whose white gestures filled a cab,
 And thought of neither then nor since.
 Also, to clasp them, the small, red-nailed hand
 Of no one I can place. Wait. No. Her name, her features,
 Lie toppled underneath that year’s fashions.
 The words she must have spoken, setting her face
 To fluttering like a veil, I cannot hear now,
 Let alone understand. (*CP* 127)

That the scene is set in Paris can be surmised as the engraving was purchased “for a few francs”; by the poem’s close Merrill reveals that their cab is travelling down the Champs-Élysées. The scene Merrill creates is undoubtedly saturated with marital imagery. “Garlands,”

⁷ Beyond Proust, the moment also leads one to think of Melanie Klein’s psychoanalytic theory of introjection, the carrying with one something, whether it be an image, an object, or a person, and attaching to it a certain central determining significance to a greater whole (as the garland becomes part of Merrill and comes to represent the building no longer there).

“white gestures” that “filled a cab,” and her face “fluttering like a veil” all bolster the idea that Merrill and the woman are bride and groom in a wedding processional. Merrill, here, is asserting that this woman, with her heterosexualizing potential, is not a necessary component to his writing process (or, more likely, is no longer a necessary component). She comes to be emblematic of the specious ‘she’ that Merrill addresses in early poems like “Some Negatives: X at the Château” to. By “An Urban Convalescence,” this emblemized woman lacks a voice because she no longer serves a purpose. Merrill shies away from Proustian gender inversion—thus, the absence of the feminine presence in the cab does not absolutely necessitate the presence of a man. Instead, her space in the cab is just another one of numerous open spaces that Merrill provides in the poem, akin to the torn-down building and his apartment’s “walls weathering in the general view” (CP 128). In place of the spectacle of homosexuality and Proustian inversion of the love-object one sees in *Sodome et Gomorrhe*, Merrill’s project is instead concerned with (if I can be afforded the word) naturalizing his sexuality. It is the love that need not speak its name, and a love that becomes all the more lucid as *Water Street* advances. At the very peak of the scene in the cab, an overtly heterosexual remembrance, Merrill suddenly finds himself,

...already on the stair,
 As it were, of where I lived,
 When the whole structure shudders at my tread
 And soundlessly collapses,... (CP 128)

Right as it seems that Merrill is inserted into this heteronormal scene, the very structure that he is standing on gives way beneath his weight. With an eye to “For Proust”, this moment reveals Merrill’s new poetic project.

Merrill’s snapshot of the French novelist in “For Proust” captures him near death, descending from his cork-lined bedroom (an obviously rare occasion that creates astonishment among the hotel personnel) in order to attend a banquet straight out of the pages of *À la recherche du temps perdu* and meet a woman from his past. The poem’s first two stanzas reveal much about the Proustian writing process. The opening lines, “Over and over something would remain / Unbalanced in the painful sum of things” (CP 139), is suggestive of the endless manuscript revision Proust was absorbed in until his death. The

line also emphasizes an equational image that is associated with the inversiveness of Proustian fiction. A balance between both sides of the equation between life and art must be reached, and when there is an imbalance, as in the poem's opening, Proust must clarify his memories before rewriting them in his fiction. In other words, Merrill's Proust seeks stasis by reaccessing a memory and reappropriating the memory into his art. In the second stanza, the seemingly innocuous line "A thin spoon bitter stimulants will stir" (*CP* 139) also serves to illuminate Proust's process. While overtly a reference to the stirring of the medicine that the ailing Proust would take to prolong his life, this line also functions as an efficient metaphor for Proust's writing process: Proust, in his works, stirs and recombines the bitter stimulants of his life (the life lived and the people known) by tirelessly writing with his pen (an analogously shaped tool working in a manner metaphorically analogous to the spoon) in order to create a balm for his ailments, both the medicine stirred and the novel written. Pen and spoon, art and medicine, are mollifiers for the illness that was to eventually take Proust's life. That fiction can be a cure to sickness is a motif that recurs throughout Merrill's poetry—as Merrill was to write in "Farewell Performance" from *The Inner Room* (1988), "Art. It cures affliction" (*CP* 581).

The schema of "For Proust" is typified Merrill both in its relative complexity and its layered import to the poem's meaning. In each of the poem's quatrains, the middle lines end on the same word (or nearly the same word as in the case of "draw" and "withdraw" in the final quatrain). However, in each pair, both of the terminal words are used with different meaning. For example, the final "palms" of line 10 refers to the tree, the "palms" of line 11 to the palm of the hand. The equation of the opening line of the poem resonates in this stylistic choice, where each quatrain is effectively divided in two, and a balance on either side of the split is reached through the repetition of the terminal words. Each quatrain acts as a mirror in this way, with the image reflected aesthetically the same as the original, but with an altered application. Such is the manner of the Proustian path of fictionalizing reality that Merrill began to stray from in *Water Street* where the life of the artist is not steadfastly represented but instead modified in order to accommodate convention or need. Yenser notes the significance of this stylistic contrivance: "...the very pairing of terms in lines two and three in each quatrain makes us aware of differences at the same time that we see identity. We are led to consider the interplay...between the world and the literature that reflects it" (79). The scene

invoked by Merrill in “For Proust” is one inextricably tied to such a process where experience serves as a medium for the art created, and fiction is an inversive version of the life lived.

The narrative of “For Proust” follows the novelist to a meeting with an old “friend / Conjured” who had hummed “a little phrase...you could not sleep tonight without” (*CP* 139). The motif of transmuting experiences into an inverted, equational fiction reoccurs in the idea of the “friend / Conjured,” implying that the woman is already a creation of the author – not literally, but metaphorically transformed through fictionalization. When Proust initially sees the woman, he does not recognize that she has aged, which causes one to wonder if the novelist sees her or her fictional counterpart. That Proust cannot sleep without hearing her hum the “little phrase” suggests that this woman is possibly a model for Odette Swann who is intimately tied to ‘the little phrase’ of Vinteuil’s sonata that haunts Charles Swann throughout *Du côté de chez Swann*. Merrill’s Proust cannot escape the past, left to obsessively ruminate over unsolved issues, and since there is naturally a temporal disconnect with the past from the ever-flowing stream of Time, Proust’s only way to reconcile experience with his present is by passing it under the thin veneer of fiction. Thus, when the friend does *not* hum “the little phrase,” Proust cathartically recognizes her aging—she is not still the child he originally envisaged, but instead, “in her hair a long / White lock has made its truce with appetite” (*CP* 139). This moment marks a clear contrast to the Merrill of “An Urban Convalescence.” Merrill’s conjured Proust could not sleep without hearing the “little phrase” hummed by the “friend / Conjured,” while the Merrill of “An Urban Convalescence” is incapable of recollecting what the woman in the cab has said to him. The ‘she’ to Proust is everything, a requisite in constructing his fiction. “An Urban Convalescence” is indicative that for Merrill, ‘she’, as a representation of an inversive fiction, is now marginal and fundamentally irrelevant to the creation of his poetry.

Left to his own devices, and with the notes of Vinteuil’s sonata ringing in his head, Proust must do the one thing he can in order to relive past experience—translate that experience into fiction. Merrill carefully delineates the inversive translation of reality inherent to the Proustian process in the ninth and tenth stanzas. He writes:

Back where you came from, up the strait stair, past
All understanding, bearing the whole past,

Your eyes grown wide and dark, eyes of a Jew,

You make for one dim room without contour
 And station yourself there, beyond the pale
 Of cough or of gardenia, erect, pale.
 What happened is becoming literature. (CP 140)

Merrill is not above coy wordplay, and the “strait stair” that Proust absconds up immediately jumps out. Merrill’s use of the adjective “strait” brings to mind the restrictive nature of artistic convention that relegated Proust to masking his homosexuality in his fiction. Furthermore, the sexual implications of the “strait stair” are palpable: Proust is withdrawing to his temporally-dislocated bedroom to continue writing a novel that meant to portray himself as straight. The authorial closet is equally associated with straitness and straightness, with restrictiveness and (compulsory) heteronormativity. Proust’s renowned corked-line bedroom is a physical manifestation of the metaphoric closet. These stanzas are marked by a discernible sense of exigency, as Proust is battling against Time to finish *À la recherche du temps perdu*. Proust makes for the room “without contour”—Proust has to write, and he has to take the straight path to his closeted work environment without the slightest waver, so that what happened can become literature.

Merrill concludes the poem with the hypothetical scenario of a maid coming upon Proust’s manuscripts in which “The world will have put on a thin gold mask” (CP 140). Under this mask, the world (locally, Proust’s world) is reimagined beneath the glittering veneer of fiction which allows Marcel to be ‘straight’ and Albertine to ‘stand in’ for Alfred. In a closeted authorial environment, writing from beneath the gold mask is the safest conduit of artistic expression—“An Urban Convalescence” sees Merrill take off the mask and adhere more mimetically to his reality in his verse. Merrill returns to this new mask in “The Book of Ephraim”, when JM’s psychiatrist recalls “that epigram / Of Wilde’s I’m getting damn / Tired of hearing” (*The Changing Light at Sandover* 30): “Give him a mask, and he will tell you the truth” (Wilde 1142). It is in “An Urban Convalescence” that Merrill trades the “thin gold mask” of “For Proust,” a mask that hides homosexuality, for the Wildean mask that reveals it, a mask that prohibits a more open effusiveness in his verse. In the process, Merrill eliminates both the “strait stair” and the Proustian closet.

It seems as if Merrill is halfway up the “strait stair” of “For Proust” when the stairs (that lead to, presumably, the ‘writing closet’ we last left Proust in) dissolve. Back inside of his apartment, the effects of this manifesto on the poet are already tangible. “Unwillingly I picture / My walls weathering in the general view.” Merrill remarks that this effect is not circumscribed solely by his poetry, but ubiquitous among contemporary homosexual artists: “my good fortune was to stay in one place while the closet simply disintegrated” (*A Different Person* 192).¹ Still, the restrictive spaces of “For Proust” like the “strait stair” and the authorial closet open up in “An Urban Convalescence” in a remarkable way, in the building demolished, the woman in the cab who is no longer necessary, and the “walls weathering in the general view”—an openness that follows Merrill’s career through his mature works. The closet collapses in “An Urban Convalescence” not to provide a spectacle, as it does in *Sodome et Gomorrhe*, but merely to provide a view. With the “strait stair” having vanished, Merrill swears that he will abide by “The massive volume of the world,” with all of its “Gospels of ugliness and waste.” His eyes are “astream... With self-knowledge” (*CP* 128). As the stairs dissolve, Merrill formulates a new poetic mission, dedicating himself to an art that is predicated on accessing the truths within him—truths that include his own sexuality. In short, Merrill promises to himself and latently to his reader that he will avoid the Proustian closeting by knowing himself and by being willing to access, expose, and confess himself in his verse. By swearing to abide by “The massive volume of the world,” Merrill’s walls become diaphanous and the façades are dropped.

As the poem ends and Merrill glides into a drowsy haze, the Parisian scene returns for its denouement. Merrill swallows his medicine;

With the result that back into my imagination
The city glides, like cities seen from the air,
Mere smoke and sparkle to the passenger
Having in mind another destination

Which is now not that honey-slow descent
Of the Champs-Élysées, her hand in his,
But the dull need to make some kind of house
Out of the life lived, out of the love spent. (*CP* 129)

⁸ I disagree with the reticence Merrill puts forward regarding his own part in the dissolution of the authorial closet. While the poet acts as if this action was widespread and involuntary, there is a marked effort (as this study hopefully supports) on Merrill’s part to faithfully assert his own identity as a homosexual poet.

The mention of the Champs-Élysées, beyond firmly locating the scene in Paris, also significantly associates the scene with Proust—not only did Proust play along the Champs-Élysées as a child, but in the early volumes of *À la recherche du temps perdu* it is where the narrator meets and mingles with his first love interest, Gilberte Swann. Thus, the inarguably heterosexualized trip down the Champs-Élysées and Proust are recognizably associated, and it is from both that Merrill is moving away. By choosing “another destination,” Merrill swerves off the linear, heteronormalizing path of “her hand in his” dictated by literary convention, a path that is irrefutably parallel to the “strait stair” of “For Proust.” “An Urban Convalescence” acts essentially as Merrill’s coming out, an avowal that he will no longer follow the Proustian method of using his art as a means of enshrouding his own homosexuality. The recuperative and normalizing “bitter stimulants” (CP 139) of “For Proust,” with all of their Proustian and *fin de siècle* associations, are traded in for the more openly flamboyant “pousse-café” (CP 128) of “An Urban Convalescence.” The Eliotic and Proustian mask that maintains the distance between the artist and his art is traded in for a new “thin gold mask,” one that Wilde knew so well – the mask that does not obscure, but reveals. When Merrill originally envisioned the Parisian scene, his house melted beneath his feet. Merrill is left to “make some kind of house / Out of the life lived, out of the love spent” (CP 129)—literally, a new poetic career faithful to his lovers, his sexuality, his life.

Other poems of the *Water Street* collection further Merrill’s closing oath from “An Urban Convalescence.” The Oedipal conflict that Merrill first worked through famously in *The Seraglio* is explored in both “Scenes of Childhood” and the onerously Imagist first section of “Five Old Favorites”. In both of these poems, the conflict is neatly located in Merrill’s complicated relationship with his father, Charles Merrill, a notion that observes the poet’s policy of adhering to the “life lived... love spent.” “Childlessness” sees Merrill toy with his sexuality in the direct manner that he dexterously precludes in his first two collections. In this poem, there is a female sexual presence tied to Merrill’s speaker, but she is intangible, a “dream-wife” in a decidedly nightmarish scene. Merrill awakens to the infertility implied by the poem’s title, recognizing that “in my garden / Nothing is planted” (CP 148). The poem leaves no doubt as to the poet’s sexuality, as the potential of heterosexual coupling proves stifling and appallingly undesirable (even in dream, the wife is “Ranting and raining”) and

Merrill expresses resigned awareness that his sexual choice naturally contravenes the possibility of having children with a lover. “The Book of Ephraim” (1976), the first poem of Merrill’s postapocalyptic epic *The Changing Light at Sandover* and his magnum opus, openly and faithfully depicts the poet’s homosexuality and the emotional vacillations of his relationship with lover David Jackson. When JM, the authorial guise throughout “Ephraim” and *Sandover*, reaches his emotional nadir and boldly declares that he has “read Proust for the last time” (*Changing Light at Sandover* 76), one with even a cursory knowledge of Merrill’s development as a poet cannot help but be taken aback by the absurdity of this statement. The reverence that Merrill feels towards Proust is so unquestionably experienced in his work that one simply cannot believe he will never pick up *Du côté de chez Swann* or *Sodome et Gomorrhe* again. Merrill’s position is one of ambivalence: his admiration of Proust is consociate with an awareness that he need not strictly adhere to the Proustian model in his poetic career.

In his 1993 memoir *A Different Person*, James Merrill humorously recounts a college dress party where he dons the appearance of the novelist he was to venerate for his entire poetic career: “Greasepaint mustache and Monday-night-at-the-opera tailcoat sufficed to turn me into a Proust athletic enough to stand on a table and recite Don Pasquito’s Tango from Façade” (129). One could argue that Merrill kept this Proust costume on until the publication of *Water Street* in 1962. Proust acted as a ‘familiar spirit’ to Merrill’s development as a poet; his early verse is inundated with recurring motifs from the pages of *À la recherche du temps perdu* and his method of reinterpreting his experiences, inverting the gender of the lover, and couching his own sexuality in his poetry is typified Proustian. In straying from the path of heterosexualizing the life lived in art, Merrill opened his verse to his own sexual difference, dissolving the authorial closet that Proust was so carefully embedded in through his life. As Merrill develops as a poet, his sexuality becomes an increasingly more naturalized part of his verse, not a wholesale identifying characteristic as much as it is one of a panoply that define Merrill as a poet, alongside his interest in the occult, and his complicated relationships with his parents and his lovers. The definitive turn off the Champs-Élysées in “An Urban Convalescence” brought Merrill to a path that led straight to the expansive vistas of “The Book of Ephraim” and *The Changing Light at Sandover*, and the development of his own universal cosmogony. In “The Book of Ephraim,” Merrill recognizes Proust’s importance to

his development. Ephraim, the guide through the hierarchy of the spiritual world, reveals that Proust is posthumously “A GREAT PROPHET THRONED ON HIGH” (*Changing Light at Sandover* 76), but not an irreproachable god. Merrill considers Proust a fallible, but nonetheless estimable, prophet. He is, recognizably, a guiding spirit in Merrill’s work.

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Dracula vs. Mina

Catherine Grover

In Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* (1897), many characters blur the lines of traditional gender definitions. However, no character does this more than Mina Harker. Her peculiar blend of masculine and feminine characteristics, explored by Christopher Craft in "Kiss Me With Those Red Lips: Gender Inversion in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*," make her Count Dracula's most formidable opponent. Though at first glance it might appear that the men who surround Mina constitute Dracula's primary opposition, further examination reveals that Mina is behind their successes against the main character. Mina is the mastermind behind Dracula's ultimate demise but her male supporters are necessary in bringing about this downfall.

Mina is essentially the perfect woman. Stoker's character Van Helsing refers to her as "one of God's women" indicating that she is different from other women because God has especially gifted her (Stoker 168). Mina is "enduringly, incorruptibly, good" (Craft 445).¹ She is properly "modest" and has the sensibility of her predecessor, the Victorian woman, as represented by the character Lucy; but she also possesses a keen and analytical mind, a quality which was usually attributed to men in the late nineteenth century. In addition, Mina must work in order to support herself. Mina's very name, short for Wilhelmina, is a feminized version of the name William which means "protection" or "resolute." The masculine nature of her name adds to Mina's general aura of strength and steadfastness. She is not susceptible to fainting spells and temptation like the flirtatious, Victorian Lucy whose character serves as a contrast to Mina, and who shows that an ordinary woman is an easy target for Dracula. Lucy underscores Mina's uniqueness and her strength is further exalted by the fact that Lucy is "punished" for her susceptibility to the temptation of vampirism. Lucy fails to resist Dracula and when she becomes like him, her fiancé, Arthur, drives a stake through her writhing body. Lucy's downfall highlights the fact that Mina is "threatened by but not fully seduced into vampirism" (Craft 457).

¹ All quotes from Stoker and Craft are found in the Norton Critical Edition of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* edited by Nina Auerbach and David J. Skal.

Mina's feminine sensibility opens the communication among the all-male "Crew of Light" (Arthur, Quincey Morris, Dr. Seward, Jonathan Harker, and Van Helsing), and allows them to band together to gather the intelligence which eventually leads to Dracula's downfall (Craft 445). Mina's presence allows Arthur to unburden himself "in his...sorrow" over Lucy's death as he cannot allow himself to do in male company. Dr. Seward also entrusts Mina with his personal phonograph diary which betrays all "the anguish of [his] heart" (Stoker 197). Even her husband, Jonathan Harker, entrusts his diary to Mina. Mina's place among the men as female confidante enables her to compile all the information they have regarding Dracula, and with her quick typing she produces a manuscript which the men can share comfortably with each other. The communication among the men of the "Crew of Light" facilitated by Mina, and the information and advice she gives them allows them to compete with Dracula's mental prowess.

In essence, the deadly "game" being played is between Mina's male mind and Dracula's wits, though Van Helsing participates somewhat by contributing his medical and professional knowledge. Mina is the only character in the novel besides Dracula who has the train schedules committed to memory, and it is she who eventually deduces the specifics of Dracula's escape plan through the logical process of elimination (Stoker 304). Mina also discovers that Dracula's mental hold over her weakens at sunrise, and while under hypnosis, she is able to give information on the Count's whereabouts. The men look to Mina for guidance and in several instances the whole group engages in a sort of pledging ceremony which is reminiscent of a company of knights swearing fealty to a king. During one such moment "each of them in turn [kneel] to her to take the oath" that they will kill her if she becomes too far gone in her vampiric state. This scene places Mina in the position of a male leader. It is similar to the scene in Homer's *Odyssey* when Odysseus, king of Ithaca, orders his men to lash him to the mast of his ship in order that he might resist the temptation of the Sirens' song. On the other hand, it is also the men's tender love for Mina that binds them to her and to each other in a way that they could never be bound to another man. The all-male "Crew" feels the need to protect what is female in Mina.

The men successfully thwart Dracula and systematically destroy his various havens so long as they make Mina a central part of their plans. The only time things take a bad turn is

when the men decide that Mina is delicate and that “she is to be left out of [their] future work and even out of [their] deliberations” (Stoker 223). In fact, Mina finds herself in danger when her communication with the men is cut off.

Mina is capable and smart; she becomes Dracula’s nemesis because she is strong enough to resist his mental hold on her. However, no matter how masculine her mind is, she still has one nearly fatal flaw: she cannot compete with Dracula physically in the same way as the men around her can. Dracula recognizes Mina as a formidable adversary and since he feels threatened by her, he takes advantage of the time when she is separated from the men to cruelly remind her how helpless her feminine body is against his physical strength. Dracula attacks Mina “in the Harker bedroom;” he says to Mina “you are to be punished for what you have done. You have aided in thwarting me and now you shall come to my call” (Craft 457, Stoker 252). He then proceeds to cut “[open] a vein in his breast,” grip Mina “by the back of the neck, forcing her face down on his bosom” and force Mina to drink his blood (Stoker 247, 252). The forced exchange of bodily fluids clearly parallels a rape. Dracula hopes not only to assert his dominance over Mina but also to turn her into his instrument by making her a vampire. He knows that the “Crew” will be more easily dealt with once Mina is allied with him, and he hopes to use their love for her as a weapon against them.

The rape scene involving Mina and Dracula serves as a reminder of the fact that no matter how much a woman becomes part of the world of men, she will always have limits and she will always have the need for men. Mina can outwit Dracula and hand him over to the “Crew of Light” but she needs a man to strike the final blow. In the end, Mina’s husband does just that; he beheads Dracula and stabs him through his heart. The “Crew of Light” is essentially the physical manifestation of Mina’s masculine attributes. In Stoker’s narrative, they perform the actions Mina would have carried out if she were a man in body as well as in mind.

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The State and the Superman: The Difficulty in “Watching the *Watchmen*”

John Miller

Especially after times of national crisis, there's an undeniable allure to superheroes. The American public has been enthralled with the masked avengers of comic books since Superman's 1938 appearance in *Action Comics #1*, and many consider the genre to be the modern myth on a par with the rich ancient mythologies of Greece and Egypt (Moore & Gibbons, 1986). Comics started with idealized super beings who fought for justice and who exemplified society's positive characteristics without any of its flaws. Gradually, the genre adjusted to more real world ideas as characters were filled with doubt and imperfections. Where the old motto of superheroes was “Truth, Justice, and the American Way,” comics began to reflect themes more in line with the idea that “With great power comes great responsibility.”

However, comic books still did not reflect a true real world model. The villains were too fantastical, the plots too stylized, and the powers were too removed from possibility. Police understood superheroes as allies, the public adored them, and the government turned a blind eye to what was at times extensive property damage. Despite their valuable lessons on morality and responsibility, the heroes did not create any sort of disruption of the power balance in the American public.

And then there was *Watchmen*. Writer Alan Moore resolved to write a new superhero drama about what the world might really have been like if masked vigilantes walked the Earth. By rewriting history to include superheroes, Alan Moore and artist Dave Gibbons wove together a story of superheroes that more accurately reflects how such a powerful variable in American society would affect the power structure of the state. The central question of the

work, “Who watches the watchmen?” is a prudent one, as vigilantes intrinsically represent an extra-national force of justice and law enforcement without oversight or legal boundaries.

The state became the group that would “watch the watchmen”—a complicated power relationship with a small community of masked avengers. In the graphic novels, the government doesn’t perceive the watchmen as guardians of freedom, but rather as assets and liabilities. The culmination of this government response to masked vigilantism is the Keene Act: a ban on unregistered vigilantism through congressional legislation. This reaffirmation of governmental power in light of superhero action is a social power play by the government to regain its lost legitimacy and authority.

However, the power of the Keene Act is suspect at best. One superhero, Rorschach, ignores it completely, and later in the narrative the rest of the retired heroes follow suit. Even the two heroes registered under the act, Dr. Manhattan and the Comedian, are loosely controlled by the government, and still act in ways that contradict the ideals of justice and due process. The villain of the story, Ozymandias, is a former hero who considers the actions of the government as ponderous and self-destructive, and therefore takes matters into his own hands to create a better world.

Additionally, the government’s capacity to control superheroes is in some respects an ethical nightmare. By controlling heroes, the government essentially employs agents and assassins to act with discretion against America’s enemies, again without oversight. Ultimately, *Watchmen* addresses the question of how government would react to the existence of superheroes living and operating in New York, and whether the world truly needs a superman.

The End of an Era: the Keene Act

By the year 1977 in the graphic novel’s timeline, masked heroes have been operating for nearly 40 years, fighting against the drug trade and organized crime. Their presence heralded technological advances and changed attitudes toward law enforcement and the concept of justice. This is a society in which superhero involvement won the war in Vietnam for America and gave the US a clear tactical advantage. For this reason, the ban on superheroes in 1977 seems a bit ungrateful to say the least. However, a police strike and public riots ended

the age of superheroes, and the masked avengers of yesterday were forced to figure out what to do with themselves.

From a rational perspective, the Keene Act should not have come as a surprise. Superheroes in almost every mythos act outside the state, and are therefore difficult or nigh impossible to control. However, in order for the state to function, it must maintain supreme authority over matters of legality and justice. Since the state is “a human community that claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory,” as defined by sociologist Max Weber (1947, 78), superheroes represent a threat to governmental sovereignty. Vigilantes make a mockery of legitimate law enforcement by performing the same tasks without the expense and manpower of a police force, and because they operate outside the law without internal affairs or oversight, they walk a thin line between peacekeeper and criminals. Therefore, the Keene Act is an attempt to bring superheroes under control or to do away with them completely.

By “demanding that superheroes either register and work for the government or retire...” the Keene Act performs a necessary two-fold action for the state (Spanakos, 2009, 34). Firstly, it permits superheroes with known state loyalties to the state to continue operating, legitimizing their actions and making them part of the state rather than accessories. The act also makes these superheroes answerable to presidential authority, making registered vigilantes ideal agents in sensitive areas. In the graphic novel, the government uses a registered superhero, the Comedian, to intervene in the Iranian hostage crisis, a crisis which in real life embarrassed the Carter administration but in the *Watchmen* world is defused due to superhero involvement (Moore and Gibbons, 1986).

The other necessary function of the Keene Act is the removal of rogue superheroes from the societal equation. Regardless of political leanings or sense of justice, the government has no use for heroes who won't submit to national authority and forces noncompliers into retirement. This ability not only rids the state of undesirable heroes but also affirms the government's supreme authority over all keepers of peace. Many of the heroes in *Watchmen* retire due to this act, reflecting the government's authority over vigilantism.

Dr. Manhattan: the Superhuman Gambit

The best way to understand the power relationship between superheroes and the state is to consider *Watchmen*'s only true "superhuman": the imposing figure of Dr. Manhattan. Created from a nuclear accident, Dr. Manhattan, formerly Jon Osterman, has vast, godlike powers including teleportation, multiplication, control over his size and appearance, and enhanced intellect. He can manipulate matter on an atomic scale and—since he can glimpse the future—doesn't perceive time linearly. In many ways, Dr. Manhattan embodies the archetypal Superman.

Therefore, the government's efforts to control him reflect a complicated power relationship. Using the bases of social power as defined by John French and Bertram Raven, Dr. Manhattan's allegiance to the United States government reflects legitimate, referent, and expert power (French and Raven, 1968). At first, Dr. Manhattan is a tool of the government; he consents to its requests as he realizes its legitimate power over him. Advertisers and government officials choose his name and costume "for the ominous associations it will raise in America's enemies" (Moore and Gibbons, 1986, 12). Dr. Manhattan is not the first hero to have his name chosen by his superiors; by choosing his name, the government routinizes its power over him, shaping what he will be through the use of language (Reid and Ng, 1999). Unlike other heroes who choose their names based on personal values and favored symbols, "Dr. Manhattan" reflects the government's designs upon him, limiting his capacities as a superhero. Though capable of great acts of benevolence and of advancing technology in leaps, Dr. Manhattan's primary function is as a weapon. Characters frequently call him a "walking H-bomb" indicative of his marginalized status as something purely destructive.

However, the key danger with Dr. Manhattan is that this "superman" is no longer a "man." Through his character, Moore and Gibbons illustrate the alienation a character suffers when he has godlike qualities, and the manner in which this situation affects the power structure of the government. Dr. Manhattan's subservience to the government is based purely on legitimate and referent power defined as the perception that a social agent is an authority and has a sense of identification with the social agent, respectively (French and Raven, 1968). The usual direct methods of power, the ability to reward and punish, have no bearing on this

superbeing who can destroy tanks with his mind. Therefore, the power the government exerts over Dr. Manhattan is fragile at best, and steadily weakens as he loses touch with his humanity.

As Dr. Manhattan becomes more than human, the government's referent power is stripped away, as he no longer identifies with other humans as equals. Since his sense of intrinsic morality is stripped away, the legitimate power of the government as a rule-making body also deteriorates. This is symbolically represented by the condition of his government-provided costume which becomes small and more revealing until he finds himself wearing nothing at all (Hughes, 2006).

As the government loses control over Dr. Manhattan, his power over the government grows. Though he doesn't exercise it, his potential for power is enormous due to his ability to reward and punish, defined as his reward and coercive power (French and Raven, 1968). As a crimefighter, Dr. Manhattan's coercive power is the most powerful of any hero, and it extends to his role in foreign politics. In two short weeks he wins the Vietnam War for the United States and acts as a powerful deterrent for America's enemies (Spanakos, 2009). He also figures heavily in America's nuclear launch scenarios since he has the ability to stop nuclear missiles before they hit U.S. soil (Moore and Gibbons, 1986). Because of these accomplishments combined with his ability to design incredible advances in technology, Dr. Manhattan has become a crutch for the U.S. government. When he leaves Earth completely, the political situation becomes completely chaotic.

Moore and Gibbons show that superbeings by nature subvert government authority and end up hopelessly complicating the power structure of whatever nation they call home. Whether his activities are legitimate or not, the superman is an uncontrollable factor, initially attractive but ultimately debilitating as a force in political thinking. Regardless of the power base, superpowered beings are not subject to the same limitations and coercions as the rest of mankind, and are therefore detrimental to the power structure of the state.

Rorschach and the Comedian: Compliance with the Keene Act

Since Dr. Manhattan is the only true superhero in *Watchmen*, his power relationship with the state is different than the relationship other heroes experience. Where his acceptance of

the Keene Act is more or less implicit, the other heroes have a serious moral question to answer when faced with the choice to register, retire, or go rogue. The government has plenty of reward power to encourage compliance and coercive power to punish disobedience. However, the role of the superhero is not to be a government officer but to be a member of society who acts because no one else will. In this sense, the Keene Act represents an ethical quandary.

On one side of the debate is the Comedian, born Edward Blake, who registers with the Keene Act since he had a previous working relationship with the government. Appearing as a dark mockery of Captain America with his red, white, and blue armor, the Comedian is far removed from the stoic, noble hero of traditional comic books. Blake is a sadistic enforcer of law who is less concerned with protecting people than with unleashing wanton violence upon wrongdoers. He's the only hero in *Watchmen* to wield guns, and he has no qualms about killing criminals. In his past he's murdered a pregnant woman, tried to rape a fellow vigilante, and it's heavily implied that he assassinated Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, the Watergate reporters, at the request of President Nixon. More suited to the role of villain, the Comedian embodies a hero given a governmental blank check for mayhem.

His relationship with the government is less complicated than those of the other heroes as he is more or less depicted as the American mercenary. His ability to do whatever he pleases, which is what he calls the "American Dream," is supported by the state in a mutually beneficial power relationship. The Comedian's style of justice represents a destructive force the state can harness, and so he is representative of the second type of hero the government would want in its employ—one with a shaky moral character. Blake and the government both are rewarded: Blake makes troublesome people disappear in exchange for the ability to act on his violent tendencies. This government backing empowers the Comedian, making him a symbol of American aggression. His speech is self-assured and cocky, even when speaking to more powerful or intelligent heroes like Dr. Manhattan and Ozymandias (Moore and Gibbons, 1986). His power is reflected in his assured speech and in how he views the world. Blake speaks in absolutes and threats, he is never humbled even when beaten or wounded, representative of how powerful he perceives himself to be in regards to others (Reid and Ng, 1999).

Even though the Comedian represents an ethical nightmare in terms of abuse of

government power, he is still more or less a known quantity. Heroes who operate in direct violation of the Keene Act represent a moral dilemma of a different sort. This is exemplified in the character of Rorschach, also known as Walter Kovacs, a vigilante scarred by a traumatic childhood and pathologically dedicated to fighting crime. One of the most complex characters in the superhero genre, Rorschach has an uncompromising view of the world, and therefore could never comply with the Keene Act. His response to the act—he leaves a dead multiple rapist outside police headquarters with a sign that says “Never!”—fully explains his philosophy toward the state: that it will always be flawed, inefficient, and lacking in resolve to do what must be done (Spanakos, 2009).

Due to his philosophy toward government, Rorschach experiences governmental power differently than other heroes. He recognizes the government’s legitimate power, evidenced by how stringent he is in enforcing the state’s laws. This is exemplified in his persecution of the former criminal Moloch for owning illegal cancer pills; though Moloch harms no one with the pills, Rorschach finds him guilty for breaking a law created by the state (Held, 2009). Therefore, Rorschach’s heroism isn’t limited by universal questions of right and wrong, but instead is dictated by government laws.

By the same token, Rorschach doesn’t hold himself to the same set of laws, because like Dr. Manhattan, his referent power is very weak. He describes how he became a superhero after hearing about Kitty Genovese, a woman who was brutally raped in a New York alley with multiple witnesses watching, none of whom called the police or stepped in to help her. “I...made a face that I could bear to look at in the mirror” Rorschach goes on to say, swapping his humanity for a symbolic mask (Moore and Gibbons, 1986, 10). By becoming a masked hero, he places himself above humanity and its vices, and often counts politicians as part of the world’s scum. Therefore, though he respects the legitimate power of the government to make laws, he doesn’t respect its ability to make laws that interfere with his job. Compliance with the Keene Act yields no rewards for him, and though he’s eventually caught, Rorschach isn’t thwarted by the prospect of the government’s coercive power. In his case, he is a masked vigilante as far removed from government control as possible while still enforcing its laws.

Refusing to conform, Rorschach is the very type of masked hero the Keene Act attempts to prevent. He acts on the government's laws, but with a brutality and finality that is undemocratic in nature. By declaring himself "judge, jury, and executioner" he goes against many of the constitutional provisions that protect the accused (Held, 2009). Rorschach represents the hero working outside the state, acting with brutality and autonomy that undermines the state's authority and ability to enforce its own laws. In all likelihood, the drafters of the Keene Act probably had Rorschach in mind.

The Comedian and Rorschach show that even non-powered heroes can be detrimental to society regardless of which side of the law they choose. While Rorschach openly mocks the authority of the government and the efficacy of the police, the Comedian immediately casts the state in a negative light since all his actions are sanctioned by legitimate authority. Both cases erode the power of the state with their own "coercive capacity" (Spanakos, 2009, 35). Therefore, like the superpowered Dr. Manhattan, the Comedian and Rorschach cause more trouble than they are worth.

And Then There Was Ozymandias

Though Rorschach operated outside of government control, he still observed the legitimate power of the government. However, this is not true of the hero who calls himself Ozymandias after the poem by Percy Bysshe Shelley. Also known as Adrian Veidt, Ozymandias is considered the smartest man in the world, and for a long time he uses his intellect and physical prowess to fight crime. He retires before the Keene Act is passed, and has made a fortune by marketing his superhero identity. He's seen as the idealized superhero for most of the graphic novel: he is handsome, at the peak of physical fitness, promotes philanthropy and green industry, and is even a vegetarian.

However, the narrative centers on Ozymandias' plot to bring about utopia and world peace by killing three million innocent people in New York. What's worse, he succeeds in his mission, leaving a moral dilemma in his wake. Should he be turned in thereby ruining world peace, or should he be let go, leaving three million people unavenged?

More so than Rorschach, Ozymandias represents the hero furthest removed from

government power. Since he is wealthy, the government holds no reward power over him. His base of operations is in Antarctica, so the state has very little coercive power over him. Legitimate power is weakened by the fact that he not only circumvents established law, but also sees himself as acting in its stead. Indeed, his master stroke is to exert enough control over both the U.S. and the Soviet Union through a major catastrophe in order to bring them together in a gesture of peace. Ozymandias represents a hero so removed from government that the power relationship between him and the state is purely unilateral.

Ozymandias represents the sharpest critique of superhero autonomy. He is not the first character to use such destructive power to reach peace, and in fact his actions can be compared to Truman's bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in World War II. Examined from outside the lens of legitimacy, Ozymandias' action is more morally sound. Both actions were taken to prevent a greater loss of life in the future. Truman's action was clearly partisan, forcing Japan into an early surrender in World War II. In contrast, Ozymandias doesn't seek to favor either power specifically. His aims are more universal and bilateral, and though the scale of destruction is greater, so is the scale of salvation.

So how does the idea of legitimate authority play into Ozymandias' actions? (Spanakos, 2009). Though Rorschach supported Truman's bombing of Hiroshima when he was young, he cannot condone the actions of Ozymandias. By circumventing the state completely, Ozymandias has acted criminally regardless of the ends. It is difficult to praise him as a savior after he has killed so many people directly. Additionally, history mocks his final achievement, as US and Soviet tensions cooled down on their own without three million dead in New York. In Ozymandias, the superhero's arrogance is fully fleshed out; he acts because he is convinced he knows what is best for society, and the state just gets in his way. Though there's something frightening about this being the best solution determined by the smartest man in the world, Ozymandias' self-assuredness about his course of action comes without a second opinion or any oversight. Ozymandias is a mockery of the state's legitimacy and authority.

Conclusion

In *Watchmen*, the reader explores a world in which government and vigilantes clash over the right to dispense justice and maintain social order. However, in order for government to function, it must be the only legitimate authority over social actions, particularly in the use of “coercion” (Spanakos, 2009). By operating outside of that system and using force against criminals and drug dealers, masked heroes effectively undermine the authority of the government. As seen through the examples of Rorschach and Ozymandias, unauthorized actions on the behalf of superheroes run contrary to the values upon which the American state was built: due process and visibility of government action. When a law officer uses excessive force in an arrest, he is investigated by internal affairs. When the president decides to use military violence in a region, his advisors and strategists examine the plan and comment on its strengths and weaknesses. Transferring this power to ordinary and often lone citizens poses too many questions of ethics and morality, questions which may not receive sufficient attention.

Similarly, the government’s use of superheroes misaligns its actions from its purpose. The use of the Comedian to assassinate political and media targets sounds fascistic, and exempting him from the oversight that keeps law enforcers in check is a dangerous notion for a rational society. Trusting national defense to a superhuman is a fool’s gambit because the state cannot hope to impose any measure of coercion upon him. The idea of making superheroes work for the government is shortsighted and neglects the implicit power incompatibilities that a masked avenger represents.

Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons have crafted a world where masked heroes address many inconsistencies in the superhero genre. How can the government maintain its aura of legitimacy if its ability to exercise coercive power against outside agents is curtailed or deemed futile? And in this case, who really can “watch the *Watchmen*?” When comparing the *Watchmen*’s world of the 1980s with real events, we can see how tense and difficult the superhero factor has made society, and specifically how corrupted government has become through its “authorized” superheroes. From a social-psychological perspective, as well as a rational one, *Watchmen* makes it clear that superheroes work to the detriment of government and that perhaps the world doesn’t need a superman after all.

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Time and Space in Order and Chaos

Alyssa Grieco

One of the essential and most challenging elements of a great science fiction novel is the creation of a fantastic, yet very real world. In any genre, the setting of the story, including both time and place, plays a crucial part in captivating a reader who shares the characters' experiences. Science fiction, in particular, must meet this requirement because it specializes in all things eerie, uncanny, and bizarre, leaving many incredible places that can be inaccessible to the reader. H.P. Lovecraft and Arthur C. Clarke create fantastic yet real worlds that allow the reader to witness their peculiar tales. Both authors accomplish this in two ways—by not describing their settings in complete detail, and by omitting certain “indescribable” details that are left to the reader’s imagination. Although Lovecraft and Clarke use the same method, Lovecraft creates utter chaos while Clarke creates increasingly complex ideas of order that the reader is not meant to comprehend. Lovecraft reflects his hatred of the real world in the fragmentary and chaotic nature of his fantasy worlds; time and space are never certain and are rarely understood as seen in his stories *The Call of Cthulhu* and *The Haunter of the Dark*. In contrast, Clarke *Childhood's End* creates a unique utopia in which all time and space have an organized plan; each individual space within the novel presents the reader with unique and increasingly intricate forms of organization, except for his Overmind which may not occupy a space at all. While these worlds may seem impossible at first, each author succeeds in creating very real spaces with the perfect balance of writer’s description and reader’s imagination, resulting in a looming sense of terror that captures the reader from start to finish.

Lovecraft’s settings are not only interesting to read about but are also unsettling and chaotic because they do not seem physically possible. This is evident in *The Call of Cthulhu*, a mythical tale of an ancient creature that will one day bring about the next coming of the Elder Ones to take control of the world. The third part of the story follows a group of sailors who, all but one, meet their demise after encountering an island with fantastic qualities. The island

is first seen from afar, a tactic often used by Lovecraft to deconstruct the familiar in order to confuse his reader and to avoid giving too much detail. Lovecraft describes this ancient island through the eyes of the only surviving sailor: “Without knowing what futurism is like, Johansen achieved something very close to it...for instead of describing any definite structure or building, he dwells only on broad impressions of vast angles and stone surfaces...too great to belong to any thing right or proper for this earth” (Lovecraft 165). This artistic description tantalizes the imagination. Knowing that futurism focuses on themes including movement, energy, speed, technology, and other modern ideas, the reader can only begin to put together an image of this island. Not one individual component of the island is described, not a single building or any kind of landmark. The reader is only given an overall impression of the space of the island itself, involving vast angles and other-worldly stone surfaces. Even from such a simple description, the overall space seems awe-inspiring, imaginative, and overwhelming all at the same time. Here, Lovecraft gives the reader a few tangible descriptions that begin to formulate a picture of his space; the rest are indescribable details that leave the reader with a mere impression of their existence. Therefore, the reader believes he or she is in a real space, although it is incomplete and unnerving.

The lone survivor continues his description by saying “that the *geometry* of the dream-place he saw was abnormal, non-Euclidean, and loathsome redolent of spheres and dimensions apart from ours” (Lovecraft 166). It is interesting that he italicizes the word “*geometry*” as though that isn’t exactly the word he wants to use and yet, there is no other word to take its place. This subtle tactic reinforces his bizarre sense of space. Euclidean geometry describes real life space, dimensions of our world. To have a space be non-Euclidean is terrifying in that it is unreal space. By leaving the reader with notions of Euclidean geometry, Lovecraft leaves the rest of his settings up to the imagination by not providing information needed to construct the rest of the space.

Einstein’s complex theories of physics also inform *The Call of Cthulhu*. Lovecraft’s description includes the fact that the island has more than three dimensions which implies the curvature of space. The horror is that the laws of physics are being broken and therefore cannot be understood. In a world with three dimensions that obeys the laws of physics, to have a space that defies all logic can cause complete chaos. When Einstein’s theories were first

released to the public, only a handful of people understood their level of complexity. These theories support Lovecraft's chaotic space in that they evoke the same feelings of confusion—people are left with very little understanding of the seemingly realistic world in which they have been placed. Both time and space are defied. In *The Call of Cthulhu*, Lovecraft's ancient beings were said to have been alive for centuries. Cthulhu lived under the sea, and all of the creatures waited for the time when they would return to the world. Such ancient and powerful beings released into a modern world and our own ability to release this chaos are unnerving elements of the story. Lovecraft places his reader in a twisted, chaotic version of the world that seems very real and very threatening.

Lovecraft's agoraphobia caused him to see the "beyond" as an empty void and the world we live in as an island on which we are stranded. Not surprisingly then, he had an intense hatred for the real world and used his stories to create worlds into which to escape. The only good place for him was an artificial dream, and his fears resulted in the creation of outrageous settings for his tales. Regardless of whether these haunting places are isolated by space, time, or both, each one conveys a looming sense of doom. Characters find themselves stranded at sea with no land in sight, or exploring basements that never seem to end, or discovering an ancient church filled with remnants of mysticism and death. The latter of these places is the setting for *The Haunter of the Dark*. The story follows Robert Blake who seeks out and explores the secrets of an ancient church—a venture that ultimately leads to his demise. Like the island of Cthulhu, Blake first sees the church from afar and becomes so captivated with it that he decides to seek it out for himself. When he finally reaches the façade of the church, the reader gets the first real description of the building through Blake's eye: "This was the end of his quest; for upon the wide, iron-railed, weed-grown plateau which the wall supported—a separate, lesser world raised fully six feet above the surrounding streets—there stood a grim, titan bulk" (Lovecraft 341).

Here, the reader experiences another place that is isolated in both space and time. By means of this structure, Lovecraft uses the element of perspective, elevating the church above all of the surrounding ground. Not only does this imply importance within the story, but it also serves as a warning sign for the reader. The other impression garnered from this description is that the building is very old and deserted. Weeds have all but taken

over the landscape, the buttresses have collapsed, and the iron fence has rusted, creating a foreshadowing of the chaos that is to come. In addition, as the reader is soon to find out, the interior is as old, dusty, and creepy as its exterior. Again, Lovecraft utilizes a few familiar physical details such as the iron rails and growing weeds to draw the reader into a false sense of security about the nature of the space.

While exploring the interior of the church, Blake finds he is drawn to the tower which he had observed for a long time from a distance. In the tower, he finds an asymmetrical metal box housing an oddly shaped stone. Not unlike the island of *Cthulhu*, the stone is very alien in its appearance; it is described as a polyhedron with many irregular flat surfaces. Blake finds himself reacting to this stone much like the reader may have reacted to the island's description: "He could scarcely tear his eyes from it, and as he looked at its glistening surfaces he almost fancied it was transparent, with half-formed worlds of wonder within. Into his mind floated pictures of alien orbs with great stone towers, and other orbs with titan mountains and no mark of life, and still remoter spaces where only a stirring in vague blacknesses told of the presence of consciousness and will" (Lovecraft 346). The word "stone" gives the reader a solid entity to start with, much like Lovecraft's overall description of his spaces. The image of this ancient stone and the horrors it holds as pictured in the horrific creature images on its box mirrors the description of the island of *Cthulhu* and reveals that this building is also isolated in time. Each of these visuals gives the reader a glimpse of various alien spaces that contribute to the overall haunting feeling of the church and the chaos that is to come. The creature that is released into the dark will, like *Cthulhu*, brings a chaotic end to both the character and the story. Once again, Lovecraft has created fragmentary spaces that draw the reader into chaotic stories that are finally ungraspable. However, the reader discovers too late, as do many of the characters that the deeper one is pulled into these places, the worse things are, and the harder it is to get out.

Lovecraft's use of familiar, tangible objects leads his reader to believe his spaces are real, albeit chaotic. Like Lovecraft, Clarke uses setting to convey a sense of threatening terror; however, he chooses to present his space and time in a very orderly fashion which seems to make his space less intimidating, at least on the surface. In addition, while Lovecraft's spaces are fragmented, Clarke's spaces overwhelmingly make sense; ironically, the reader comes to

discover that the more orderly the space we approach, the less we can actually understand it. Clarke's *Childhood's End* is set at the time of the Cold War when the threat of nuclear warfare was imminent. It is for this reason, it seems, that the Overlords, an alien race, are sent to earth to create a utopia and prevent the destruction of the human race. Like Lovecraft, Clarke starts *Childhood's End* with something recognizable and sets his story in a realistic time. The reader will get to experience another bit of Einstein's theories in this novel as well; Clarke addresses Einstein's theory of relativity as he delves into the space of the Overlords.

To compensate for the general lack of issues concerning time, Clarke presents the reader with some unique spaces, including the secluded human space of New Athens, the space of the Overlords, and the space of the Overmind. However, before Clarke addresses these spaces, he first places his reader in a utopian space. The Overlords have come to earth and have worked to create peace on earth through means unknown to humanity. Clarke writes "Fifty years is ample time in which to change a world and its people beyond recognition. All that is required for the task are a sound knowledge of social engineering, a clear sight of the intended goal—and power. These things the Overlords possessed. Though their goal was hidden, their knowledge was obvious—and so was their power" (Clarke 72). The only sense of this space that the reader experiences is that it is no longer familiar; unlike Lovecraft, this space does not feel chaotic, but rather feels ironically "alien" to the humans. Any form of resistance to this imposed order is subdued immediately through various techniques including vaporizing a missile headed for their ships, blocking out the sun for those who refuse to cooperate, and causing pain without any physical contact. Here, the reader gets the first sense that Clarke, like Lovecraft, is intentionally leaving out certain details to allow for his fantastic world to be as real as possible.

While most people are happy to concede to the power of the Overlords, others seem to feel a bit helpless and seek to push the limits of their control over them. It is not until the final part of the novel that Clarke gives the reader a new space to explore on earth. This space is a colony consisting of two islands—New Athens and New Sparta. These spaces are presented as follows: the purpose of New Athens is "to build up an independent, stable cultural group with its own artistic traditions" (Clarke 153) while New Sparta is "wild and rocky, and is a wonderful place for sport of exercise" (Clarke 153). This colony was formed

because some people felt that the Overlords were stifling humanity's creativity and artistic development. The names of the two islands seem intentionally chosen to connect the reader to familiar classical Greek cities in order to create a recognizable, small stepping stone into this space. New Athens is a place that allows people to express themselves through production, art, economics, science, philosophy, and more. The colony, overall, is extremely well organized; everyone has a job to oversee and no one person holds a single job for too long to avoid any power struggles. The creators of this space have done extensive research into social engineering and the exact conditions that they would need to maintain long-term stability. This place stands in stark contrast to Lovecraft's settings; there is no sense of chaos at all, and while the islands are somewhat isolated in space, the overall environment feels very safe. The creators justify the creation of this island and push the limits of the Overlords' control saying they are merely "trying to save something of humanity's independence, its artistic traditions...they swept away many good things with the bad...nothing really new has been created since the Overlords came...there's nothing left to struggle for, and there are too many distractions and entertainments...absorbing but never creating" (Clarke 154). These islands seem to be places where humanity can regain some individual control from the Overlords, in order to create for themselves again and not merely absorb information.

The Overlords seem to leave this colony alone until the day when the transformation begins. Now Clarke finally starts to get into that eerie, bizarre space that Lovecraft loved so well but without any sense of chaos. As the inevitable transformation of the colony's children begins to happen, no place is spared this unnerving and swift sense of doom. The reader now knows that the Overlords have simply been the messengers for their superiors—the Overmind. However, before Clarke addresses the idea of space with the Overmind, the reader gets to experience the space of the Overlords through a rogue explorer named Jan who stows away on one of their ships. It is only here that the reader gets to experience some issues with time in the form of Einstein's theory of relativity. Jan explains the theory briefly in his goodbye letter to his sister: "Strange things happen as one approaches the speed of light. Time itself begins to flow at a different rate...from the viewpoints of the passengers on one of the Overlord ships, the journey to NGS 549672 will last not more than two months—even though by Earth's reckoning forty years will have passed" (Clarke 132–133). Jan will arrive

back on Earth eighty years after his departure, and not only will all of his loved ones be gone, but all of humanity will have come to its end. Here again, Clarke illustrates the organized plan that has been set out for humanity and reinforces the lack of understanding often created by Einstein's ideas.

For the first time, the reader experiences a space occupied by the Overlords. Through Jan's eyes, Clarke writes that there was "nothing that did not serve a purpose... even Jan, for all his curiosity and scientific detachment, sometimes found himself on the verge of unreasoning terror. The absence of a single familiar reference point can be utterly unnerving even to the coolest and clearest minds" (Clarke 210–211). Here, Clarke expands his organizational structure by presenting the reader with an orderly complex space that is not exactly understood; this new environment enhances the looming feeling of terror. This place is completely alien to Jan, and therefore to the reader; the panic that Jan feels upon viewing this place mimics the panic that is taking place on earth at the same time. To humans, the city of the Overlords is very plain with strictly functional architecture, and Clarke tells the reader that it was designed for creatures with wings: there are very few streets, no surface transport, doors located high up on the walls of the buildings, and a different sense of gravity. The reader and Jan share the feeling of a suspended world, where there is hardly any ground at all and one is likely to fall hundreds of feet with the slightest misstep. This world is a highly imaginative place and Clarke's descriptions allow the reader to picture parts of it very clearly. Even though he creates an impression of an alien place, there is nothing chaotic about it. Instead, the reader realizes that this place may be beyond our full comprehension, a feeling reminiscent of Lovecraft's spaces.

To reinforce this idea, Clarke also gives the reader a glimpse of the Overmind in the space of the Overlords. Jan sees a mountain beyond the horizon and, as he watches it, notices that it is moving and seems to be alive. Streams of color seemed to be rising upwards from the mountain in red, then yellow, then blue. A solid ring of blue rose and expanded above the mountain until Jan could no longer see it. The mountain now "seemed taller and narrower, and appeared to be spinning like the funnel of a cyclone...it was then that he guessed, for the first time, that the Overlords had masters, too" (Clarke 217). This vivid image of color and movement is not only captivating to the reader but also quite unnerving. Due to the physical

space in which it takes place, the reader is almost left wondering if it happened at all, as Jan does. Although the colors seem to be the typical colors of the rainbow, the space in which they are seen lead the reader to believe that they are indistinct and bizarre; Clarke uses them to provide a balanced setting that is both familiar and imaginative to the reader. With these images, Clarke leads us to come to the same conclusion that this is actually an indication of a supreme power—the Overmind.

In comparison to the substantial space of New Athens and New Sparta and to the alien space of the Overlords, Clarke presents the space of the Overmind, or possibly a lack thereof. The Overmind, the reader comes to learn, is the ultimate power that seeks to know the entire universe by destroying individuality; like the minds of other races before it, the minds of humanity have been prepared by the Overlords to be absorbed into the Overmind. Clarke's organization of the story reaches its peak with the Overmind; as with Lovecraft, the reader is left with many questions regarding this seemingly impossible entity, but is spared from any form of chaos. Perhaps the most interesting of questions regarding space is the following: If the Overmind seeks only to absorb the knowledge of the entire universe, what kind of space can it occupy? Clarke does not answer this question, but rather, like Lovecraft, leaves it up to the reader's imagination. The reader experiences the Overmind again through Jan, the last man on earth: "Now it looks exactly like the curtains of the aurora, dancing and flickering across the stars...the whole landscape is lit up...the atmosphere's escaping...the great burning column is still there, but it's constricting, narrowing; it looks like the funnel of a tornado...just then I felt a great wave of emotion sweep over me...it was a sense of fulfillment" (Clarke 234-235). This second description of the Overmind is much like the first, but still does not give a sense of whether or not it actually occupies physical space. There seem to be arguments supporting both views. For example, the Overmind seems to manifest itself in the form of colors, but colors cannot truly occupy physical space. On the other hand, everything on earth seems to be absorbed by the Overmind, and since it must have some place to go, it must occupy a physical space. Despite the fact that this ultimate power may not occupy any space at all, Clarke presents a complex system of order that is unfamiliar and impossible to comprehend while creating an entity similar to Lovecraft's that epitomizes a looming sense of unavoidable terror.

The most successful novels are the ones that create a world that completely immerses the reader. Science fiction writers are challenged most as they must not only create a fantastic world for people to explore, but they must also make it convincing enough that the reader feels as though it could actually exist. Both H.P. Lovecraft and Arthur C. Clarke create environments that find a balance between the realistic and the fantastic. Both use the same techniques of not fully defining their spaces and leaving some of the details up to the reader's imagination. However, similar techniques can provide very different results. While Lovecraft successfully creates complete and utter chaos in his worlds by defying the laws of physics, he manages to make his ancient creatures plausibly exist in a seemingly realistic setting using familiar, tangible objects; the combination of his details and the reader's imagination create an overall atmosphere of terror, instilling fear in the bravest of readers. In comparison, Clarke uses organization to create an eerie sensation of control and impending doom that is both incomprehensible and unavoidable. His various spaces of New Athens, New Sparta, the Overlords, and the questionable space of the Overmind are presented in limited detail like Lovecraft, with small realistic details that make them believable. Unlike Lovecraft, Clarke organizes his spaces in an increasingly complicated way that enables him to convey an eerie sense of disaster that is new to the reader. But both Lovecraft and Clarke make the bizarre believable and successfully place the reader in their constructed worlds that provide an escape from reality and at the same time make the reader happy to return to his or her own world.

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The Light Switch

Julius Constantine Motal

“Hey,” the light switch calls, “I’m tired of pointing down.”

The light switch always asks me to turn her on, but it won’t make a difference. I haven’t used the lights once since I moved into the apartment several years ago. I think she might be taunting me. I’m not sure.

I wear sunglasses so the light switch can’t see my eyes.

The faucet handle squeaks slightly as I turn it. A twenty-degree turn is just enough to get it at the best temperature. The water douses my hands. It splits around my fingers and forms new ways to get to the drain. I bring a handful to my face. There’s too much stubble. I need to shave.

I have to look somewhat decent. The date is about seven hours away. I’ve never met her before. We were set up through a mutual friend, and we’re meeting at the theater down in Union Square. The friend asked me if I needed help getting there, but I declined. I remember it from before the accident.

The shaving cream feels cool. I let the tips of my fingers determine the borders of my bearded continent. My bristles hibernate for about ten minutes under the creamy, white snow before I force them off the map. Post-shave, my fingers register a familiar smoothness.

The light switch cries out to me as I shuffle out of the bathroom. I smother her cries with my hand, but I don’t give her the satisfaction she so desires. Back in my room, I grope lazily along the wall until my hand slides onto the closet handle. A fleet of sleeves hang in front of me. The colors are floating in my head as each fabric brushes my fingertips. My hand moves up to the hanger of my silk shirt. That one is blue.

I sink into my couch comfortably. The sunlight filters in through the shades and wraps around me like a warm blanket. The couch and the bed are of the few items I actually

own.

Fridge.

Bed.

Couch.

Some CDs and a stereo system.

The end table next to the couch holds my essentials: phone, wallet, and keys. There's a roll of tape in there, too. I reach my hand over it and lock on a CD case. I hold it out and pretend to read it.

The stereo is nearby. The CD's a mystery. The front of the stereo feels like a control panel, all buttons and knobs. The disc tray slides out empty and back in full. I hear the *tic-tic-tic* as the volume knob changes degrees clockwise. The first lines of *Fight Club* fill the room.

Tyler got him a job as a waiter, and then later Tyler put a gun in his mouth. Apparently, according to Tyler, the first step towards eternal life is death. That's no fun. Playing that disc marks the fourth time I've listened to it. If *Fight Club* is about Tyler's quest to make everyday people realize their potential, to make them see the light rather, then they're blind. All they have to do is open their eyes.

I must've dozed off. The stereo's spouting the last sentence. Inside the drawer of the end table, I pull out my wallet, phone, and keys. I grab my messenger bag and my cane that leans against the door.

The door closes with a soft click. Outside on the pavement, the air is cool. The sun's nearing the end of his shift. The light doesn't feel as bright. All he has to do is pass the keys over to the moon and call it a day. The moon's poking his head in to see if the sun has left any messes for him to clean up.

The ground rumbles as the train pulls into the station. A subdued bong-bong rattles out of the speakers.

This stop is Steinway Street.

Most people of my ilk have that folding cane to poke the gap between the train and the platform.

This is the R train to Bay Ridge.

I abandoned that a while ago, but after some close calls, I became decidedly less daring.

The next stop is 36th Street.

I'd rather die without it, but sadly, I need it if I want to get outside and feel the world.

Stand clear of the closing doors please.

Eleven stops later, I step out onto the platform at Union Square. East 14th Street and Union Square West, that's my exit. A cool breeze blows through the park. I see where I am in my head. Hazy outlines of the landscape hover in my thoughts. Wire-mesh iterations of the superstructures arise out of my memories to fill in for what I've forgotten. With the park behind me, I walk in the direction of the theater.

I can feel the flaky white tip of my cane stare at me as it passes in forty-degree arcs along the cement.

Ccchhht. Left.

"Nothing to report, boss," the tip calls over the roar of the city, "All's flat."

Ccchhht. Right.

"Boss. Boss! Do you not smell him?" the tip said, "Left. Faster. Now."

Ccchhht. Left. Tck.

My fingers slide along the glass door. I remember this door. I step back and wait. My hands move along the metal shaft, and tug at the joints. Slight clicks sound as the cane folds together. I tuck it in my bag and lean against the building.

I slide the phone out of my pocket, and hold it to my ear. At the sound of the girl's name, the phone dials the numbers.

Brrrrrrrrrrrr.

Brrrrrrrrrrrr.

Hey, you know what to do.

At the tone, please record your voice message.

Bip.

“Hey, just letting you know that I’m outside the theater. I’m wearing a blue silk shirt and black jeans. I’ll see you here.”

The city rushes by me as I stand outside the theater.

Taxis and trucks.

Cars and vans.

Bikes and boards.

Horns honking. Sirens blaring. Dogs barking. Drivers cursing. People talking. Tires screeching. Engines humming. This is my sixth year hearing the city. Six years. Six. I’m losing my grip on everything I’ve seen. My memories are changing senses. Images are becoming sensations. Sounds. Odors. Tastes. Any attempt to recall a scene returns a half-imagined vista. My mind pulls from somewhere to fill in the gaps. The New York City in my mind is slowly losing shape. It is losing congruency with the New York City constantly shifting around me.

My memories are a pond. With each passing day, another pebble is dropped in, distorting the images the liquid mirror reflects. Ripples from one pebble collide with the ripples of another. After enough time has melted away, there won’t be anything left. Just ripples.

I feel a tap on my shoulder.

“Hey, have you been waiting long?”

“Nah, it’s been about ten minutes as far as I can tell.”

“Alright, let’s get inside.”

I feel the ticket girl’s fingers brush mine as I slide the cash through the small opening in the glass barrier. They feel clammy. It must’ve been a long day for her.

The ticket guy’s a heavy breather. I sense a few extra pounds and one too many stops at the popcorn counter.

“You’re in theater one. Walk straight ahead and turn left. Enjoy the show.”

She and I stand still for a moment inside theater one. A digital seating grid stretches before me. A cascade of lights, each marking a moviegoer.

“Do you see any good seats?” I ask her.

“There are two open all the way at the back.” Two lights disappear.

“Make-out row? On the first date?”

“You have an old soul. What’s the worst that could happen? Awkward silence? We can put the armrest down, you know.”

“Oh alright. Lead the way.”

We settle into the two remaining comfy seats. I feel her breathing on my neck as she leans in. Her hair falls forward, grazing me. Shoulder length, or something near that.

“You do know you’re wearing sunglasses inside a movie theater, yeah?” she whispers.

“Oh, she didn’t tell you?” My voice matches hers.

“Tell me what?”

“That I like to wear shades inside movie theaters.”

“Oh, no, she didn’t. I thought blind people do that.”

“Yeah, you’d think so.”

“Well, why?”

“I like the hue.”

“Fair enough. Oh, the previews are starting.”

One preview melts into another. The action flick gives way to the crime drama gives way to the romantic comedy. Opening scene.

All throughout the film, I do not make a move for her hand, and she does not make a move for mine. We are a man and a woman enjoying a film together. She breathes softly. Occasionally, she moves slightly, adjusting her posture. I don’t feel her move forward at all. She seems relaxed, drinking in the movie as it plays. I create images with each new sound. My artistic direction is undoubtedly different.

After the movie lets out, she and I venture to a café nearby. I match my footsteps

with the rhythmic clicks of her heels. The cane bounces in my bag.

“Well, what did you think?” she asks as we settle in the café.

“I don’t know. I wasn’t really feeling the lead actor’s performance.”

“What do you mean?”

“I think Ed Norton would’ve been a better fit.”

“You can’t be serious. Why?”

“He just didn’t do a good job of it. Besides, his career isn’t much to speak of.”

“Isn’t much to speak of? How can you be so in the dark about this? He’s had an amazing career.”

I can hear my light switch’s cries in the back of my mind. She must be bored without me around to tease. I can’t stay here. This charade can only go on for so long before she sees me for what I really am, and when that happens, terribly kind words will deluge the air.

I hate forced sympathy. I’ve been on dates before with girls who had foreknowledge of my condition, and there was always an awkward tension. I wasn’t going to have that again.

“Listen,” I say, “I’d best get going.”

“Wait. What? Why?”

“I’m really sorry about this, but I just remembered that I have to watch my sister’s kids.”

“This late?”

“The party she’s going to is a late one,” I say as I stand up from my chair. “Let’s do this again some other time.”

She catches sight of the wand as I remove it from my bag. As I turn to leave, I can hear her sharply draw in air.

Back at home, I hear the light switch heave a sigh of relief.

“Thank heavens you’re home.”

“Don’t even think about asking.”

“But it’s so easy to turn me on.”

“I’m not looking to satisfy anyone tonight.”

“Come on. You’ve been saying that for five years.”

I reach for some tape inside the end table.

Svvvt. Skch.

Svvvvvt. Skch.

Svvvt. Skch.

The light switch is none too happy after I tape her up. Her pleas come through as muffled screams. I tune her out as I shed my clothes and slide into bed.

I have no desire to see the light.

Ever since the accident, I’ve grown used to the blackness.

Besides, everything looks better in the dark.

Defining Individual Character in *Antony and Cleopatra*

Annemarie Correa

From the opening scene of *Antony and Cleopatra*, Shakespeare takes a complex approach to depicting individual human beings. In traditional Judeo-Christian literature such as Dante's *Inferno*, characters are usually one-dimensional as they are typically defined by a single trait. The souls whom Dante encounters on his trip through hell are defined by the single, most grievous sin they have committed in life. However, Shakespeare takes a more three-dimensional approach in his portrayal of Antony and Cleopatra. Antony is not solely a Roman general or passionate lover, but a complex blend of these seemingly contrasting characteristics. Similarly, Cleopatra is not just an Egyptian queen or dramatic mate, but a clever and manipulative woman. Throughout the first scene, Shakespeare underlines the complexity and three-dimensional nature of human beings by presenting Antony's and Cleopatra's conflicting characteristics, by questioning their ability to measure their characters, and by using language that emphasizes the blending of their characteristics. Shakespeare's play demonstrates that individuals are most accurately depicted through the portrayal of the full range of their characteristics while leaving much to the audience's interpretation. Ultimately, a three-dimensional character experiences a wider range of emotions, motives, and perspectives and is therefore more human and realistic to the audience.

Through the character of Antony in particular, Shakespeare takes a classical Roman figure and transforms him into a complex character by mixing Roman qualities with conflicting Egyptian qualities. Antony is expected to be Roman in the Virgilian sense—he should dutifully place the needs of the Roman Empire before his personal desires. Like Aeneas, he is a Roman leader who is responsible for representing and leading Rome both in politics and on the battlefield. In the beginning of Act I, Philo and Demetrius explain

Antony's Roman side to the audience. These minor characters are soldiers under Antony's command and yet they provide the audience with the first judgments and descriptions of the two main characters. Philo describes Antony as a man of war. He refers to him as "our general" and further describes Antony's "office and devotion" as well as his "captain's heart" (I.i. 5-6). Philo's description introduces Antony to the audience as a true "Roman;" his primary commitments are to Rome as a military leader who is dutiful and self-controlled.

However, Antony's first appearance in the play provides a stark contrast to his Roman self that Philo describes. Philo alerts the audience of Antony's other side as he warns "Take but good note, and you shall see in him / The triple pillar of the world transform'd / Into a strumpet's fool: behold and see" (I.i. 12-14). The phrase "triple pillar" reminds the audience of Antony's role as one of the three rulers of Rome and also hints at Antony's three-dimensional character which is always changing. The difference between Philo's description of Antony and Antony's speech and actions challenges the audience to judge Antony for themselves. Philo literally instructs the audience to "behold and see" (I.i. 14) an Antony that is indeed different from his description.

Shakespeare intentionally defines Antony to the audience as a "Roman" to then undo that very definition. As Antony enters the scene, his character for the moment seems passionate and fixated on Cleopatra. In response to Cleopatra's flirtatious questions regarding his affection for her, Antony declares "Then must thou needs find out new heaven, new earth" (I.i. 17). His language is poetic and philosophical as he and Cleopatra discuss how to measure love, a subject that hardly seems direct and duty-oriented. While a typical Roman should discuss the expanse of land practically in relation to the Roman Empire, Antony instead creates an exaggerated sense of distance (heaven and earth) to convey the scope of his love for Cleopatra. Later in the scene, Antony again demonstrates his "un-Roman" characteristics; he resents the arrival of news from Rome. He says "Grates me: the sum" (I.i. 19). He should be eager and ready to respond to commands from Rome and from Caesar but instead appears annoyed and unwilling to fulfill his duty. He goes further declaring "Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch / Of the ranged empire fall! Here is my space! / Kingdoms are clay..." (I.i. 34-36)! Even though Antony is a Roman leader, he quickly denounces his Roman identity when presented with the alternative of staying with Cleopatra. Through Antony's passionate

rejection of his Roman identity, Shakespeare shows the audience another dimension of Antony's shifting identity: he is passionate and acts in the moment based on his emotions rather than on the greater good of Rome. Though his Roman identity based on duty and his Egyptian identity based on emotion seem contradictory, they blend and transform into each other creating a true depiction of Antony.

Similarly, Cleopatra balances conflicting identities. Throughout the first scene, Antony defines Cleopatra as "Love." Though he is indeed in love with her and "Love" seems like a simple affectionate title, "Love" carries symbolic meaning. Cleopatra is "Love" because she embodies passion and beauty creating a character which contrasts with the stoic and dutiful Romans. Antony directly addresses Cleopatra as "Love" on several occasions, such as "How, my love!" (I.i. 25) and "now for the love of Love" (I.i. 45). By blending Cleopatra the Queen of Egypt with "Love," Shakespeare identifies Cleopatra's passion as one of her dominant traits.

However, Shakespeare does not limit Cleopatra's character to her passionate love but instead adds cleverness to her personality. Cleopatra begs Antony, "You must not stay here longer" and then questions "Where is Fulvia's process" (I.i. 27, 29)? In one interpretation of her lines, Cleopatra sincerely asks Antony to return to Rome as she recognizes his duty as a leader. Therefore, her motivation could be a selfless love which shows respect for her lover's responsibilities. However, the lines can also be interpreted as intentionally manipulative and self-serving. She may have mentioned Fulvia's name to draw a contrast between her own beauty and passion and Fulvia's cold stoicism fully knowing that Antony would eagerly choose to stay with her rather than return to Rome. She notes his reaction to Fulvia's name as she informs him "Thou blushest, Antony" (I.i. 31). If the lines are interpreted as manipulative, then Cleopatra seems more clever than loving. She knows that the mention of his duty to Fulvia would elicit an emotional reaction from him. The juxtaposition of cleverness and love in Cleopatra's character creates conflict; Shakespeare challenges the audience to comprehend how manipulation and love for another person can exist equally in the same character. Cleopatra does not love any more than she manipulates, but both characteristics combine, sometimes contradict and blend together to make Cleopatra's character three-dimensional. Shakespeare is intentionally ambiguous in creating Cleopatra's character so she is complex and difficult for the audience to define.

Shakespeare adds a third layer of complexity to Antony's and Cleopatra's individuality by blending their characteristics. Despite the initial description of Antony as a dutiful Roman commander, his behavior and language in the first scene demonstrate the opposite. He declares passionately to Cleopatra that "There's not a minute of our lives should stretch without some pleasure now. What sport tonight" (I.i. 47, 48)? Though Antony should be focused on his duties as a general and on Caesar's instructions, instead, he desires the pleasure of a single evening with Cleopatra and becomes more like Cleopatra herself. In addition, by implying that they will be united sexually, Shakespeare challenges the separation between the two and emphasizes that though their characters initially appear to be separate, at times they become one character.

For example, when Antony refers to himself and Cleopatra as "such a mutual pair/ And such a twain can do't, in which I bind on pain of punishment" Shakespeare emphasizes their union (I.i. 38–39). Shakespeare redefines the one-dimensional definition of individuals as separate and distinct.

Perhaps the strongest expressions of the pair's fluid identities are Antony's exhortation "Let Rome in the Tiber melt" (I.i. 34) and Cleopatra's imperative "Melt Egypt into the Nile" (II.v. 88). The lovers desire that their conflicting qualities be reconciled, a frequent theme throughout the play. Antony's line demonstrates his exasperation with the conflict between his passionate side and his Roman side. In fact, if the two cannot coexist, Antony renounces his Roman character in favor of his passionate side as he chooses to have "Rome in the Tiber melt" rather than Tiber melt in Rome. Despite his apparent renunciation of his Roman character, he continues to fluctuate between and blend both characteristics throughout the play. Similarly, Cleopatra chooses passion over her duty as queen. Antony and Cleopatra desire to melt into each other through the symbols of their nations; they also wish for their goals as well as their identities to blend as the play progresses. By establishing Antony's and Cleopatra's identities as ambiguous in the first scene, Shakespeare prepares the audience for a deeper conflict between and within their characters.

Shakespeare also questions the possibility of defining qualities using the tool of measurement. In Cleopatra's first line of dialogue, she attempts to quantify the love between

her and Antony by asking him “If it be love indeed, tell me how much” (I.i. 14). This line introduces the subsequent recurring questions about the scope of Antony’s love and how much it defines his identity. Just as Antony and Cleopatra exit Scene I, Antony proposes to Cleopatra that they “wander through the streets and note / The qualities of people” (I.i. 34–35). Antony’s desire to define the characters of strangers by noting their qualities emphasizes his own attempt to quantify individuals. Ironically, the audience will attempt to note and define Antony’s character which is complex and ultimately indefinable. In addition, Demetrius questions how much Antony values his duty to Rome and wonders “Is Caesar with Antonius prized so slight” (I.i. 57)? As Demetrius questions the degree to which Antony values Rome, the audience also questions how much of Antony’s character is indeed Roman. Shakespeare presents the idea of measurement in the opening scene to introduce the possibility of defining someone using quantification.

By the end of the first scene, Shakespeare challenges the audience to define the identities of Antony and Cleopatra. Philo observes that “when he is not Antony, / he comes too short of that great property / Which still should go with Antony” (I.i. 58-9). Philo implies that when Antony does not behave like a Roman, he is no longer “Antony.” Similarly, Cleopatra’s changeable character also defies definition and classification. Shakespeare notes the limitations of defining an individual’s identity through Antony’s description of the crocodile later in the play. Answering Lepidus’ questions about the definition of a crocodile, Antony responds: “It is shaped, sir, like itself, and it is as broad as it hath breadth. It is just so high as it is, and moves with its own organs. It lives by that way which nourisheth it.... Of its own colour too” (I.i. 40–47). In this humorous passage, Antony cannot capture the essence of the crocodile beyond describing it as itself. An attempt to define the crocodile in concrete terms would provide a limited understanding of the crocodile. Like Antony’s description of the crocodile, Shakespeare’s descriptions of Antony and Cleopatra cannot be defined beyond themselves. To define Antony as dutiful would omit his passion for Cleopatra, and to define him as passionate would omit his loyalty to the Roman Empire. No characteristic of Antony is any less “Antony” than another, just as no characteristic of Cleopatra is any less “Cleopatra” than the other. Similarly, to define Cleopatra as simply “Love” would omit her cleverness, and conversely, to define her as clever would omit her passion. After Antony “defines” the crocodile, Caesar asks “will this description satisfy him” (I.i. 51)? Indeed, Shakespeare expects that initially, his audience will not be satisfied by non-concrete descriptions. Caesar’s question is very practical; Can simply defining

something as itself truly capture its essence? Shakespeare, through his depiction of Antony's and Cleopatra's characters, demonstrates that only through presenting characters in their most complex forms, with their contradictions and ambiguity, can their essence best be captured.

Shakespeare presents a complex view of humanity: one in which each individual is influenced by conflicting motives that can never be fully understood by either the individual or an observer. From the onset of the play, Shakespeare's three-dimensional portrayal of Antony and Cleopatra makes them more human and lifelike to the audience because he captures the nuanced complexity of an individual's multi-faceted character. Shakespeare recognizes that individual characters can be contradictory, disorderly, and even unexplained, and yet can still capture the essence of the human condition.

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The Reality of Love: The End is Only the Beginning

Ryan Sobeck

In Jean Baudrillard's essay *Simulacra and Simulations*, he says "that truth, reference, and objective causes have ceased to exist" (367). In other words, reality has ceased to exist based on objective truths, references, and causes which can be used as indicators to distinguish what is "true" and what is "false." Baudrillard argues that all reality has been replaced by *dissimulation* and *simulation* of reality (366). The ability to distinguish what is true and real, and what is simply a simulation of reality becomes nearly impossible. The song *This is for Keeps* by The Spill Canvas [lyrics in appendix] illustrates this confusion between what is real and what is simulation as the listener follows the first person narration of a vampire's "infallible love." Despite the vampire's difficult and misleading simulations, the listener can detect the reality of the song's story while experiencing the power of a simulated reality on the perception of love.

According to Baudrillard, *dissimulation* is "to feign not to have what one has" whereas simulation is "to feign to have what one hasn't." In both situations, either a new presence (simulation) or the absence of any presence at all (dissimulation) replaces reality. Baudrillard uses the example of "someone who feigns an illness [who] can simply go to bed and pretend he is ill. Someone who simulates an illness produces in himself some of the symptoms." Through dissimulation, some semblance of reality remains intact; it is possible to distinguish between "true" and "false." However, through simulation, the line between real and imaginary becomes blurred, and it is almost impossible to distinguish between "true" and "false" because they look and feel the same (366). When these concepts are applied to *This is for Keeps*, the listener must question not only what he perceives as reality but also what the vampire narrator perceives as reality.

In order to deconstruct the song's layers of reality, the listener must first establish "true reality" and then identify what in the song is a simulation and what is a dissimulation. In *This is for Keeps*, absolute reality comes at the very end of the song when there is simply a swelling of notes with no drumming or singing (5:11-5:25) [all time notation refers to a youtube performance of *This is for Keeps* at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X8D08cDZEJs>]. It is only when the listener begins to replay the song that the end's silence emerges as the true reality of the vampire's heart. By recognizing this silence as true reality, the listener is able to make sense of the song's beginning.

In the beginning of the song, the listener hears a series of strong drum beats that are reminiscent of a beating heart. This use of the drums as auditory evidence of a heartbeat is a continuous motif throughout the song. However, it is strange to hear what sounds like a heartbeat since the entire song is sung from the first person perspective of a vampire, a monster who has no heartbeat. The listener is left with no choice but to believe that the heartbeat rhythm of the drums is the vampire's own heart. At this point it is vital that the listener remember the silence at the end of the song—the silence that creates the absolute reality of his heartbeat not existing. Therefore, the drumming heartbeat the listener hears and believes to be the vampire's heart is a *simulation*. The reality of the heartbeat is established at the very end of the song through the lingering silence.

However, in the first line of the song, the vampire says that "The streets are dark, my pulse is flat-lined" (0:27–0:32). Though the listener knows that the heartbeat is a simulation, the vampire believes that it is real thus making his statement a *dissimulation*. He is pretending that he does not have what he does have. Even though the statement "my pulse is flat-lined" reflects the objective reality of the vampire's state of being, the statement must be considered in relation to the simulated reality the vampire occupies (a reality in which has a heartbeat). Everything the vampire says and does occurs within his simulated reality in which he has a heartbeat. However, by pretending that he doesn't have a heartbeat, the vampire tries to bend his reality, though to what end is uncertain.

The final simulation heard by the listener in this reality is the vampire's song about his romantic feelings towards his "lover." He repeats the chorus multiple times: "Eternity will

never be enough for me / and eternally we'll live our infallible love" (2:00–2:24, 3:18–3:41, 4:21–4:42). The vampire claims that he "loves" the girl and wants to spend the rest of eternity with her. These feelings of "love" come from the simulated reality he has created in which he has a heartbeat; therefore the vampire can, in fact, feel love. His feelings are a simulation based on his larger simulated reality that includes a heartbeat in the first place. However, the listener, without necessarily understanding that the heartbeat is a simulation, knows that the vampire's feelings are not genuine. The vampire sings of an "infallible love" rather than an "eternal" love leaving the listener to question whether or not the vampire knows what love is since the word "infallible" seems an odd choice to define love.

Now that all the pieces in the puzzle of reality are labeled according to their place in the narrative, the listener can discern the meaning behind the narrator's words and actions. Following the thought process of the vampire, the listener hears that in the vampire's true reality, he has no heartbeat and therefore can't "feel" love. The vampire then simulates a reality in which he *also* possesses a heartbeat. However, with a heartbeat and his new found "humanity" comes a set of principles and inhibitions that the vampire has operated outside of due to his lack of human qualities. To negate these inhibitions, the vampire creates a dissimulated belief in his own heartbeat so he can feel the emotions it provides while denying the human inhibitions it creates. As a result, he speaks about love in a twisted manner based on death and an eternity that "will never be enough;" everything in *his* reality is twisted in on itself.

Baudrillard says that "one can live with the idea of a distorted truth" (367). The vampire's song is his distorted idea of truth and reality. It is only at the end, when the listener hears the silence that he realizes the vampire's heartbeat was never really there. The vampire's use of simulation and dissimulation to manipulate not only himself but the listener as well shows how a simulated reality can change our perspective on love.

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Appendix

This Is For Keeps

The Spill Canvas

The streets are dark, my pulse is flat-lined
 as I'm running to you
 You sit completely unaware of what I'm about to do
 The air is thick with tension much like when we are together
 My fangs are aching as I'm pondering about you and I forever

As I round your corner
 I am nervous that you won't be my lover
 I knock three times and hope that my pale complexion won't blow my cover
 You answer the door with your innocent face
 Would you like to leave this human race, tonight?

Eternity will never be enough for me
 and eternally we'll live our infallible love

My brain is pumping an unusual secretion of lust
 Your eyes are softer now
 and your chin, it drips a bloody color of rust
 I am raising up the stakes of this round, I am playing for keeps
 Oh, would you like to leave this human race, tonight?

Eternity will never be enough for me
 and eternally we'll live our infallible love

Follow me into the sea
 We'll drown together and immortalize you and me
 Leave behind this lonely town
 We're both better than this, it's not worth being down

Eternity will never be enough for me
 and eternally we'll live our infallible love

Follow me into the sea
 We'll drown together and immortalize you and me
 Leave behind this lonely town (eternally)

We're both better than this, it's not worth being down (eternally)

The Torture Memos: Rationalizing the Unthinkable

Elina Kats

They're gonna try and disbar me...The whole Establishment. Their little Rules. Because I know no rules. Because I don't see the Law as a dead and arbitrary collection of antiquated dictums, thou shall, thou shalt not, because, because I know the Law's a pliable, breathing, sweating...organ...

—Roy Cohn, *Angels in America*, (Act Two, Scene 6)

In 2009, the Obama administration released previously top-secret documents that the Office of Legal Counsel (OLC) wrote about the Central Intelligence Agency's use of authorized and unauthorized interrogation techniques, which the OLC determined did not violate the Conventions on Torture. If their decision had been based on a true attempt to ascertain the nature of these techniques in relation to common definitions of torture, a so-called "good faith" attempt, then the decisions and conclusions would not have incited so much protest, both domestic and international. Yet, as is evident from the language of the memos themselves, the OLC lawyers cleverly twisted legal language, manipulated laws and cases, and argued that the proposed techniques were legal based on information given by the CIA operatives and medical physicians. These characteristics, however, only become apparent when the memos are read consecutively, without a significant amount of time passing between them (as was the original case). David Cole's book, *The Torture Memos: Rationalizing the Unthinkable*, provides an opportunity to do just that. Individually, the memos may not be as disturbing, but in a compilation such as this one, they demonstrate that while the OLC tackled many difficult questions, no matter the situation or how much time passed, the legality of the CIA methods never changed. Instead, the OLC manipulated laws to fit their conclusions, their "bottom line."

The CIA and then President George W. Bush first approached the OLC in 2002 in an effort to determine whether or not the CIA could use techniques like sleep deprivation, light slapping, stress positions, and water-boarding on persons suspected of having information on al Qaeda activities and ties to terrorism, the first of whom was Abu Zubaydah, a man considered to be one of the highest ranking members of al Qaeda. In the August 1, 2002 memo to Alberto Gonzales, the OLC took the liberty of further defining the meaning of “severe” and “prolonged mental pain” (both of which are defined under the Torture statute 18 U.S.C. Section 2340-2340A), provided stipulations for why, if the techniques did violate the statute, they would be defensible and necessary, and ultimately concluded that only extreme conditions (rather than human degradation) could be equated to torture and that a person can only be convicted of torturing someone else if they had the intent to cause severe pain. The CIA took this as a green light and subjected Zubaydah to stress positions, placed him in a small box for hours, gagged and strapped him to a hospital bed while pouring mineral water over his face, and caused him to lose control of his bodily fluids (which he continues to do to this day when under stress).¹

When the memo was leaked and Congress showed signs that it would intervene, the OLC issued a replacement memo discussing the previous descriptions of “severe,” “severe physical pain or suffering,” and “specifically intended,” but did not redefining any of these terms. This December 30, 2004 memo seemed more of a public relations maneuver than an actual attempt to reinterpret the law, and the consequent secret memo written on May 10, 2005 only served to support this observation. Based on information that the CIA gave to the Office about the amount of pain caused by the techniques and the amount of stress induced, the May 2005 memo concluded that as long as there are strict limitations and guidelines (such as not using all of the techniques at once) then the interrogation is permitted under the statute. The memo continued to evaluate actions like sleep deprivation for more than 48 hours, abdominal slaps, cramped confinement, walling, and water-boarding as techniques that do not cause enough pain to be defined as “severe” and “prolonged mental harm.”² A subsequent May 30, 2005 memo made specific references to water-boarding as a legitimate practice due to its use in Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) training.

¹ David Cole, *The Torture Memos: Rationalizing the Unthinkable* (New York: The New Press, 2009), 5-6.

² Cole, pp. 177–187.

When the torture scandal came to light, the public and the media were in a frenzy. The reputation of the Bush administration and America itself was damaged. In response to the investigation, President Obama issued Executive Order 13491 on “Ensuring Lawful Interrogations” which limited the type of interrogation techniques that could be used by “officers, employees, or other agents of the United States Government.”³ Currently, the administration is not relying on the OLC’s interpretations of interrogation laws made between September 11, 2001 and January 20, 2009.⁴

The memos, despite the nature of the subject matter they discuss, are masterpieces of the law in its worst form. They tackle the vague definitions of key torture statutes, presenting their reasoning, however unsound, in a step-by-step manner that to an untrained mind seems logical and indisputable. They ensure that legal repercussions of CIA actions are minimal, and that any politician or Agent caught in the crossfire would not be held accountable for torture. The first memo clearly demonstrates this. First and foremost, the OLC used an obscure reference to define “severe pain or suffering.” Instead of using common Webster or Oxford definitions which they argued were too vague (clever, because outright discarding of the definitions would have highlighted the inappropriate nature of the source they did use), they applied a federal statute definition of “severe pain” equitable to levels “ordinarily associated with a sufficiently serious physical condition or injury such as death, organ failure, or serious impairment of body functions.”⁵ This statute, however, originally addressed the assessment of *emergency medical conditions* in order to provide health benefits. Thus, this is a worst-case scenario definition of “severe pain” as a life-or-death situation. Torture, however, does not necessarily equate with the imminent possibility of death, but rather pain that is “hard to sustain or endure,” which is the definition that the Oxford Dictionary gives, and the very one that the OLC discarded.⁶ Using this definition, however, would necessitate an individualistic approach to interrogation standards, since pain thresholds depend on the personal circumstances, making the CIA’s (and the OLC’s) life much more difficult. The way the OLC describes the situation suggests that the health benefit statute is the only recourse. Manipulative but utterly masterful.

3 Cole. p. 291.

4 Cole. p. 291.

5 Cole. p. 47.

6 Cole. p. 47.

Besides presenting the memos consecutively, Cole writes an introduction focused on the nature and context of the memos. He presents two main themes regarding the torture memos: a lack of transparency and a never-changing bottom line. Thus, his grievance with the memos is less about the content that the OLC dealt with (meaning the legality of torture) and more about the way the lawyers handled the issue when confronted with information and public protest. He writes:

When its initial August 2002 memo was leaked to the press and widely condemned, the OLC publicly issued a replacement memo...but the secret memos now disclosed reveal that even as the OLC sought to convince the public that it had changed its view, behind the scenes it continued to approve all the same interrogation tactics.⁷

Moreover, despite mounting protests and an acknowledgment that the previously established definitions for “severe” and “prolonged mental harm” may not have been the most applicable definitions in this case, the OLC continued to approve CIA actions and provided them with defenses to use if someone chose to prosecute the prison guards. This is in light of changing laws as well. By the time the lawyers wrote the May 2005 memos, Congress had learned about the abuses and indicated its intentions to overrule the “administration’s evasion of the ban on ‘cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment.’”⁸ Yet, this did nothing to change the bottom line: the OLC continued to approve the techniques, reiterating previous thoughts on water-boarding as a safe and legal procedure as long as it follows the “guidelines” and “restrictions” and remains physically not painful.⁹ Ironically, they do say that reasonable people may disagree with the OLC’s findings, demonstrating awareness that their findings are controversial and arguably illegal.

While the definitions in the Convention are vague, the OLC attempted to demarcate further the nuances of the terms in order to arrive at a clear and applicable conclusion to the matter at hand, which originally was the interrogation of Abu Zubaydah. Again and again, despite the eventual outcry from the public once the interrogation tactics were made public, the OLC concluded that CIA actions, including water-boarding, were not degrading and did not constitute torture. In section V of the August 2002 Alberto R. Gonzales memo, they even

⁷ Cole, p. 4.

⁸ Cole, p. 26.

⁹ Cole, p. 192.

argue that if the President does it, it is not illegal.¹⁰

In order to respect the President's inherent constitutional authority to manage a military campaign against al Qaeda and its allies, Section 2340A must be construed as not applying to interrogations undertaken pursuant to his Commander-in-Chief authority...Congress may no more regulate the President's ability to detain and interrogate enemy combatants than it may regulate his ability to direct troop movements on the battlefield.¹¹

Thus, even if an interrogation method were to violate the statute, the OLC concluded that the statute itself could be unconstitutional on the basis that it infringes on the President's responsibilities as Commander-in-Chief. Since the CIA operates on behalf of the President (mostly), they would not be held responsible. The reasoning for this section is obviously less sound and requires some suspension of disbelief on behalf of both the interpreters and the readers.

While careful reading of the memos reveals holes in the OLC's arguments, one cannot discount the impact Cole's introduction has on the reader. He provides a legal, temporal, and ethical context for the memos that ultimately highlights his bias against the memos and what they represent. "Law has no absolutes...torture is different. International and U.S. law provide that torture is never justifiable...whatever benefit torture might conceivable bring...the prohibition must hold."¹² From the beginning of the section on legal context it is clear where Cole stands on this issue, and where the CIA and the OLC had violated the law. The law states that torture is never justifiable. In several of the memos, the OLC attempted to use the imperative to combat al Qaeda as a justification for the methods the CIA proposed, tying it together with the President's duties as Commander-in-Chief. In the initial memo, the lawyers cited self-defense as a justification, arguing that even if the interrogation methods *violate* the Torture Statute, "a defendant could still appropriately raise a claim of self-defense...[and] would be further supported by the fact that, in this case, the nation itself is under attack and has the right to self-defense."¹³ Under Cole's claim that torture is the only law that is absolute, that has no exceptions to the rule—self-defense included—such an argument would be absurd. Without Cole's statement, the argument is

¹⁰ Statement is a reference to Nixon's declaration and defense.

¹¹ Cole, p. 84–85.

¹² Cole, p. 7.

¹³ Cole, p. 95–97.

much more compelling.

Cole also compares the OLC's rationale that water-boarding is a viable interrogation tool because of its history of use in SERE training to the issue of rape. There is a distinct difference between volunteering to undergo water-boarding performed by a trusted soldier in a training session (especially when the soldier can utter a safety word and stop the process) and being forced to undergo this technique in an enemy prison cell where the possibility of death is high. This is similar to the statement "that there is no severe infliction of physical or mental pain or suffering during consensual sex [not meaning] that rape has no such effects."¹⁴ This comparison is very powerful and resonates in the readers' minds as they continue reading the sections in the May 2005 memo regarding water-boarding. The lawyers make it seem as though the fact that SERE personnel undergo this treatment and survive intact equates to there being no lasting side effects (more specifically "prolonged mental harm") if practiced on prisoners. But the rape scenario lingers and causes a questioning of the validity of such a conclusion, and rightly so.

The legal realm is filled with Roy Cohns, lawyers who are willing to suspend ethics and morality, who believe that laws are guidelines meant to be twisted to benefit their clients, who are able to get juries to acquit known murderers on the basis of technicalities, and who are as criminal and deceiving as the clients they represent. To be a good lawyer, one needs to be an even better liar—or so the saying goes. This is the popular American conception of lawyers. It may not apply to everyone, but the American public generally accepts this stereotype. How many lawyer jokes depict this very sentiment? *A tomb reads: here lies a lawyer and a good man. Mommy? Did they put two men in the same grave? Laughs all around.* It is a view that is accepted as a reflection of reality and that to a certain extent is true. Americans live in the age of Johnnie Cochran, Al Sharpton, and the late William Kunstler. The depravity of lawyers is accepted, even expected. However, when the arbitrators who are meant to check the power of the executive branch and ensure the integrity of the legal system begin to exhibit signs of such moral ambiguity and even complete disregard of laws and justice—when the Office of Legal Counsel demonstrates characteristics that undermine the justice system, the

¹⁴ Cole, p. 28.

implications are broad and disturbing.

Cole argues that the OLC lawyers “had the opportunity and the responsibility to prevent illegal conduct before it occurred,” and those who drafted the memos had failed to do so. While this is true, the implications of their failure are greater than even he describes. The fact of the matter is the lawyers, the officials of the Bush administration supporting the memos, and the CIA interrogators all bought into the popular understanding of lawyers as advocates for clients rather than as “honest brokers” of the law. Moreover, the interpretations of law that the OLC provided to the President offer far reaching consequences. Johnny Cochran may have successfully defended a murderer, but the OLC lawyers silenced the rights of individuals who had no chance to defend themselves as they were whisked away into secret prisons. The OLC permitted the Bush administration to create policies that allowed, amongst other things, the water-boarding of prisoners both domestically and abroad. They allowed the administration to pursue prisoner-treatment policies that went against international conventions (no matter how much they tried to rationalize it away) and hurt the reputation and integrity of the United States. Finally, in making it difficult to prosecute anyone other than themselves, the OLC took away the ability of the legal system to reprimand and punish those who were clearly in the wrong. Essentially, the Office of Legal Council, which is supposed to be the “conscience of the Justice Department,” undermined the very system it was obligated to uphold.

The sub-title of Cole’s book is *Rationalizing the Unthinkable*. Yet, in psychology, rationalization is often used as a defense mechanism to deal with a particularly controversial behavior, and can help prevent anxiety or preserve self-esteem after a particularly psychologically damaging event. While not necessarily a good thing, rationalization protects the damaged ego. Such a context can be applied to the OLC’s actions in defending CIA interrogation techniques in the post 9-11 years. The attack on September 11th was the equivalent to a traumatic event that deeply damaged the American psyche. American citizens sought reprisals against the people behind the event, members of al Qaeda. It was up to the administration in charge to ensure the prevention of another attack and the punishment of those behind the first. A state, amidst the panic and shock that categorized the state of mind of the public during the years 2001–2002, must protect itself. Officials knew that the

techniques the CIA wanted to use on Abu Zubaydah were borderline torture—if they did not have suspicions about the legality of their actions they would not have approached the OLC—but the necessity of protecting the American self-concept (as a land of security and freedom) along with suppressing anxiety resulted in the application of this defense mechanism. This is not to say that the OLC was correct in their interpretations. By definition, rationalization means to use logic and reasoning to explain an unacceptable behavior while ignoring the true reason behind it. Thus, rationalization has inherent negative characteristics. However, instead of condemning the OLC's initial actions in the August 2001 memo, one should understand the frame of mind people were in.

Of course, there is a point where rationalization must be abandoned, and the true reason for actions be addressed. By the December 2004 memo, the OLC and the Bush administration should have acquiesced to public outcry against the torturing of prisoners in Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo Bay, and individual cases like Abu Zubaydah. Instead, the OLC used the litmus test of “shocking the conscience” to defend CIA actions, arguing that the interrogation method did not “shock the conscience” of the public and were therefore excusable. Perhaps in 2001 such methods would not have shocked the conscience, but by 2004 the sharp sting of 9-11 (for most people at least) had turned into a dull, aching pain that would endure, but one that no longer could excuse the violation and degradation of human lives, not to mention the unapologetic breaking of international norms and domestic laws. Thus, while the first memo can be ascribed to the response to the immediate aftermath of 9-11 and the fear that permeated the country, the subsequent allowance of CIA practices, especially the secret memos after December 2004, were unnecessary and indefensible.

The Torture Memos: Rationalizing the Unthinkable is a clear and persuasive statement of Cole's argument: he strongly opposes the OLC's interpretation of the CIA interrogation techniques, the never changing bottom line of the memos, and the secrecy through which everything was done. Although he fails to truly consider the justification that the OLC may offer for their actions, he does admit that the OLC did have to tackle some difficult questions. Thus, while the introduction is extremely biased against the OLC and CIA, the accompanying memos do exhibit many of the characteristics he ascribes to them. Reading the memos in sequence demonstrates the severity of the OLC's actions: despite the changing time

and circumstances, despite crucial holes in their arguments, despite public outcry, the OLC continued to secretly support the CIA interrogation tactics based on information that the CIA provided. They disregarded the possibility that the CIA records and medical testimonies may have been biased towards the safety and the degree of pain involved in the techniques in question, and constituted a distinct conflict of interest for the CIA. Cole's grievances with the torture memos are understandable and well-placed. Reading the later memos, one can only stare in disbelief and ask, "What were they thinking?"

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Georges Braque: More Than Just a Cubist

Colleen Fasone

Georges Braque is most often recognized for his contribution to Cubism; however, this is less of an accolade than one would expect. His life and work are often defined by misconceptions which obscure the great artist that he was. There are three popular misconceptions about Braque that need clarification. Firstly, Braque was not merely a contributor to Cubism, an underling to Picasso. In fact, he was half the Cubist equation. Secondly, Braque was not only a Cubist. His work includes many art forms as he changed drastically throughout his life. Lastly, Braque was more than an “artistic sponge,” soaking up and using the ideas of his collaborators. An exploration of his work reveals that he is, at the core, always himself. Because most scholarship posits that Braque was a pioneer in Cubism, it is the latter two clarifications that deserve analysis.

Born on May 13th, 1882 in Argenteuil, Braque was immersed in art from the very start. There seemed to be an artistic spirit both in his blood and in the air of Argenteuil and Le Havre where he and his family moved when he was eight. His father was a house decorator and a Sunday painter; even his grandfather was an amateur painter. The French cities in which they lived had many Impressionist ties. Major artists such as Monet and Manet had painted a multitude of works in Argenteuil during the 1870s, and the subject of Monet’s *Impression, Sunrise* (1873) (fig.1) from which the Impressionist movement got its name was a port in Le Havre. Interestingly enough, Braque’s later work *Houses at L’Estaque* (1908) (fig.2) would be the painting which gave Cubism its name.

Braque learned his art from a variety of sources. He attended various art schools, learned from his father, and taught himself. “My artistic education? I did it all by myself...I spent my evenings copying—by the light of an oil lamp—the illustrations in Gil Blas.”¹

¹ Alex Danchev, *Georges Braque: A Life*. New York: Arcade Publishing Inc., 2005, 3.

Braque studied painting and decorating in his early years giving him a breadth of technical knowledge that would later find its way into Cubism. Apprenticing with his father and later Rupalay and Rosney “whose specialty was deceiving the eye in every way known to man,”² Braque learned how to mimic a variety of elements: wood, marble, paneling, and mosaics. These techniques would later be implemented in the famous “papiers collés” that Braque would create in 1912. He concluded his apprenticeship in La Berthe where he “set to preparing colours, grinding the pigments, and mixing the tones.”³ Here he also learned that “all manner of things can be mixed with paint,”⁴ such as oil, ash, tobacco, and coffee grounds. Such physicality in his work shaped Braque’s art. “I work with matter and not ideas,”⁵ he told author Dora Vallier. This physicality would also resonate in some of his later works which were created with a mixture of paint and sand for extra texture. He moonlighted at the École Municipale des Beaux-Arts in Le Havre and later moved to Paris to study at the Académie Humbert. His goal was to “enroll at an academy, consult the good book of the Louvre, as Cézanne advised, and become a real painter.”⁶ While in Paris, he earned his decorator certificate which resulted in a shortening of his military service. His works during this time were paintings reminiscent of Impressionist pieces exhibited in the Salon des Independants in 1906, and house decorations such as the frieze around the walls of the Ceylon Tea House.⁷

Braque’s next artistic phase focused on paintings inspired by the 1905 Fauvist Exhibition. He adopted the Fauve style using bright colors and loose structures, and created landscapes such as *L’Olivier près de L’Estaque* (1906) (fig.3) and *Landscape à L’Estaque* (1906) (fig.4). However, his use of color soon became more muted and subdued than the rest of the “true” Fauves, returning slightly to realism as seen in his use of blues, greens, and reds in *Terrace of Hotel Mistral* (1907) (fig.5). In this work, the trees have a red-brown bark, the leaves are deep blue-green, and the grass is a light yellow-green. All are relatively expected colors within the confines of the landscape, a contrast to the bright yellow mountains or rolling purple hills of his other *L’Estaque* pieces. Although he adopted Fauvism for a short

2 Ibid. p. 18.

3 Ibid. p. 18.

4 Ibid. p. 19.

5 Ibid. p. 19.

6 Ibid. p. 23.

7 Ibid. p. 21.

time, approximately one year, Braque was considered good enough to exhibit with the Fauvists in 1907. Fauvism's unconventional use of color, however, would stay with Braque, serving as a precursor to the treatment of color in Late Cubism with its division into "local color used descriptively and monochromatic shading used to create form."⁸

Braque's 1907 visit to the Salon d' Automne for the Paul Cézanne retrospective would be his next influence. Braque adopted Cézanne's exploration of geometric simplification and unconventional perspective which are evident in many of Braque's pieces created around the time when Cubism was beginning to develop. Braque's *Le Viaduc à L'Estaque* (1908) (fig. 6) can be compared to Cézanne's *L'Estaque, View through the Trees* (1879) (fig. 7) on the grounds of more than a shared subject; the angled perspectives and simplification of building shapes are evident in both works. Braque would go further than Cézanne, however, in changing the typical landscape, eradicating the sky altogether in what is likely his most famous painting, *Houses at L'Estaque*. The continuation of the sharply geometric cubes to the top edge of the canvas was not merely a way to change perspective, but part of a larger set of unconventional choices that would culminate in Cubism. Within the work there is an inconsistency in planes and light sources thus preventing the viewer from considering all the houses as taking up the same three-dimensional space. Instead, "this very ambiguity induces the viewer to transcend the confines of rationality itself and to experience an intuitive state of mind."⁹ This work does not exemplify all that Cubism would later come to embody for it still contains an evident influence of Cézanne, despite the fact that critic Louis Vauxcelles claimed it was merely made up of little cubes.

Following these works came the more conventional Cubist creations, those composed of the interplay between Braque and Picasso – the ones for which Braque is known. However, it is not an analysis of these works that is necessary for a clarification of the misconception that Braque was mainly a Cubist. His work as a pioneer in the Cubist movement should not be all that defines him as an artist. Picasso is just as well known for his Blue Periods and his Rose Periods as he is for Cubism, so why isn't Braque known for his later bird-themed works? Braque even painted the ceiling of the Louvre during this bird stage; one would expect that to be memorable. Further, why is he not remembered for his earlier works,

⁸ Douglas Cooper, *The Cubist Epoch*. London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1971, 194.

⁹ Mark Antliff and Patricia Leighton, *Cubism and Culture*. New York: Thames & Hudson Inc., 2001, 47.

the rich Fauve pieces or those inspired by Impressionism which, when shown at exhibitions, “had unusual success in selling?”¹⁰

Some might argue that Braque is remembered for what he did best—that Cubism was the highlight of his career. However, I would argue that Braque’s and Picasso’s goals in Cubism were clear. In the case of Braque’s later work with birds there is either too little mystery or too much of it, the simplest answer coming from Braque that “the birds inspired me; I am trying to extract the greatest benefit for my painting.”¹¹ This simplicity either gives away the true intent or does little to explain the aerial additions, leaving the general public unsatisfied in their newfound desire for art that inspires thought and demands explanation. “The Friends of the Louvre were not ready for Braque or for his crudely painted, semi-abstract apologies for birds,”¹² explains Alex Danchev in his biography of Braque. Just as Cubism was underappreciated in its own time by many, Braque’s later work had few followers. Those who did support Braque did so to an almost cult-like degree, considering him to be a true master of his craft—a man to be idolized.

Prior to Braque’s paintings of birds, he served with the French army in World War I. Critically injured with a gunshot to the head, he was granted leave with honor; however he was unable to create art until he recovered fully in 1917. This was a hard time for Braque who was constantly painting and working on some project or another. His post-recovery works were rooted in Synthetic Cubism (the second phase of Cubism); however, his subject matter shifted towards still lifes as opposed to imagined scenes or people. This allowed for a greater study of form and geometrical interplay within objects, perhaps as a way to return the order many felt was lost in World War I. *Café Bar* (1919) (fig.8) is one of these still lifes. It contains the decorative elements previously found in Synthetic Cubism (as seen by the dots of color added to all of the green planes) and yet differs in its vertical composition that gives the impression of the work being built from the ground up as opposed to being broken down.

Braque’s works would continue to vary in subject matter and color. Ornament and color would enrich his works in the 1930s such as *Blue Mandolin* (1930) (fig.9) and *Pink Tablecloth* (1933) (fig.10) both started within a year of each other. Braque used bright colors not merely for impact; he utilized one color in tandem with others to create a life and an

10 Edward B. Henning, “Two Major Paintings by Georges Braque.” *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 64, no. 4 (1977): 138.

11 Danchev, p. 245.

12 Danchev, p. 239.

impact for all of them. When he moved to Normandy, seascapes and scenes of beaches and boats filled his canvas. At the onset of World War II, his pieces became more somber interior views rather than short and vivid still lifes as seen in *Woman with a Mandolin* (1937) (fig.11). Here, the ornaments remain, yet there are flattened figures placed before them. It is interesting to note how un-human the woman looks—almost as if she were an instrument herself. The contrast between her dark, flat form and the vibrant background calls to my mind how a soldier, although part of a greater whole as the woman is, can be a tool placed in a setting in which he does not wholly belong—a setting that is fervent with activity and yet somber with the air of death. He could occupy the same space as the woman. My analysis of this painting shows that Braque’s Cubist work is not all that should be praised for its ability to make one think. Many of Braque’s works contain this high level of intellectual appeal. The viewer is encouraged to seek the “meaning” of the work as well as to enjoy his or her emotional response. As such, his later works beg for an “explanation” just as much as his Cubist works and should be equally celebrated.

Braque also sculpted and explored colored lithography as he got on in years. Something as small as two fish cast in bronze left a strong impact: “On canvas, the striking thing about these creatures was their colour. They were black – black as the market and the years,”¹³ explains Braque’s biographer Alex Danchev. “[Just as] Goya’s golden liberation dream defied war and tyranny in Napoleon’s time, Braque’s black fish did something similar in Hitler’s.”¹⁴ Truly, Braque’s body of work has greater significance overall; he was more than just a pioneer of Cubism.

The second misconception I would like to address is that Braque was primarily an “artistic sponge.” While Braque did adopt other styles of painting before coming to Cubism, he did not partake in artistic fads. Instead, his work shows a high level of synthesis—a combination of his ideas with those of others which makes each of his works distinct. It is always Braque’s hand and mind that ultimately chose what to incorporate from the vast world of outside stimuli. Braque claimed that he was not concerned with ideas but with tangibility. However, Braque had a strong potential for the synthesis of ideas and events around him. He was aware of his intents and desires, a sense of self that allowed him to combine his ideas with

¹³ Ibid. p. 212

¹⁴ Ibid. p. 212

others in a distinctive way. Braque was perseverant in his work, laboring consistently on a project until its completion while being open to influence and change.

Braque's ability to synthesize ideas and events around him was fueled by his recognizing and even embracing limitations. These traits partly account for Braque's constantly changing artistic style and method and his creation of Cubism and its unique reality. Braque was not cut out for Impressionism. He did not simply paint what he saw, felt, and wished to inspire; instead he tried to tame or discipline what was before him. His response to what were perceived as his shortcomings was that "Effectively the only way to get out of my incorrigible failure is to make a virtue of it."¹⁵ When he considered his "inability to portray a woman in all her natural loveliness" he asserted that "I must therefore, create a new sort of beauty, the beauty that appears in terms of volume, of line, of weight, and through that beauty interpret my subjective impression."¹⁶ His *Nude* (1908) (fig. 12) is one of these heavy figures, as are most of his early Cubist works. For Braque, this heaviness and tangibility is truer to reality than any mirror image of conventional beauty could hope to be. This notion of recreating beauty extends to recreating reality, a reality in which both the relationship between art and viewer are changed, and in which the figures in a work no longer exist in the same plane.

Braque did not use external stimuli in a simple way; instead, he would filter them through his own imagination. Cézanne is often cited as a major influence in Braque's work, something evident in the artist's reducing objects to their basic geometric forms and his use of unconventional perspective. But "Braque outstripped Cézanne in that he did not allow the landscape to impose itself on him as an organized set of forms, but instead conspicuously imposes his own sense of reality on the landscape,"¹⁷ explains Douglas Cooper. Although Cézanne's influence was strong, Braque's work was distinctively his own. This synthesis of Braque's own idea with what first inspired him can be seen in the comparison of *Le Viaduc à L'Estaque* by Braque to *L'Estaque, View through the Trees* by Cézanne. Cézanne's work seems like an altered depiction of the real world in which the geometry is already underlying nature. On the other hand, Braque's piece seems as if it were created with geometry in mind – Braque

15 . Ibid. p. 36

16 . Ibid. p. 76.

17 Cooper. p. 29

deciding that reality should have the heaviness explained thus creating a world in which the landscape fits this reality.

Braque's *Nude* of 1908 is a prime example of his ability to synthesize multiple sources of inspiration. *Nude* contains elements of Picasso's *Demoiselles D'Avignon* (1907) (fig. 13) and Matisse's *Blue Nude* (1952) (Fig. 14). The faceted nature of Braque's background conjures images of Picasso's curtain, and the mask-like face is similar to those in *Demoiselles*. From Matisse's *Blue Nude*, viewers can recognize the curved outlines of the woman's body, her position, and her general heaviness and definitive presence. Ever present, however, is Braque's uneven use of light as well as his general ability to synthesize ideas of other artists. *Nude* also resonates with Cézanne's color pallet and the body proportions and edges of African sculpture. The brush strokes are uniquely Braque's—the woman's body is painted with the same evenness as the foliage in *Le Viaduc à L'Estaque*.¹⁸ Something as consistent as the technique of an artist's brush stroke is often overlooked; however, it is critical to notice all the ways in which Braque's pieces are tied to one another. Another example of this connectedness is evident when comparing Braque's fauvist work *Terrace of Hotel Mistral* to his Cézanne-inspired *Le Viaduc à L'Estaque*. The pieces are only a year apart, yet they share a similar structure focused on a bridge.

In contrast to Braque's mastery of synthesis are works dominated by his love of physicality, his presence within a work, and his desire to create something new. His painting of a ceiling in the Louvre, which was not what his commissioners were expecting, was an intense work in its own right. Upon its completion, Braque exclaimed "Ah! A ceiling like this has never been conceived before. For me, it's an event. What would they say, the painters of yesterday if they could see it? Never mind, we must be of our own time."¹⁹ This quote is a perfect articulation of Braque's joy in creating something new and his desire to live in his own time. No man who merely absorbs the influences of others would claim that to live in his own time is crucial. Braque's work in the Louvre demonstrated his ability to labor for a long time over a project; he would take years to create many of his pieces. For this reason he produced far fewer works than Picasso though he would also work on various pieces at the same time. The painting of the Louvre's ceiling was a complicated endeavor. The panels which would eventually decorate the ceiling were painted in another room, while the planning would

¹⁸ Antliff, p. 53.

¹⁹ Danchev, p. 239.

happen with Braque staring up at the ceiling. The color of the ceiling, the blue that composed the sky in which the birds forever fly, was something Braque deliberated over tediously. He continued the above quote saying “Ah! That blue, that’s what tormented me most! It makes the ceiling. Cold, icy...One day I added some black, but I soon came back to the purest shade.” The constant flux of color, its use throughout all his works from his Fauve-inspired pieces to the more somber war impacted works, furthers the notion that Braque created his art based on his own drives and imagination. No man created that blue but Braque; each work was truly his own, regardless of outside stimuli. In fact, the use of such stimuli provides ample evidence for his ability to synthesize, his intellect, and his genius.

The correction of these two misconceptions—that Braque was only a Cubist and that his work was mostly derivative—paints a fuller portrait of Georges Braque the artist. While he was indeed half the Cubist equation, Braque’s ever-changing works with their varying influences and signature techniques prove his versatility and intelligence. Even if the entirety of his work is not recognized as having the same caliber as his Cubist works, it cannot be dismissed as anything other than the work of a man who is a master of his craft—the sign of a true genius.

Fig. 1: Monet, *Impression, Sunrise* (1873)



Fig. 2: Braque, *Houses at L'Estaque* (1908)



Fig. 3: Braque, *L'Olivier près de L'Estaque* (1906)



Fig. 4: Braque, *Landscape at L'Estaque* (1906)



Fig. 5: Braque, *Terrace of Hotel Mistral* (1907)

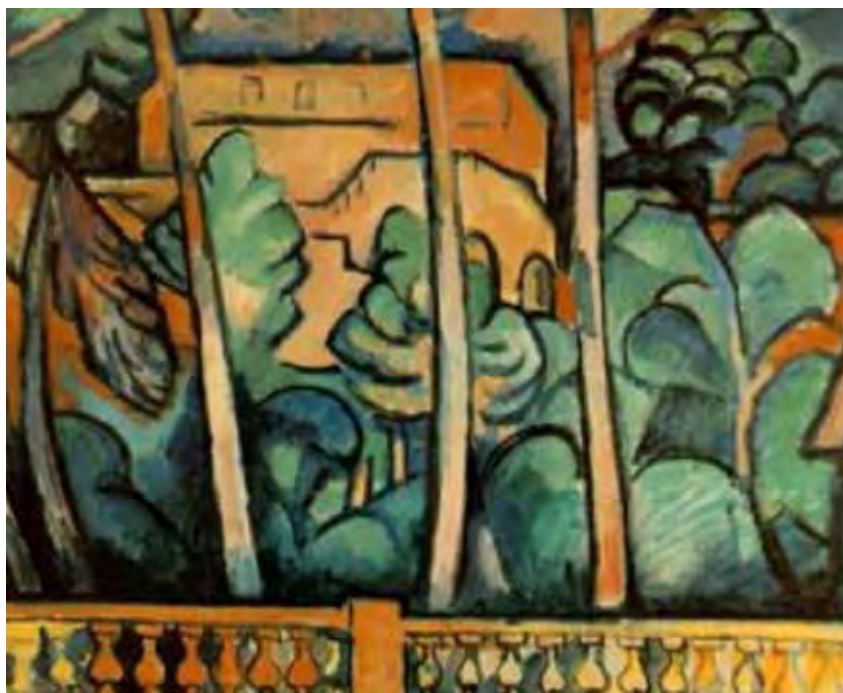


Fig. 6: Braque, *Le Viaduc à L'Estaque* (1908)



Fig. 7: Cezanne, *L'Estaque, View through the Trees* (1879)



Fig. 8: Braque, *Café Bar* (1919)



Fig. 9: Braque, *Blue Mandolin* (1930)



Fig. 10: Braque, *Pink Tablecloth* (1933)



Fig. 11: Braque, *Woman with a Mandolin* (1937)



Fig. 12: Braque, *Nude* (1908)



Fig. 13: Picasso, *Les Femmes d'Alger* (1907)

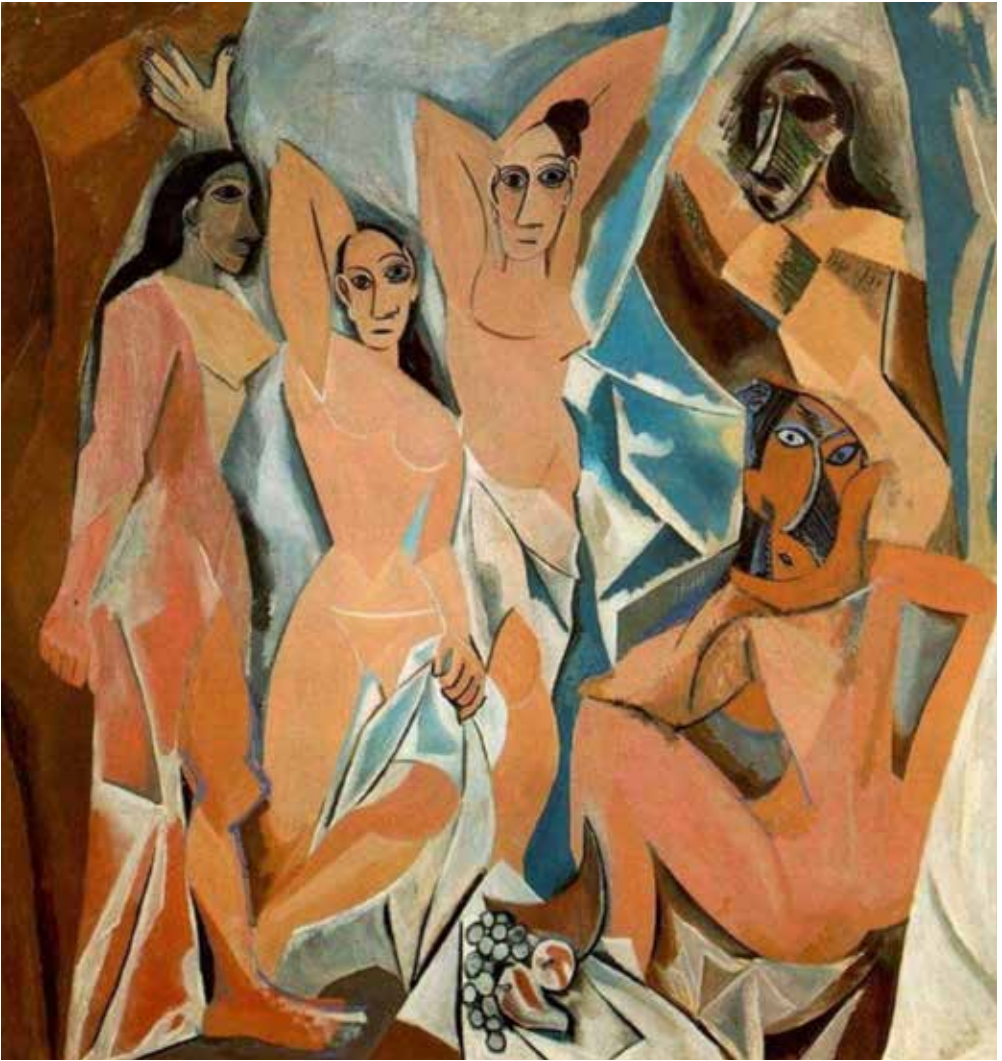


Fig. 14: Matisse, *Blue Nude* (1952)



Searching

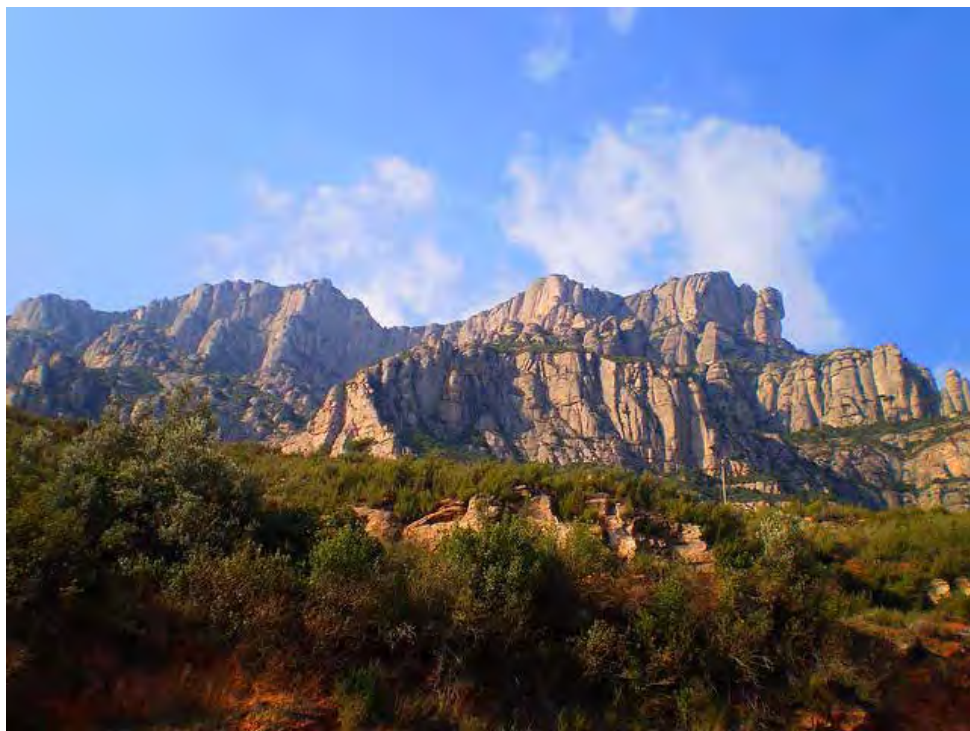
Cara Lynch

Solvent Transferred Drawing on Cotton Fabric

Searching was recently exhibited at the *Excellence in Printmaking Show* at the Washington Printmakers Gallery in Washington, DC. The show was curated by Joann Moser, Senior Curator at the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

Searching is a piece from my personal library of images which comment on life and death, the human condition, and domestic life. Working with fabric has enabled me to reflect on and work through my ideas similar to the way 18th and 19th century American women used quilting and textile work as a space to contemplate life and to express themselves.





Las Sierras

David Campmier



This cover design is inspired by the window and the lighthouse, the opening and closing parts of Virginia Woolf's "To the Lighthouse," in which she explores the true nature of human perception and knowledge, which all Honors students pursue in their studies.