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a literary journal

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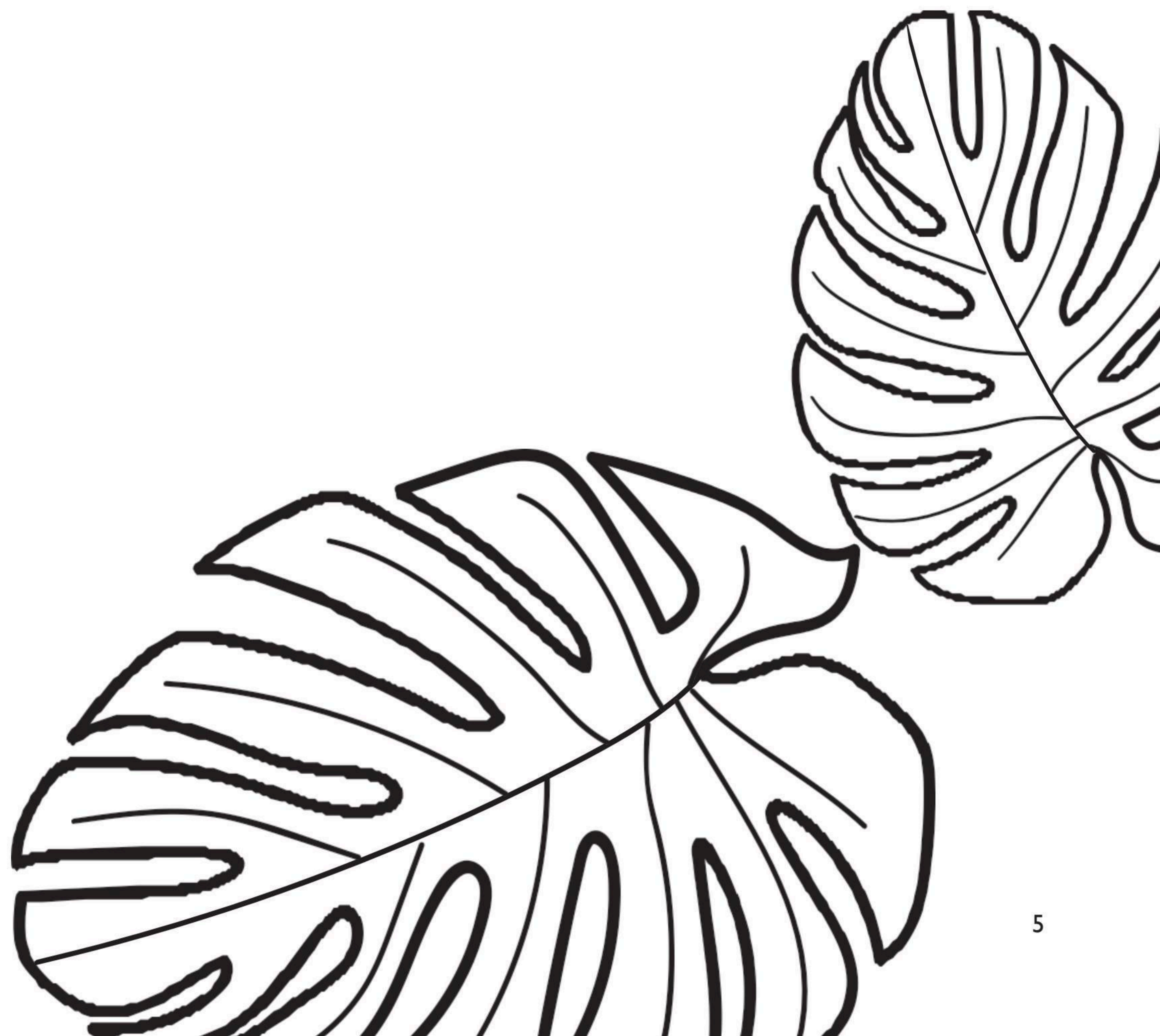
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Bitches Don't Submit to Me: Virile Violence & Heterosexuality in Male Authorships	<i>Rachel Maggio</i>
Restraint and Vulnerability: Monica Youn's Meditation on the Female Body	<i>Gillian Ebersole</i>
The Glass Essay	<i>Angela Brittain</i>
Re-Assimilation in Crisis: Greek Masculinity Depicted Through Film	<i>André Enriquez</i>
Soldiers in Love	<i>Rachel Mullens</i>
Gender Performativity as a Symptom of Social Dysfunction in "The Lottery" and "Battle Royal"	<i>Meghan Mariana</i>
The Merchant of Venice and Christian Cultural Superiority	<i>Mattie Norman</i>
Cultural Fear in "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?"	<i>Rena Gallagher</i>
Beat Deafness: The Polyrhythm of Paradiso's Chapter XII	<i>Yoán Moreno</i>
The Art of "Nox"	<i>Brooke DuPlantier</i>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dear Readers,

Gone are the days that I have to defend my chosen field of study to well-meaning relatives and not so well-meaning strangers. In my eyes, and I hope in yours too, this issue reaffirms the importance and relevance of English Literature at every level of its creation and critique.

I have collaborated on three issues of *Criterion*, and this is my favorite. Although it is likely that some of this sentimentality stems from my impending graduation, it is mostly due to the intersection of cultural and human issues that are centralized in the topics of this year's essays.

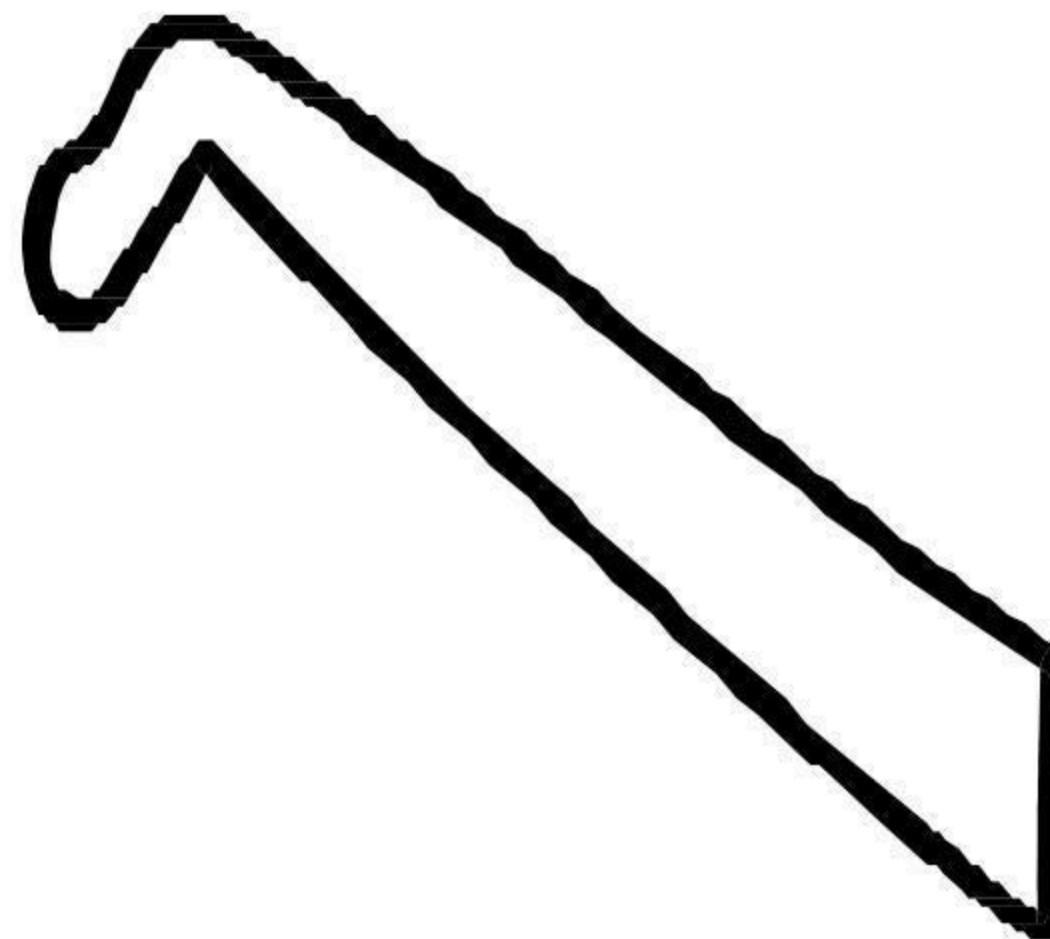
During my freshman orientation, I remember hearing a quote that epitomized my love of language and story telling. It ultimately became my guiding principle during the past four years. In an unfamiliar classroom from the lips of an unknown professor, it came: "The study of English is the study of what it means to be human." Suddenly, my hidden desire to understand others wholly and be understood in the same manner became a shared experience.

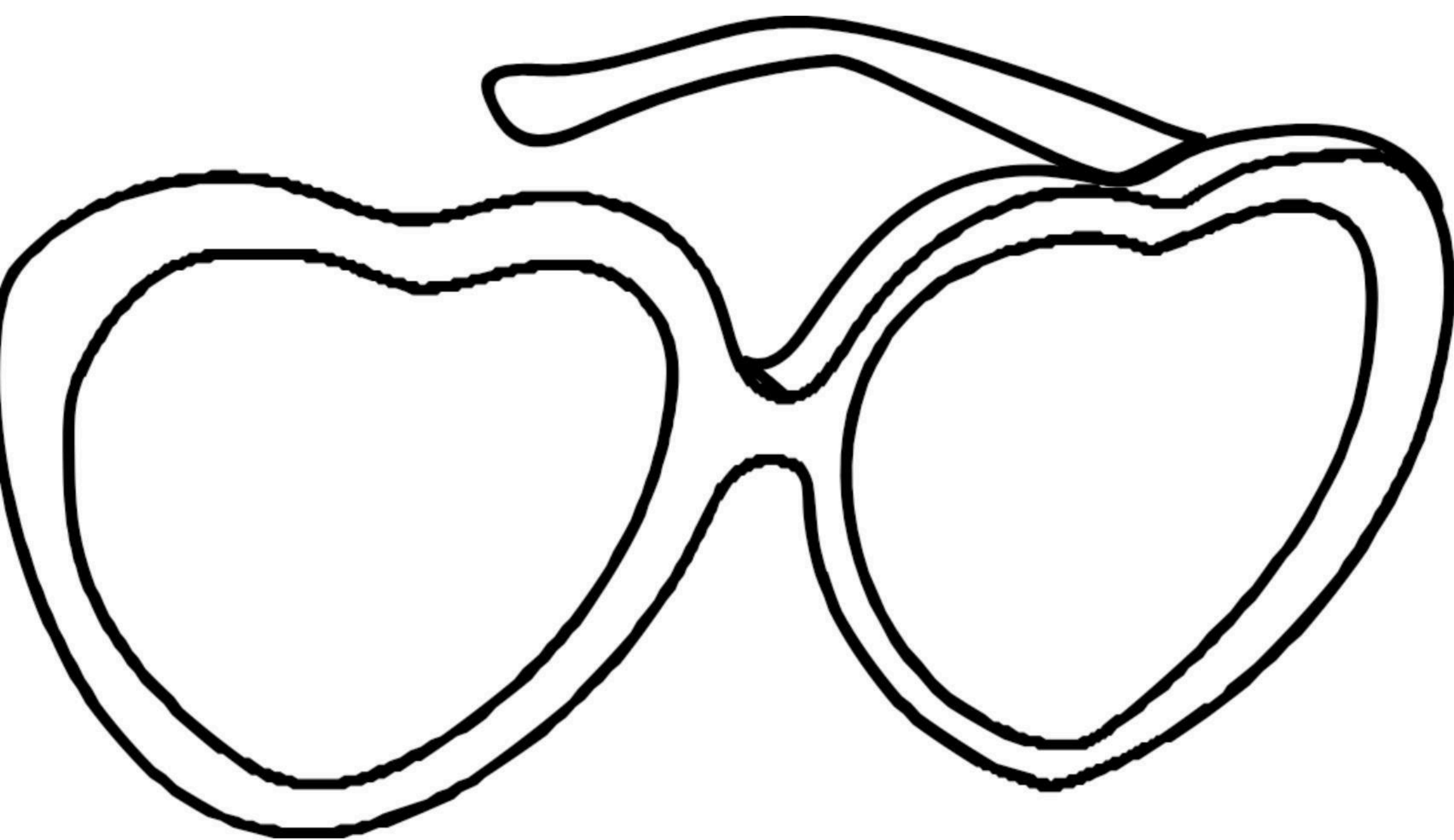
The essays selected for the 2018 issue not only answer the question of what it means to be human, but add another layer to be explored. What does it mean to be human in a world that too often denies the humanity of its inhabitants?

Before you continue reading these essays that I hope spark genuine contemplation of this question, I would like to express my gratitude for the people that made this issue a reality. Thank you to my dedicated staff of editors as well as our graphic design dream team, Chloe Cunningham and Allie Crawford. To our faculty adviser, Dr. Aimee Kilroy-Ross, I am deeply appreciative for your commitment and guidance. I would also like to recognize all of those who submitted their work for consideration. As always, this little victory is dedicated to my parents, family, and friends who have become family.

Over and out,

Rachel Mullens
Editor-in-Chief
Class of 2018





**Bitches Don't Submit to Me:
Virile Violence and Heterosexuality
in Male Authorships**

By Rachel Maggio

Rachel Maggio is a sophomore transfer student. She is interested in the way literature enforces power dynamics in society. This essay was written for Daniel Krause's Language of Fiction course.

Authorship carries with it many implications and expectations of identity and responsibility. Without proper examination of bias, societal pressures and rifts can cause an author to allow identities different from their own to fall to the wayside. This issue is especially pressing in regard to female characters under male authorship. Frequently, through themes of submission and egotism, male authors further marginalize already disenfranchised groups. This allows the fragile male identity to grow increasingly thin and dependent on these tropes, further nurturing a culture in literature of toxic hypermasculinity which glorifies and fetishises violence. This is chiefly apparent in postmodernist texts, such as Italo Calvino's *If on a winter's night a traveler*, which maintains heavy themes of binarism and heterosexuality. Male authorship often depicts disempowered, one-dimensional women, only introducing multidimensional women in relation to male characters, in an attempt justify their masculinity through violence and heterosexuality.

In understanding the lack of adequate, competent female representation in much of male authorship, it is important to understand common barriers to minority representation in popular literature. The issue of identity is crucial to male authorship, as concepts of masculinity are constantly shifting and changing through generations. Reevaluations of the masculine lead to problematic subjectification among male authors, wherein the subject must maintain a static and often archaic form of masculinity in order to be cemented as a truly masculine character. Dorthe Staunæs explains the conflation between subjectification and identity in her article, "Where Have All the Subjects Gone? Bringing Together the Concepts of Intersectionality and Subjectification." Staunæs explores these concept in relation to modern and postmodern literature, coming to the conclusion that subjectivity is easier utilized in writing:

"Compared with the concept of identity, which is used in both post-modern and modern literature, the concept of subjectivity can grasp stability as well as change and rupture. Furthermore, the concept is built upon a certain understanding of the relation between this sense of self and the social context in which subjectivity is in an ongoing process of becoming" (Staunæs 103).

Staunæs' postulation on the role social context

plays in subjectification offers insight into the ways in which subservience is enforced in literature. The polarization between subject and object in literature creates a clear hierarchical division mirroring that enforced by gender norms in society. This brings into question the impact of feminism on subjectification, specifically, the ways in which feminist critiques of literature could decrease the hypermasculinity of the subject in male authorships.

Susan Hekman explores the masculine subjectification of postmodern literature in her article "Reconstituting the Subject: Feminism, Modernism, and Postmodernism." Hekman asserts:

"The principal thrust of the feminist critique is that the subject has been conceptualized as inherently masculine and thus has been a significant factor in maintaining the inferior status of women" (Hekman 45).

This asserts that the latent masculinity of the subject can oppress and limit the expression of femininity and womanhood throughout a novel. With this in mind, it's important to note the intentional versus the unintentional stifling hypermasculinity that often characterizes male authorships. That is, it must be observed whether machismo is a factor of environment and neglect or intentional carelessness and bias on behalf of an author.

Hypermasculinity in literature, which commonly comes about through identity othering, enforces dangerous stigmas and tropes. The idea of hypermasculinity is, in and of itself, an othering concept whether intentional or unintentional. Hypermasculinity at its core is about the debasement of less masculine ideals, reducing them to a lesser status in comparison to the overbearing and characteristic bravado. Staunæs explicates this idea further, saying,

"It is a structural system that favours wealthy, heterosexual, white, male, Christian, young and slim people. In relation to them, everyone else becomes the Other, the illegitimate, the abnormal and the inappropriate" (Staunæs 102).

As Staunæs suggests, focusing on dominant groups in excess, as is the tendency in hypermasculinity, others all other identities. Making note of this, it becomes a question whether hypermasculine characters and developed, competent female characters can exist in the same realm; that is, whether authors who write

hypermasculine characters to prove their own virility and in a way that enforces societal standards can also introduce female characters who then exist outside of this male identity. Staunæs expands on this idea, bringing into the conversation the issue of social status (eliminated "at all") in regard to characters surrounding the hypermasculine. She postulates that:

"Social categories do not count only for the Others, the non-powerful and the non-privileged: they also count as conditions for the more privileged and powerful people" (Staunæs 105).

In the hypermasculine novel, the question is one of whether or not minority characters can stand when separated from the masculine focus. Women bear the brunt of this dependent representation wherein they can only truly exist when paired with the masculine. These barriers and disparities matter as they create a patriarchal petri dish in which marginalized voices, especially those of women, are stamped out and violence is readily accepted and celebrated as a hallmark of maleness. While, with all of this considered, it is easy to excuse this in reference to postmodernism (a realm of literature that often uses rifts and tropes for the purpose of scrutinizing them), this cannot be done completely. To write off the inadequacies in representation in any genre of literature simply because it is 'revolutionary' creates an allowance for hypermasculine behavior to continue. In her article "Flexible Sexism," Doreen Massey explores domains where enforcing power dynamics for examination can be helpful. She examines this with particular regard to postmodernism, concluding

"Postmodernism holds out the potential democracy of a plurality of voices and points of view, the end to a notion of science and society which has in fact (to be distinguished from 'by necessity') been unremittingly and tediously male, a patriarchal hierarchy with a claim to truth" (Massey 212).

Important to note with this is the plurality of voices Massey suggests. Without a plurality of voices there is no "potential democracy" as Massey puts it. In hypermasculine literature, there is one dominant voice and one dominant viewpoint, that of the hypermasculine, and more often than not, main character. Another important note is the distinction Massey makes between fact and necessity. Fact is

an observation, such as much of prevailing literature contains overbearing male characters, while necessity is an opinion, such as the validity of those characters.

Postmodernist fiction often seeks to blur those lines, but the lines between necessity and fact cannot be blurred if the lines between master and servant are not. Massey goes on:

"In such a context one of the emancipatory roles of the writer and intellectual could be precisely to help give voice to the previously excluded" (214).

But this is often not the case. Especially in postmodernism, the role of the intellectual is to further himself and prove his superiority. Herein lies a problem of identity: through the male character the male author attempts to uphold the fragile ideal of superiority by any means necessary. This necessity begets violence, particularly against feminine characters. Mark Bracher studies this issue in his article "Healing Trauma, Preventing Violence: A Radical Agenda for Literary Study," where he posits that vulnerability is the root cause of this violence:

"Since identity vulnerability is the root cause of violence, and since lack of recognition is the most powerful and common cause of identity vulnerability, this lack is particularly in its most severe forms such as insult, shame, humiliation-- the single most important cause of violent behavior" (Bracher 520).

Vulnerability is a threat to identity, which must be maintained to maintain the ego. Male authorships systematically attack the femininity that threatens their constructs of masculinity, both in their characters and in society. Furthermore, these authorships create a dichotomy between those that serve the masculine identity, and those that do not.

This is especially apparent in Italo Calvino's *If on a winter's night a traveler*, in which the author introduces himself as a force behind the text. This piece of postmodernist fiction provides an excellent case study as it contains many vignettes of other novels surrounded by a frame tale, all of which uphold the masculinity of the main characters. The frame tale explores the budding relationship between the Reader and Ludmilla, the Other Reader. Ludmilla is only introduced to the plot in relation to the male main character, and is only ever seriously considered as a love interest and nothing more. In the scene in which she is introduced, it is especially apparent that Ludmilla only serves to titillate the main character:

"He has pointed out a young lady to you... Huge, swift eyes, complexion of good tone and good pigment, a richly waved haze of hair...She smiles. She has dimples. She is even more attractive to you" (Calvino 29).

Her first characterization is that she is attractive to the Reader, and this defines her journey throughout the frame tale. Throughout the frame tale, Calvino is quick to paint Ludmilla as an ethereal being, a flighty but smart girl:

"The trouble is that she's read many more novels than you have, especially foreign ones, and she has an orderly memory" (Calvino 30).

She is quirky. This serves her narrative, as she is a puzzle to be figured out by everyone who encounters her or they are destroyed by her feminine prowess. The main character finds himself enthralled by her; yet, in this narrative where she is an essential cog, she is only an object. The mission of the novel begins with figuring out Ludmilla:

"Here we go again. The minute you think you're on the right track, you promptly find yourself blocked by a switch: in your reading, in the search for the lost book, in the identification of Ludmilla's tastes" (Calvino 92).

Ludmilla must be decoded and won as a prize for ultimate masculinity. Throughout the novel, Ludmilla is only a prize, not a person. It comes to light that before the Reader's storyline begins, Ludmilla's mysterious femininity has destroyed other men. Here, the police chief in an unknown country explains to the main character the downfall of another man due to [deleted:a] Ludmilla:

"It seems he did everything for a woman, to win her back, if perhaps only to get even, to win a bet with her. It was that woman we had to understand if we wanted to succeed in following the moves of our Cagliostro" (Calvino 238).

This asserts that women are not to be understood, as they are absurd. If, however, they are not decoded, they will ruin a man. This becomes the conundrum of the main character, seething with jealousy of the other men Ludmilla has destroyed. The Reader must come to know the true Ludmilla through any means necessary. This begins with a violation of her privacy: when invited in her home, the main character invades her spaces in an attempt to learn about her. This, however, extends beyond the main character, as the

narrative briefly switches to Ludmilla's perspective:

"Observing your kitchen, therefore, can create a picture of you as an extroverted, clear-sighted woman, sensual and methodical; ...Could a man fall in love with you, just seeing your kitchen?" (Calvino 143).

The narrative describes Ludmilla through her kitchen and domestic life. Here, she is not mysterious. Ludmilla is a reader; this is readily established throughout the narrative and (eliminated "this") is what makes her so mysterious, but that mystery almost dissipated with the introduction of the domestic. Furthermore, though the narrative briefly switches to address Ludmilla, the domestic is still observed and interpreted by men: the main character and the narrator, who establishes that he is (at least in part) a manifestation of Calvino, yet another man. Above all, the observation of the domestic has characterized Ludmilla as sensual. Ludmilla is attainable when her intelligence (is) pales in comparison to her domiciliary life. Soon after this, the main character claims conquest of Ludmilla's body and the two have sex. The way in which this sex is described is telling (as) for the rest of the frame tale:

"You are in bed together, you two Readers... a fairly unrecognizable tangle under the ruffled sheet... In both situations you certainly do not exist except in relation to each other" (Calvino 154).

Though in this passage Calvino is referencing only the act of sex between the two, it sets the scene for the narrative to follow. Ludmilla has been effectively claimed by the main character, and just as before she will only exist in relation to him. Under this sheet of heterosexual relations, Ludmilla is indistinguishable from any other generic female character, or even any other object in the novel. From the point of sex forward, Ludmilla is simply another thing to be had by the male character. She is effectively erased from the narrative beyond this point, as the narrator leaves her and she cannot exist without him. However, in the very end of the novel, she reappears, (however) with even less agency than before. In this arc, the narrator seeks to prove his own virile ending by truly owning Ludmilla. After a conversation about literature with other men and without Ludmilla, the main character realizes his own masculine ending can only be achieved through marriage, truly owning Ludmilla for himself, or through death:

"You stop for a moment to reflect on these words. Then, in a flash, you decide you want

to marry Ludmilla" (Calvino 259).

With no discussion, this is the ideal and the conquest that must occur. But it is not an issue to the main character, nor to Calvino who narrates him. It seems as if Ludmilla is given no choice or chance for discussion on the matter, and the book ends thusly:

"Now you are man and wife, Reader and Reader... And you say, 'Just a moment, I've almost finished. If on a winter's night a traveler by Italo Calvino' (Calvino 260).

The main character has affirmed his masculinity through the successful implementation of male, heterosexual prowess over a woman.

While the frame tale offers masculine redemption through a heterosexual and male dominant love story, the vignettes throughout the novel achieve such redemption through sexual aggression and the diminishment of authoritative women. The latter of these is apparent in the chapter "Without Fear of Wind or Vertigo" wherein the power dynamic between submissive and dominant genders is switched and examined. The chapter begins by belittling the impact of the trauma of war on women:

"The truth is that we were all very young, too young for everything we were experiencing; I mean us men, because Irina had the precocity of women of her sort..." (Calvino 78).

By categorizing traumas as authentic and inauthentic, Calvino opens a binarism discussion which is continued through the stark roles men and women fill in his writing. By discussing Irina's "precocity," the chapter falls into a common trope that women are more mature than men simply by nature and not by socialization. This gives leeway to men and male characters to depend on women for basic human needs, while still denying them their own.

Though by this logic, women are more mature, male characters often still insist that they cannot survive and thrive on their own; women, according to male characters, are still fundamentally weak. This chapter is not exempt from that notion. Quickly, the precocious Irina makes it apparent to the male protagonist that she cannot handle the tumult of war:

"I saw her open her eyes wide, raise her gloved hand to her mouth which was gaping in a cry of terror, and then sink backward. She surely would have fallen and been trampled by that crowd advancing like a herd of elephants if I had not been quick

to grab her by the arm" (Calvino 81-82).

This again echoes the common trope that women are easily overwhelmed or cannot handle difficult emotions with grace. The hero protagonist is quick to save a damsel in distress because that is what men are supposed to do. The gender dynamic is upheld in this scene. However, this dynamic begins to take a turn soon after. Though she is effectively saved by

A woman previously characterized as an innocent is from this point transformed after she does not perform her feminine duties to a male.

the protagonist, according to the narrative, Irina fails to reward him with politeness:

"She collects herself; she raises up before her a haughty gaze; she resumes walking and does not stop... I am a bit disappointed that she hasn't said a word of thanks" (Calvino 82).

This passage serves as the turning point in the chapter. A woman previously characterized as an innocent is from this point transformed after she does not perform her feminine duties to a male. The next time Irina is seen, the dynamic has dramatically shifted. Irina is next seen with a gun, holding a man effectively hostage. She belittles men as a whole and asserts female dominance, going as far as to call for a revolution:

"'Why not?' she says. 'Women can't but you men can? The real revolution will be when women carry arms.' 'And men are disarmed? Does that seem fair to you, comrade? Women armed to do what?' 'To take your place. We on top, and you underneath. So you men can feel a bit of what it's like to be a woman'" (Calvino 87).

The suggestion that men should be underneath women is an egregious crime to the narrative, one Irina must pay for with her characterization. No longer an eternal innocent or a mysterious pixie, Irina has transformed into a bitch (this brings up) raising the dynamic of submission in characterization. Irina begins her characterization as a bitch when she does not submit to the narrator's act of chivalry, it continues when she demands the same submission from men that they demand from her. Irina's transformation into antagonist occurs when she begins behaving like a literary man. This is again apparent in the ways in which the men behave around her. It is clear that Irina has cuckolded a

strong general to do her whim:

“Valerian’s eyes are on Irina, but his gaze is lost, as if he is in a trance, as if in absolute surrender, as if he expects pleasure only from submission to her whim... Irina is at once priestess and divinity, profaner and victim” (Calvino 87).

But still, Irina is a victim to the narrator. Though she is a bitch, though she is a profaner, a gender traitor even, Irina is still seen as a woman, a fallible identity. But Irina, even in her state of assertion, is not written or seen as redeemable:

“Because this was the first article of faith of the cult Irina had established: that we abandon the standard idea of verticality ... the surviving ill-concealed male pride that had remained with us even when we accepted our condition as slaves of a woman who allowed no jealousies between us, no supremacies of any kind” (Calvino 89).

The only way Irina’s identity is solidified is through her relations to men, first she is a weak and stereotypical woman, one who could not know the traumas of war and is overcome by them, then she is a cold hearted bitch with no mercy, trying to upset the gender dynamic. This is sexualized still, Irina’s rise to domination came to being because of Valerian’s lust. Even in domination, women are still valued only as sex objects by male characters.

In another chapter, “Around an empty grave,” the role of hypermasculinity in violence against women becomes apparent. In this chapter, a young man goes to find his mother after his father’s death. He first meets an indigenous, servant family

Rape narratives, which only seek to further the the masculinity of a man, either through proving his virility in sexual aggression or his chivalry in helping a victim, reveal deeper issues of women only being tools for men to use.

and begins to molest the women. He asserts his dominance as a man over them in doing so:

“‘You’re hurting me,’ Amaranta says as I press her whole body against the sack and feel the tips of her budding breasts and the wriggle of her belly. ‘...What could prevent us?’ I protest. ‘I’m a man and she’s a woman.... If destiny decided we were to like each other, not today, someday, who

knows? Why couldn’t I ask her to be my wife?’” (Calvino 228).

This passage provides insight into the fetishisation of violence. Nacho forcefully attempts to rape a girl (who is implied to be a young teenager) and receives gratification in her struggle. The narrator goes into detail of her attempt to escape him and in his assertion of dominance over her. This dominance leads to a feeling of entitlement, that he should have any woman he wants because he is a man. Nacho attempts to prove his virility by raping a child because he believes it is what men and women do together, and women have no right to protest it. When Nacho believes he is the child of the masters of the house, he again tries to take the girl, this time asserting his social dominance over the family:

“The first thought that comes to my mind is the one I proclaim to Anacleto, grabbing her daughter by a braid. ‘Then I am your master, the master of your daughter, and I will take her when I please!’” (Calvino 229).

This, again, illustrates male entitlement to female bodies, but also highlights an important literary trope of native, subservient women being abused by dominant ruling men. The more power Nacho is given, first as man, and then wrongly as a master, the more he abuses it for his own sexual gain. This desire for increased sexual prowess to illustrate his masculinity is finally shown in the prelude to a fight scene. Though the women are not able to fight Nacho’s advances justifiably in his mind, when the man he believes has entitlement to them returns home, he and Nacho duel for the women:

“‘What gave you the right, Nacho Zamora, to lay your hands on my sister?’ he says, and a blade gleams in his right hand... ‘I am Faustino Higuera. Defend yourself.’ I stand beyond the grave... I grasp my knife” (Calvino 233).

Here, masculinity is tied both to violence and ownership of women. The manliest of the two men will only be found through a violent knife fight, and the winner will be rewarded with the women Nacho attempted to assault. Again, the women are afforded no agency in this decision and are only to watch the men fight to the death. In this passage, women only exist to be brutalized and show Nacho’s potency, then to be witnesses to his valiant and violent duel to prove his machismo.

Calvino's novel offers a look into many different literary perspectives and genres of male authorship, all relating back to the fact that male prowess is established through dominance and disempowerment. One of the ways in which men prove their manhood in literature is through violence, a trope which leads to an increased fetishization of violence as a whole. Male authorships often transfer the attacks on their manhood in reality into attacks on literal men in fiction. Sally Robinson examines the ways in which male authorships transfer perceived threats to masculinity into literary trauma her work *TRAUMAS OF EMBODIMENT: White Male Authorship in Crisis*. She explains:

'Wounded bodies replace abstracted minds, as the image of a disembodied genius gets replaced by a white male body and psyche in imminent danger'

(88). Herein lies the foundation of male literary violence. Emotions are often seen as illegitimate and feminine to men and male authors and thusly are transformed into physical elements that can be overcome and physically beaten down to prove masculine dominance. This furthers the male aversion to emotion, othering it and classifying it as "un-male," leading to an increase of literary violence perpetrated by male authors. Robinson goes on:

"The displacement of cultural trauma onto the body, and the representation of social disempowerment by physical wounding functions to recenter dominant masculinity even as it appears to evidence its decentering" (88-89).

In other words, though violence is a physical threat to a man's well-being, it is not a threat to masculinity, a concept on which the vulnerable identity is placed. The male character's body and actions become physical manifestations of the life and attacks on manhood that the author has experienced, allowing for them to be transformed into an acceptable medium. This brings the discussion back to the role of women in proving masculinity, often becoming objects in the way of male violence and power. Women are disempowered in male writing through many mediums, but none more prevalent than through the narrative of sexual aggression. In literature, male characters are so often programmed to pursue sexual gratification in the same ways in which they are programmed to deal with vulnerability: through violence and force. Sabine Sielke explores the dynamics of rape and sexual aggression in her

text *Reading Rape*, arguing,

"At best, readings of rape therefore reveal not merely the latent text in what is manifest, explicit, and thus produce a text's self-knowledge; they will also evolve a new knowledge pertaining to the ideological necessities of a text's silences and deletions" (5).

Rape in literature reveals biases not just explicitly present in the act, but those lying under the surface, those that are necessary to the novel's fabric and storytelling. Rape narratives, which only seek to further the the masculinity of a man, either through proving his virility in sexual aggression or his chivalry in helping a victim, reveal deeper issues of women only being tools for men to use. Women, even in their pain and degradation at the hands of men, still seek to serve men in these narratives. Oftentimes, these female characters exist only to be brutalized and tossed to the side once the man has proved his masculinity. Rape narratives are often bastardizations of real sexual assaults, furthering myths and tropes surrounding them. Sielke explains it thusly:

As a consequence, rape narratives relate to real rape incidents in highly mediated ways only. They are first and foremost interpretations, readings of rape that, as they seem to make sense of socially deviant behavior, oftentimes limit our understanding of sexual violence while producing norms of sexuality in the process. As they have evolved in historically specific contexts, these narratives moreover interrelate with, produce, and subsequently reproduce a cultural symbology that employs sexual deviance for the formation of cultural identities. (3)

Sielke's examination of the "norms of sexuality" enforced in rape narratives brings the role of heterosexuality in proving masculinity into question. Rape enforces the dominance of the male character, his sexual prowess and his virility, but also it enforces the gender dynamic of women underneath men: in social senses and in sexual senses. Men make the decisions, women live with the decisions, and rape narrative enforce this literary trope. Examinations of these tropes often point to submission fantasies in women.

Women are frequently disenfranchised and limited in narratives written by male authors, only given agency and development when tied to a male character, and subservient to prove the masculine vigor of male characters.

Sielke further explains that,

“Instead, they present rape fantasies as products of a historically developed discourse on sexuality, a discourse that generated fantasies of rape as one of its crucial tropes” (Sielke 144).

However, this idea of submission fantasies in literature serves only to justify the unjustifiable act of rape. Through all of this, power dynamics are enforced that structure women as permanent submissive victims for male virility.

Women are frequently disenfranchised and limited in narratives written by male authors, only given agency and development when tied to a male character, and subservient to prove the masculine vigor of male characters. Through an examination of Calvino's *If on a winter's night a traveler*, the biases against women in many forms of literature are illustrated as are the themes of submission and violence. This ultimately brings into question why so many narratives by male authors contain the same predilection for violence, especially sexual violence, and what purpose these narratives serve. Literature serves as a platform to discuss and explore social issues, but if representation is not fully expounded upon, this conversation cannot take place. This representation must start with the widening of the range of emotion which male authors write.

Though masculinity should not be an ideal upheld and glorified through means of degradation and violence, it should not be one of emotionless shame either. To increase the proportional representation of minorities in literature outside of their relationships to men, there must be a fundamental change in the way in which emotions and traumas are handled by male authors. Perhaps this strengthening of emotional intelligence can lead to an overall change in the hostility toward vulnerability addressed and written by so many male authorships, allowing female characters to exist outside of hysteria and submission.

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Restraint and Vulnerability: Monica Youn's Meditation on the Female Body

By Gillian Ebersole

Gillian Ebersole is a sophomore Dance and English double major in the University Honors Program. She was born in Portland, Oregon, and grew up in Colorado, and spends an inordinate amount of time reading and drinking tea. She is passionate about the interdisciplinary nature of her Dance major, and this paper, written for Professor Sarah Maclay's Genres: Poetry class, grew out of a desire to connect her Poetry class to her work as a dancer. This led to a study of feminism and embodied experience that continues to inform her choreography and artistic practice in the studio, as well as her own poetry and writing.

Throughout a lifetime, the female body undergoes many changes, in some cases vacillating between childhood and childrearing in an arcing timeline. Monica Youn's *Blackacre* assembles poetry about the stagnation of a woman on this arc, unable to conceive and grappling with the implications of infertility. , Robin Coste Lewis, Judge of the William Carlos Williams Award (which *Blackacre* won in 2017) remarks: "Youn explores deftly those interior landscapes we are reluctant to excavate, not to mention name" ("Announcing"). Buttressed by her legal background, Youn implements and twists her diction to map the painful erasure and the persistent existence of the female body. The *Los Angeles Review* calls *Blackacre* an "examination of what happens when the body politic has been eviscerated and our survival depends on the structures of precedent that remain" (Shaw). Indeed, Youn's ability to explore the vulnerabilities of a female embodied existence renders *Blackacre* a powerful testament to a personal, and yet very communal, struggle with one's body. Looking at three of her poems – "Portrait of a Hanged Woman," "Blueacre," "Blackacre," – we can see how Youn manipulates the contrast between restraint and vulnerability in her exploration of the female body through images of clothing, body movement, and the absence of light.

CLOTHING

By playing with the connotations of clothing and femininity, Youn looks at the oxymoronic relationship between restraint and vulnerability.

In "Portrait of a Hanged Woman," Youn explicitly describes:

"it is a woman / wearing a steel / collar"
(47-49). This image of a "steel collar"
wraps itself around the neck of the
woman, twisting the imagery of hanging
as if to suggest the woman is enslaved
and shackled. The specificity of steel as a
material speaks to a certain coldness and
rigidity not usually associated with hanging.

This image bleeds into that of the woman
"wearing / a stiffly pleated / dress," (49-51),
which speaks to the suffocation experienced while
wearing uncomfortable and restrictive clothing. Youn
abruptly upends these images of restraint when she
says the dress "lifts / to reveal nothing / but drapery
where / her body used to be" (52-54).

Suddenly, the constraining nature of the clothing
morphs into imagery suggesting the vulnerability of

being female. These final lines of the poem allude to lost agency – a sense that a mysterious outside agent "lifts" the dress to see the body underneath, only to find that the woman is already gone (52). Youn's description of clothing juxtaposes restraint with vulnerability, perhaps touching on the ways in which women are restricted and then objectified whenever external agents deem necessary. Restraint and vulnerability resurface in "Blueacre," where Youn begins with an epigraph alluding to *Lamentation*, a dance choreographed by Martha Graham in 1930. Youn mourns the female body as she alludes to the clothing worn by Graham in the original staging of the piece. As both choreographer and dancer, Graham memorialized grief with "a statuesque composition, which relied for much of its eloquence upon an ingenious and simple costume arrangement" ("*Lamentation*"). During a reading of "Blueacre," Youn herself describes the inspiration she found in Graham and her costume choice, when she says: "In the dance, the dancer is encased from head to toe in a stretchy, seamless blue knit tube of fabric with only the dancer's hands, feet, and head exposed" ("*Blackacre* by Monica Youn"). Revolutionary in her choreography and costuming, Graham often played with clothing to both liberate and restrain the female dancer; her work overturned the dance world's insistence on corsets and ankle-length skirts, replacing them with flowing fabrics in bright colors ("*Lamentation*").



Figure 1 "*Lamentation Costume*"

Youn repeats the color of this costume in several lines: "this blue refrain," "bluer than blushing," "into the blue pool" ("*Blueacre*" 3, 19, 49). This repetition lends to a deepening and enveloping sense of the color blue, further building on the imagery of the costume. The dancer is "sewn / back in its cocoon," both trapped and artistically challenged by the opportunities of the clothing (27-28). This allusion allows Youn to explore the comfort and

constraint of the cocoon that is the body. Like the clothing in "Portrait of a Hanged Woman," the blue tube of fabric is both restrictive and vulnerable; it easily restrains movement while also maintaining a slim shape to reveal the female body. Beyond the individual intricacies of the imagery of clothing in the poems, cloth and fabric serve a larger purpose in the collection that is *Blackacre*. Regarding Youn's integration of clothing, *The Los Angeles Review* commented: "The image of fabric, in the sense of a tangled web, describes not only the book's metaphorical system but also its method and structure" (Shaw). Youn weaves together epigraphs rich with historical allusions to cultivate internal associations, building literary bridges between the poems as the book develops (Shaw). And yet, Youn varies the way her "[s]hort, enjambed tercets aptly capture the sense of dangling and tethering, while long, leggy prose lines invoke the idea of exposition, of textual precedent, of interconnection" (Shaw). The oscillations between restriction and vulnerability in language and structure of poetry intertwine with the descriptions of clothing. These contrasts and connections appear throughout *Blackacre*, as Youn works through how this conflict entwines like fabric on paper.

BODY MOVEMENT

Building on her intricate language surrounding clothing, Youn uses fabric as an initiation for the description of body movement. *The Los Angeles Review* notes how Youn implements "recurring, even obsessive, images not only of hanging but also of looping, grasping, binding, entwining, dragging, snarling, stricturing, and rending" (Shaw). This particularly manifests in "Blueacre" when Youn describes:

"its vague, vain / efforts at escape, / and now struggling / merely to sustain / a show of resistance / to extend a limb toward / extremity" (39-45).

Here, she again hearkens to Graham's *Lamentation*, now extricating individual movements from the dance, making her poetry move the way Graham does. There, in Youn's poetry, is present an external struggle with restraint and a parallel internal struggle with vulnerability, a scintillating show of tenacity. Like Youn, Martha Graham's depiction of grief in *Lamentation* does not feature flower-like drooping or faint movements of beseeching; instead, "she is grief from the first stricken bewildered gropings of

her head and torso to the last moment when she averts her covered head with a finality that is pitiful and terrible" (*Lamentation*). Youn mimics the way in which the limbs fight with the restriction of the clothing, unsuccessful "efforts at escape," trapping the body inside ("Blueacre" 39). In the claustrophobia of this phrasing, there remains a "show of resistance," in the extension of a single limb (43). The ebb and flow of extending limbs recalls various choreographic positions from *Lamentation*:

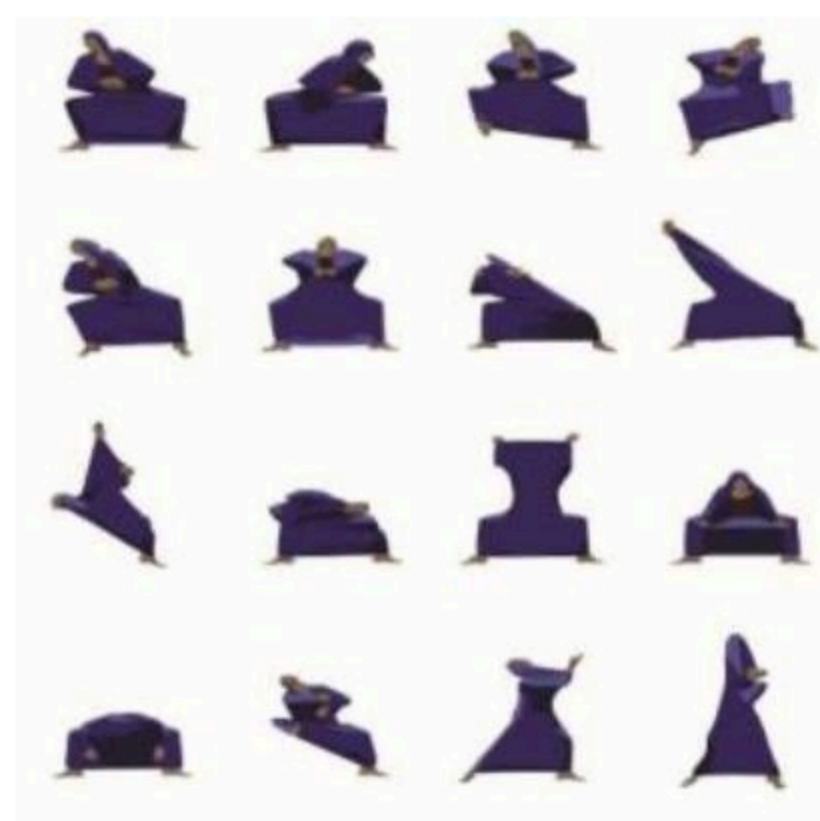


Figure 2 "Lamentation Illustration" by Ciera Shaver

The New York Times notes how Youn's imagery of movement cultivates artful variations of poetry whose underlying "subjects are the landscape of the body and the poet's struggle with infertility" (Lamy). Instilled in bodily movement itself, Youn's expression of grief takes on a lamenting flavor of its own, honoring Graham's physical demonstration of strength in the face of grief.

Movement-oriented diction is not restricted to "Blueacre" alone; Youn develops an arcing rise and fall in "Portrait of a Hanged Woman." When she juxtaposes the words "downturn and "fall" with the "elevation of / a single point – / one dot / on the topography / of a life," she points to the rise and fall of hope in a lifetime (4, 5, 10-14). In turn, the word "topography" suggests the hills and valleys as part of the terrain of a body and a life. However, Youn describes a "terrible / elevation," contrasting a negative word with one that indicates movement upward (3-4). Here, *The New York Times* connects the way Youn questions "what we are allotted and what we imagine we can grow—or not grow—on that allotment" to her language of terrain (Orr). Her struggle with what is and is not manifests in the violent language of hanging, the lifting before the falling to one's death. Youn's inclusion of forceful diction – "jerked sharply / upward," "thrown," "torqued" – magnifies the power of her imagery

of restraint (26-27, 32, 33). Thus, “uplifting” and “twisting free” do not appear as diction of freedom, but of an uncomfortable vulnerability that arises after suddenly being freed (19, 34). The contrast of movements works to demonstrate the uncomfortable vacillations between restraint and vulnerability that are so visceral in the body.

Movement-rich language continues to cultivate contrast in the brief seven lines of “Blackacre,” one of two poems that carries the same name as the collection. Youn begins the poem by describing how the moon is “ringed” while referencing a “swirling gray screen” (1, 2). Her imagery of circling carries an ominous undertone, recalling the static-y, grayscale nature of an ultrasound. The language of circumduction carries through the second half; after “it had already / launched itself” into space, “sent spiraling” into the void (4-5, 6). Though Youn employs vivid verbs, her use of “it” renders her bodily language ambiguous, and if continuing the image of an ultrasound, suggests the loss of life from one ultrasound to the next. In reference to the bodily language of the collection, *The Chicago Tribune* highlights a line from Youn’s analysis of John Milton in the second “Blackacre,” in which she states: “I came to consider my body — its tug-of-war of tautnesses and slacknesses — to be entirely my own, an appliance for generating various textures and temperatures of friction” (Rooney). The contrasts between restriction and vulnerability directly play into her language of taut and slack, developing first in her weaving of fabric which then lends to her discussion of bodily movement.

ABSENCE OF LIGHT

The precedent of juxtapositions returns in Youn’s use of light and darkness. Just as restraint and vulnerability became convoluted, so too do light and darkness, touching on the frustrating gray area of human existence. *The Los Angeles Review* points out that “[w]hile Youn’s work focuses mainly on the forces that both strangle and sustain, it does not ultimately shy away from the emptiness within” (Shaw). Particularly, this emptiness manifests in “Blackacre,” when Youn describes her “trackless gray body” (7). Previously in the poem, Youn contrasted the “dark moon” with “a bright nimbus” to create a distinction between light and dark (1, 2). Then, she smears the contrast to grayscale with her repetition of the color in the phrases: “gray screen,” “gray sky,” and “gray body” (2, 5, 7). Like the way restraint and vulnerability

exist on a continuum, Youn’s existence is not one of purely light and dark, but of varying degrees of gray. To emphasize the gradient in this poem, *The New York Times* paired “Blackacre” with an art piece by Shirazeh Houshiary, an Iranian artist who depicts “Monica Youn’s wistful imagining of a celestial body — one that promises immortality just before slipping out of reach” (Magazine). Pigment and pencil blend on white aquacryl on aluminum as Houshiary demonstrates the very gradient of light and darkness that Youn speaks of in her poetry, fading from deep to light blue in this abstract image (Magazine).

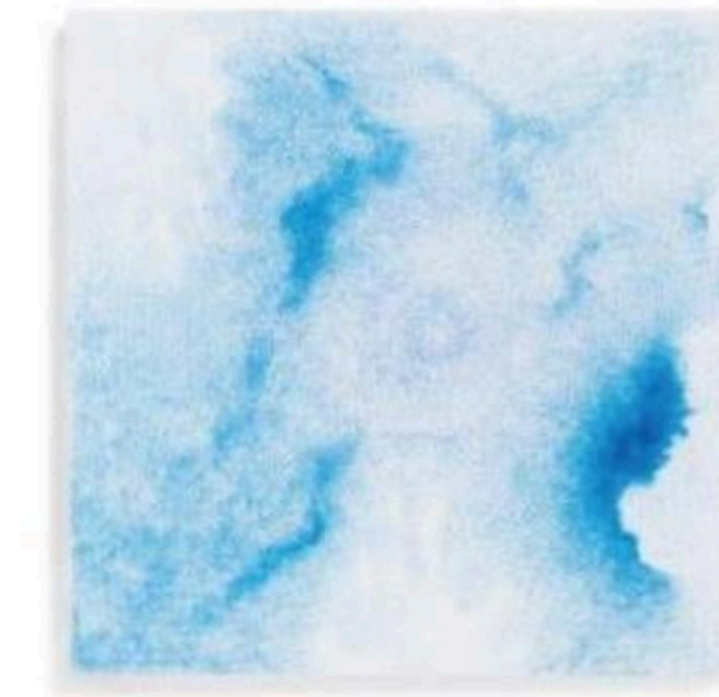


Figure 3 “Tune” by Shirazeh Houshiary

Youn’s imagery of a gradient emerges again in her reference to the “topography / of a life” (“Portrait of a Hanged Woman” 13-14). Like Houshiary’s artwork, the image of a topographic map subtly connotes gradient through the change in elevation, Youn’s method of mapping a life and a body. The strict contrast between light and darkness still appears in poems prior to “Blackacre,” as Youn explores the very triumphs and tragedies of the topography of life. In “Portrait of a Hanged Woman,” Youn describes “cities / thrown into shadow,” cutting off an implicit image of light by extinguishing the lights of the city with shadows (31-32). This “shadow zone” occurs again in “Blueacre,” again juxtaposed with light as it exists “at the core of the flame” (21, 22). Youn associates light with darkness, an intrinsic connection she plays with at every poetic turn. Again in “Blueacre,” Youn references “a moth lured to the light,” but she writes that the moth is “trapped” before it can even begin to reach its goal (26, 27). In a review for National Public Radio, Tess Taylor calls Youn’s poems “luminous fictions, [that] also capture the sheer force of imagining itself, the slippery elusive loops of desire.” Indeed, just as Youn references the desire “to glean / one glimpse of light,” she activates a sense of human desire for something existing in the gray area of life, perhaps just beyond reach (“Blueacre” 45-46). Here lies her truest vulnerability, in

the sense that the restraint of her body prevents her from that which she wants most.

CONCLUSION

Monica Youn's *Blackacre* constructs a tapestry of meaning imbued both in epigraphs and historical allusions and in her vivid imagery of clothing, body movement, and the absence of light. Youn's integration of these elements ponders the contrast between bodily restraint and vulnerability, "essentially writing a study of longing for something at once internal and out of control, something highly envisioned that may never come to pass" (Taylor). Fabric and movement alike become key parts of her meditation on the capabilities and incapacities of the female body, and her frustrations with the perpetual stagnation of her seemingly gray existence. Youn neatly weaves the threads of her messy bodily experience, leaving behind an authentically human expression of loss and longing.

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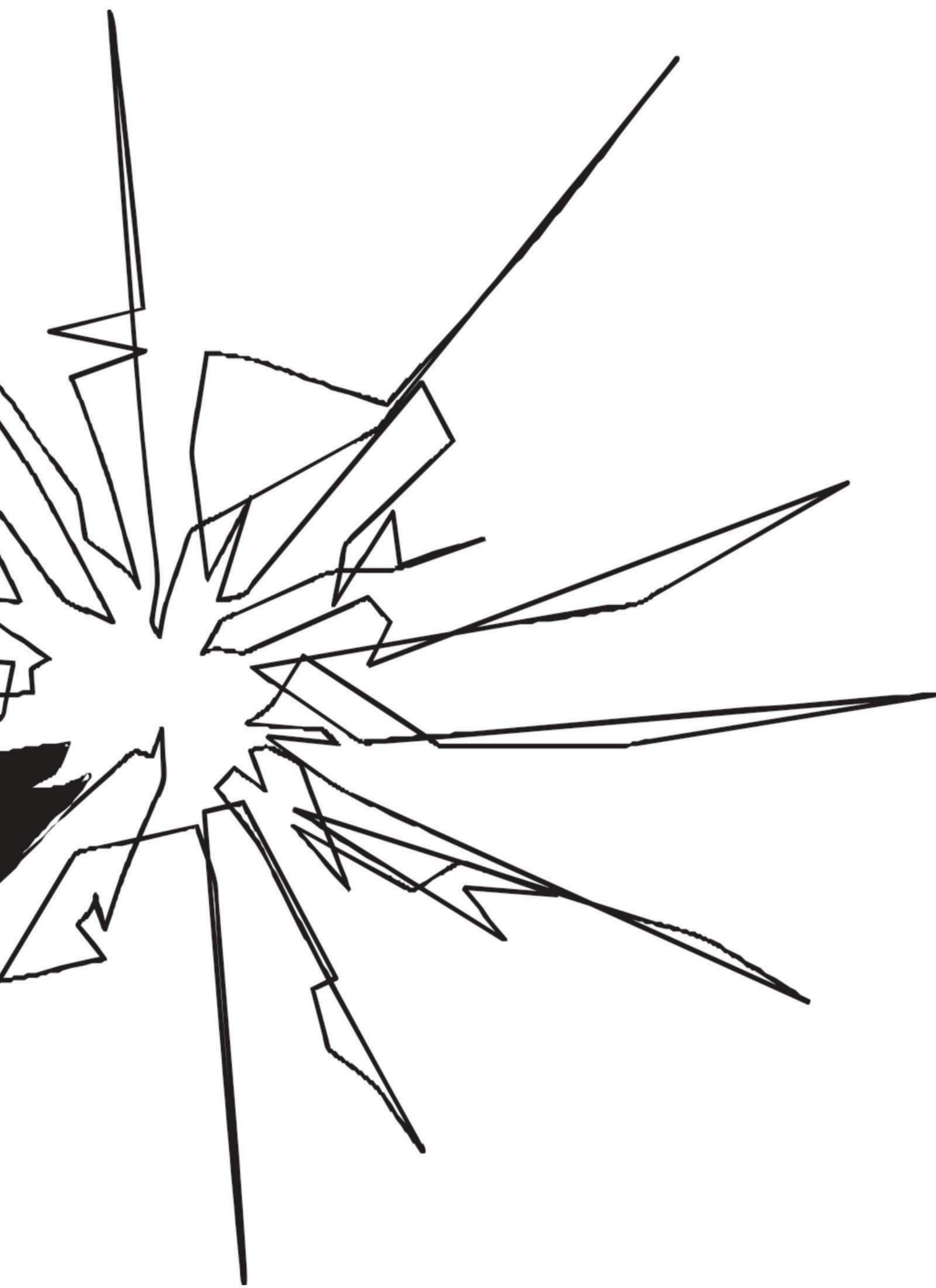
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The Glass Essay

By Angela Brittain

Fresh into the post-collegiate drift, Angela works as a gallerist and doggie lifestyle blogger. An archetypal Libra, her interests include plants, the arts, dismantling the patriarchy, and metaphysics. “The Glass Essay” was written for the class Anne Carson: Classics Iconoclast. Angela would like to thank Katerina Zacheria and Sarah Maclay for their feedback on this essay.

That Anne Carson should title her opening essay in *Glass, Irony, and God* "The Glass Essay" without ever directly addressing the reason for her title implies the very essence of glass itself—something that may be there but not always seen. Glass is both reflective and transparent; born of fire and easily shattered. When Alice walked through the looking glass, she found herself a wonderland. Debbie Harry capitalized on the futility of love, equating her heart to one of glass and peaking on music charts all over the world. Conversely, Bob Dylan comments on the fragility of the female in his song "Just Like a Woman" when he says, "She aches just like a woman / but she breaks just like a little girl" (Dylan 1966). The hourglass figure is a mark of female beauty. Hillary Rodham Clinton used the metaphor of a glass ceiling during her 2016 campaign as a signifier of entrapment. There is an obvious connection between women and glass present in our culture, whether or not we always see it, and whether or not that glass is ever shattered by the women who are trapped behind it. There is much to learn from the way Anne Carson and her female contemporaries address entrapment through glass, the way women materialize interiors that often go unseen, and the social repercussions that come with this tradition.

For centuries, women have been kept on the inside: Rapunzel in her tower, Charlotte Perkins and her room full of yellow wallpaper. From the earliest days of hunter-gatherer culture, women were left to create a home from interior spaces. Female domesticity was fetishized by advertising moguls in 1950s America, and housewives became a staple of nuclear families. Sophokles said, "Silence is the kosmos of women," so this became the cultural standard in Ancient Greece and the mind became the interior where women stored all their feelings (Carson 127). This is something Anne Carson knows too well. One of the most striking quotes on female interiors in "The Glass Essay" reflects on her childhood: "...it is the light of the stalled time after lunch when clocks tick and heart shuts and fathers leave to go back to work and mothers stand at the kitchen sink pondering something they never tell" (7). Emily Bronte, famous for her reclusiveness, also becomes a character in this essay. Carson quotes one of Bronte's critics who asks, "What was this cage, invisible to us, which she felt herself to be confined in?" (7). This idea that women have something kept inside, something they never tell, has been the subject of several female writers throughout the centuries. When women dare to tread

outside- to pass through the glass, so to speak- through literature, art, or political movement, there is an imminent threat to the patriarchal structures that have kept them locked up since the earliest days of domesticity.

In 2011, Russian feminist punk band PussyRiot formed in order to speak out against Vladimir Putin's overtly corrupt politics. What followed was a movement that ended in several arrests, beatings, public shaming, and international sensation. In an interview with *Vice*, band founder Nadya Tolokonnikova spoke on her time spent in a Russian prison, "Can you go through the most terrible experience but have the sense of being still meaningful [sic]. So if you can be meaningful then it's not completely lost time for you" (Tolokonnikova, 2017). Meaningful undoubtedly: the arrests following their protest inspired a new generation of punk feminists around the world. PussyRiot was certainly successful in their attempts to break outside the walls of their home country, as they now travel around the world speaking on social justice issues through lectures, performance art, and interactive experiences. They are a modern example of women breaking through the glass to expose the interiors of corrupt politics, bearing the full brunt of male threat faced with female opposition.

The threat of female projection has long been the subject of male authors, as we see in "The Gender of Sound": "The censorship of such projections is a task of patriarchal cultures that (as we have seen) divides humanity into two species: those who can censor themselves and those who cannot" (Carson 130). Carson discusses the Greek virtue of *sophrosyne* as being one associated exclusively with men, specifically with men who had good self-control. Women became associated with *ololyga* when they spoke out, and so "the so-called 'natural' tendency of the female to shrieking, wailing, weeping, emotional display and oral disorder cannot help but become a self-fulfilling prophecy" (128). Imagine Sophokles reacting to the feral, haunting voices of Björk or Alanis Morissette— certainly he would think them monstrous, but we wouldn't have it any other way, because they are cultural symbols of female fringe and strength. Carson acknowledges how "Greek myth, literature, and cult show traces of cultural anxiety about such female ejaculation" and this anxiety still permeates our culture today, both in fictive works and real-life social engagement (132). Women were assigned an "otherness"

for putting "the inside on the outside" and yet, this is our essence (129).

Sigmund Freud commented on the phenomena of male anxiety toward women in 1927 when he said, "Probably no male human being is spared the terrifying shock of threatened castration at the sight of the female genitals" (Freud 354). The act of sex itself is a kind of dismemberment and ambiguity. The male member "disappears" into the vagina and the lines between distinct bodies become blurred. Carson touches on bodily indistinctness when she describes her night of lovemaking with Law:

"I was floating high up near the ceiling looking down on the two souls clasped there on the bed with their mortal boundaries visible around them like lines on a map" (Carson 12).

That which follows sex—ejaculation (hopefully?) and childbirth (sometimes)—are all acts of abjection: the body rejects that which no longer belongs inside of it.

Abjection seems to be the root of fear attached to women, and yet it is our literal nature: we bleed for five days a month, we make tiny humans in our bellies and squeeze them out of a 2.1 centimeter hole, we cry, we sneeze, we poop. This idea of blurring boundaries between outside and inside is inherent in biological female function, and it has become the very thing that men feel women need to keep inside. Examples of this can be found in numerous works. Greek myths have long regarded females as abject, from Medusa with her serpentine hair to Lamia who ate children. A significant example of this in modern culture is *The Exorcist* (Warner Brothers, 1973) in which a young girl becomes possessed by the devil and several experts are called in to try and expel the evil spirit within her. Meanwhile, her body becomes more and more grotesque throughout the devil's occupation of her body. Barbara Creed writes on this film in an essay concerning female gender in horror films, saying, "The foulness of woman is signified by her putrid, filthy body covered in urine, blood, excrement, and bile. Significantly, a pubescent girl about to menstruate played the woman who is possessed" (Creed 46). The tagline of this film was "The Devil Inside," aligning the biological function of the protagonist directly with the devil.

The concept of female devilry is the main subject of contemporary artist Polly Nor, a London-based illustrator whose work features an array of women interacting with their demons in honorable

acknowledgment. Her work specifically deals with women's identity in the internet age, often featuring electronic devices such as smartphones, tablets, and laptops in the background. Her 2017 illustration "Thinking of You" features a young woman looking into a mirror (there's that glass again) and seeing a devil in the reflection. Her hands are placed on the mirror longingly, desperate for the connection that is permeated by that thin sheet of glass. Several of her pieces include women looking either at themselves in a mirror, through a phone, or directly at their demons. The way Nor directs the gaze of her subjects implies that they are not ashamed but rather inviting and confrontational with their devils.

If all of these associations between females and glass are all arbitrary, there is at least one firm connection we can take away: the glass is a tool through which we can direct our gaze to understand women's writing, art, and poetry. Today, there are women who stand behind panes of glass in Amsterdam's red light district, putting their sexuality on a pedestal to attract clients. Whether this is empowering or degrading is up to the women who work in these brothels, and that is irrelevant here—what is significant about this is that they are viewed through this pane of glass and transformed, displaying the sexual prowess that is the very root of men's cultural anxiety toward women, and proving that sex is power. Abjection, therefore, is both woman's power and her plight. To take that which is on the inside and put it out into the world when the time is right is both the basic biological function of a woman's body, and the deep-rooted literary and artistic tradition of women. This is a dichotomy that we have lived with for centuries, and until we smash through all the panes of glass that are there though invisible, they will continue to permeate our lives.

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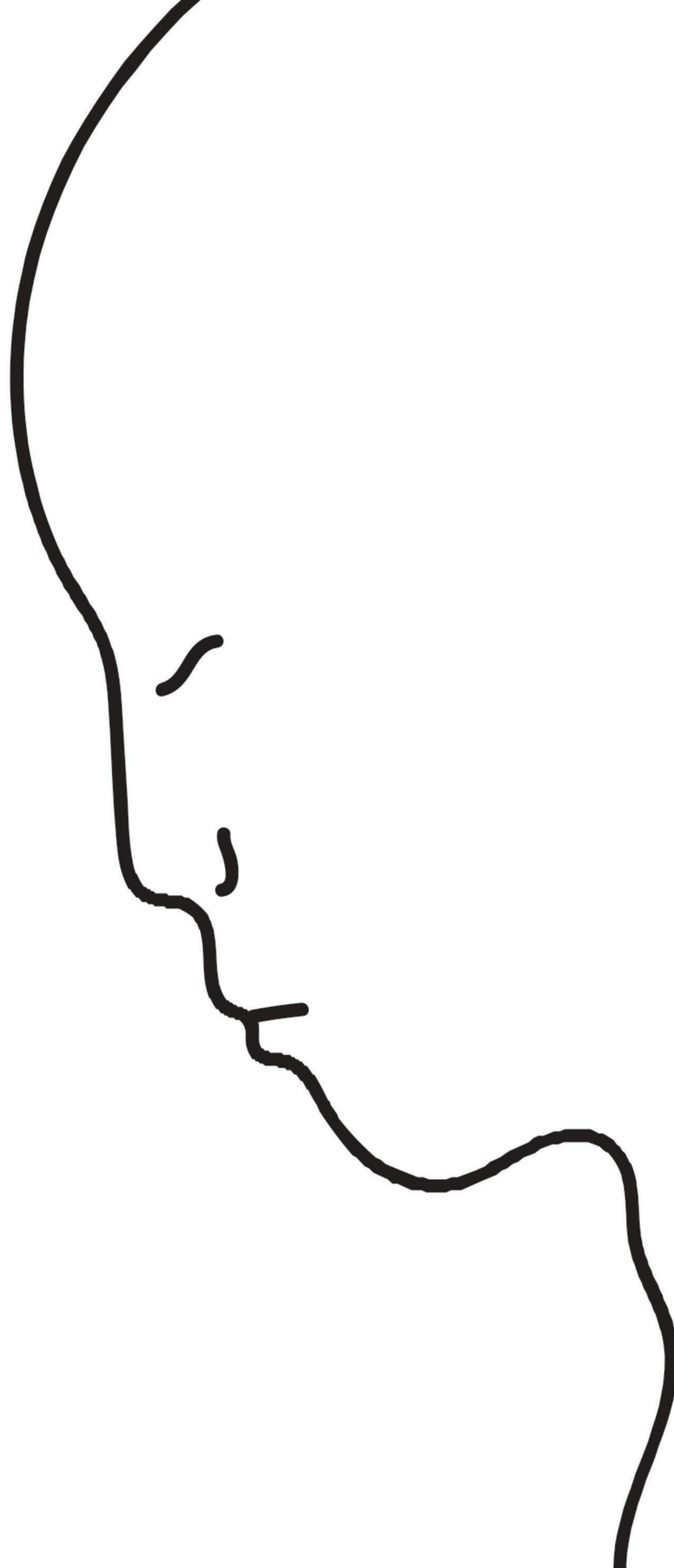
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Re-Assimilation in Crisis: Greek Masculinity Depicted Through Film

By André Enriquez

André Enriquez is a first-year English M.A. Candidate with a Creative Writing Emphasis and Teaching Fellowship. He recently graduated from LMU in the Spring of 2017 with a B.A. in English and a minor in Classics & Archaeology. "Re-Assimilation in Crisis: Greek Masculinity Depicted Through Film" was a paper written for Dr. Katerina Zacharia's Spring 2017 course "Representations of Greece: Ancient and Modern," and explores the circumstance of Greek masculine identity having to "re-learn" its exemplification through cultural norms made null by the country's ongoing economic crisis. This examination not only employs the lens of film, but, uniquely, film told from the perspective of Greece's youth/children perceiving their culture's masculine character, known the world over since antiquity, in limbo. Such a medium was made possible through the course's five-year long active internship component with the Los Angeles Greek Film Festival, for which André worked as a Summer Fellow of the Bellarmine College of Liberal Arts the season following.

It is often thought that culture is rooted in similarity, that to claim a people share a "common culture" implies that their differences stem from the same origin of understanding of core values: a branching out. This view is incorrect, however, as it is, in fact, a branching in. It is the thread that weaves together the varying individualisms, the particular things similar amongst all our differences, that we call culture; similarity rooted in diversity, not the other way around. These similarities are what Stuart Hall in his book *Representation* calls "[broad]... conceptual maps," (4), or the like-methods of interpreting the world which overlap. The crossover is then navigated in our everyday lives by varying systems of representation, such as language, semiotics, etc., which allow us to communicate with one another, and from which meaning is extracted on the personal level. But what happens to a culture when individualism, or the ability to make one's own choices to pave one's own path, is taken from those within it? The result: a re-assimilation.

Assimilation itself, or the process of being "[absorbed] into the cultural tradition of a population or group" (Merriam-Webster), is arguably most referenced in regards to immigration in times of crisis. But when those unable to leave are stuck in a culture whose social norms are made null because of that crisis, their identities, which are formed in relation to those social norms, are no longer able to develop. Thus, re-assimilation occurs, where in order for identity to mature, people must discard previously held conventions of their old culture, and re-craft themselves in this limbo-of-a new-one within its place, one where conceptual maps are no longer relevant. A people undergoing such a process today are the native Greeks, where one map affected has been Greek definitions of masculinity. This paper briefly examines how perceptions of the culture of masculine identity have changed in modern day Greece as a result of the ongoing economic crisis, which through complete upheavals of such basic necessities as job and food availability, has decomposed the societal norms of the everyday around which masculine identities were once shaped. The lens through which I observe this change is film, a medium which naturally has historically reflected the fluxing societal/political/cultural contexts of its filmmakers on the grounds of passion and realistic necessity. I conduct close readings of two films of 2017, Loukianos Moshonas' *Manodopera* and Sofia Exarchou's *Park*, which both reflect a modern take on

masculinity in crisis.

Before the crisis struck, it can be argued that the general understanding of contemporary masculinity in Greece was a continued belief rooted in a combination of two exceptionally influential periods of male representation within then-Greek/American entertainment. The first was what Achilleas Hadjikyriacou, in his book *Masculinity and Gender in Greek Cinema: 1949-1967*, calls the "Star System." A spike in Greek film heavily influenced by Hollywood in the 1950s/60s, the System describes how global cultural icons such as Marlon Brando, James Dean, and Elvis Presley widely appealed to a Greek youth questioning social reality post-Civil War. Gender relations, sexuality, patriarchy, and femininity were defined by the characters these stars portrayed in their films and music, with Greek male youths "keen to imitate the rebellious behavior of their [idols], right down to the details such as [their haircuts]" (Hadjikyriacou 84) and dancing the Twist. It was around this same time that Michael Cacoyannis' infamous film *Zorba the Greek* was released; a picture notorious for its influential depiction and exoticization of the Greek "machismo," or a performative masculinity of acting out the man's ability to be both "handsome and fearless [while] at the same time sensitive, emotional and good hearted" (Hadjikyriacou 89).

The second period, emerging near two decades later and after the end of the Greek military junta of 1967-1974, was what Sean Nixon, in his chapter of Hall's *Representation* entitled "Exhibiting Masculinity," calls the "New Man." Utilizing a visual coding of manhood borrowed predominantly from print and menswear mediums of the American West, it was thoroughly centered around a close, fetishized observation of the man's physique, framing his form as spectacle. This New Man, combined with the Star System, produced the pre-economic crisis male persona known as the "Street Style" (Nixon in Hall 302). The Style was a combination of youthful "boyishness" and weathered "hardness," or an "assertive masculinity" (Nixon in Hall 302), often cast in a model called "light-black" (referencing the subject's skin tone, and backed by a history of pathologizing the black man's sexuality/sensuality as hyper-masculine, connoting the outcast).

Street Style's material iconography can be recognized in the classic white T-shirt worn beneath a rough outerwear of a jacket or boots, a wardrobe further emphasizing the labeled/

embedded dichotomies of the boy underneath. This Style was by no means the only popular depiction of masculinity at the time, but is examined here as it is the portrayal referenced most frequently among the 2017 Los Angeles Greek Film Festival submission pool; a pool from which my two films are pulled, and which served as the basis of my research in film. The Festival exhibited a wide range of contemporary cinema from hundreds of active Greek filmmakers, and thus serves as an appropriate stage upon which to view the effects of the crisis. When the economic crisis hit in 2008, its upheaval of Greece's normative societal structure removed the Street Style from function, as the stereotypes, influences and cultural representations it encompassed were no longer sustainable in a world of devastation.

Park is a unique film to analyze as it is first and foremost told through the eyes of Greece's children/teenage youth. This is a lens which arguably provides the most intel on masculinity in its current state, as such an age range inherently exists as a stage of transition, encompassing the well-known motif of post-puberty "becoming a man," or the trendy coming of age tale. Also, by this point in a boy's life, much like a young girl's in terms of what is expected of her in stereotypical conventions of womanhood, he has soaked in and observed the idea of "man" through both the father-figure and popular media over the course of his developmental years, all with the understanding that those depictions from which he is learning from are what he is meant to become in his future. It is the most receptive stage of life, where concepts such as gender perception are personally defined by the boy's ability to navigate societal stereotypes of masculinity. When combined with the fact that his body is also simultaneously (and quite literally) undergoing a physical change into that of what he sees as "man," such a phase makes him the rawest and most honest subject of masculine study. This is most significant because this natural transition parallels the transition of re-assimilation mentioned above of the crisis, for if we understand that identity is formed around one's relationship to the stereotypes of society, and the stereotypes of that boy's society are rendered useless, what would have been his ascension to the culture of manhood becomes an assimilation into that of a masculinity never before trod.

The film takes place in the abandoned Olympic park in Athens from the 2004 Games. This setting is substantial as it represents what even

those most traditional and pride-carrying aspects of Greek culture (and arguably of the entire world, these roots having stretched back to those values of community, sportsmanship and diversity of antiquity) have had to endure, those which have been "neglected" due to immediate necessity of survival on limited resources, and which make history "disposable." The audience follows a young Dimitri, 18-22 years of age, and his discovery of self in the miniature community he and his friends have established within the uninhibited park grounds. The film wonderfully portrays two particularly telling aspects of his grappling with masculinity in their world: the boys' recreations of competition, and Dimitri's sexual experience with the female character, Anna.

At the beginning of the film, the boys, who make up almost eighty percent of the social group, take two of their youngest members and have them race barefoot on the old track of the stadium, causing their exposed feet to tear and bleed on the gravel and twig-strewn dirt. The older boys encircle them, hollering and shouting, and crown the victor with "the winner's wreath" of strung leaves, and denote the loser a "poor dog" (Park 2016). Immediately after, however, the victor is shown digging through a dumpster and foraging for food scraps, a masterful dichotomy with the notion of the young, fit, and state-fed Olympian victor of antiquity. Another competition: within the locker room, Dimitri is forced to fight a friend in a pseudo-wrestling match, the two mopping the ground with their blood. The circle forms here once again, where the boys rise beyond yelling and seem to go berserk, throwing themselves against the metal lockers and even getting down on all fours and barking like dogs, holding each other by their shirts like collars. Even though Dimitri wins, his triumph is made blunt, the scene immediately cutting to him alone and hanging over the balcony of a highway overpass, alluding to suicide, with a look lacking purpose and drive behind his hollowed eyes.

While it is true self-harm and food scavenging can be seen as immediate effects of the crisis, depleting these children of nourishment and material necessity, they can also be interpreted as a loss of self, grasping for stability. In terms of masculine identity, the circle and almost-mad behavior of the boys composing it is reminiscent of the most aggressive stereotypes associated with a once-known-to-them Street Style; the "edgy", rebellious half of the coin turned extreme when there

are no longer societally defined boundaries to contain it. The locker room, a private space of commonly assertive athletic culture, or even the isolation of the abandoned park, becomes a space of release for the children, a “purge-esque” environment, where they can experiment with definitions of masculine identity from a recent tradition that are no longer relevant; an inverted catharsis releasing something no longer contained. This notion is exemplified when taken out on Anna, who, caught in the locker room after a euphoric group-shower of the boys, is defined by them in terms of a femininity pegged far below their extreme masculine high, as they threaten to pull her hair, physically handle her, and force her to “pirouette for us” (Park 2016), mocking a (once)-stereotypical femininity.

But Anna's character is also used to exhibit the other side of the Street Style, in her leveling of traditional gender norms while having intercourse with Dimitri. The scene begins with Anna lying on the floor and Dimitri lingering over her, connoting the stereotype of the dominant/hyper-sexual male as instigator. From that point on, however, “traditional” models are greyed. For instance, when Dimitri is about to climax, he pulls out and turns away from both the camera and Anna, putting his back to them. He seems confused and conflicted; a reaction notably divergent from the sexual apex of the Greek machismo. Anna then becomes the instigator herself, when, in an effort to bring him back, she switches places with and stands above him, flashing her body and controlling his desires. The camera positioning during this transition is noteworthy, for when she stands, she takes up the entire frame, with Dimitri lost below her waist and out of view. She holds the audience's attention, and is far more confident than Dimitri's instigation, not only because she refused the beer he offered her before sex (which he had already been drinking, allowing her to retain more intellectual/physical control), but because she had to, for his sake and lacking. When he reaches up from the ground to grab her jeans, the camera sinks to him on the floor, him reaching his hands above her like a child to a desire, her then kneeling to his level. The camera rapidly switches back and forth between these two depictions, so when compared to the way both of their bodies were fully depicted when Dimitri was in control, breaks down the gender roles both play, and serves as a kind of equalizer.

These norms are also inverted when the intercourse turns into anal sex. This in no way

implies that straight couples experimenting, or those engaging regularly in such sexual behavior, are anything but normal. In the context of conventional machismo, however, where such actions commonly mark homosexual males as degraded effeminates for the exact same practice, it is interesting to note this dichotomy now deconstructed, as both Dimitri and Anna accept the position change, knowing its association, without question, discussion, or even a word. This seems another equalizer, as where the machismo most usually maintains the most control, what is exhibited between the two teens is an engagement similar to what members of the same gender, (once again) in terms of the older notions of instigation, would partake in. However, while such a sameness would seem a light in the tunnel of economic catastrophe, their being able to sustain a fair relationship ideal, the possibility is undermined by the reality of their connection having been seemingly entirely stripped of emotion. The fact that the scene (and the entire film) is absent of a single kiss between the two, for instance, indicates their inability to recognize the selves in the other necessary to create what they are missing, with lack of identity by crisis once again the cause.

Each of these examples in Park, the competition and the sexual experience, suggest an interpretation of masculine identity wherein there is no longer a sense of defined understanding, and that an experimentation, an assimilation within a once-known culture (re-assimilation), is taking place. Without a society to define what roles of manhood they are to adopt, the extremes of the Street Style manifest themselves for the children as the everyday. Park, while impressively thorough in its illustration of the contemplative struggles Dimitri and the boys suffer, largely communicates these battles through physical representation (mock Olympic games and sex), as can be expected with young boys. *Manodopera*, on the other hand, succeeds in shifting focus to the same masculine displacement in a slightly older group of friends, bringing about a more intellectually stimulated reception of change in crisis.

One method by which the short approaches masculinity's shift is by cleverly examining the discrepancies of modern-day notions of success and failure. The film describes today's Greek mindset as an examination of the real, rather than of the everyday real, a notion that takes observation beyond what is typecast as authentic in the idealized visual culture, and focuses on the unspoken truth of living in

need. For instance, towards the beginning of the film, one of the characters notes that "a guy who works in Austria, who presses his keyboard's buttons, which in turn [creates] money, is considered productive in our society. A guy who lives on a rooftop in Greece, and draws, thinks, talks, [and] flirts is considered unproductive. That's not reality. But that is reality!" (Manodopera 2016). This character, his friends, and their struggles with identity, are appropriately shown through Moshonas' own unique version of the Street Style man, one reminiscent of the rural to urban transition in Greece of the 50s-60s, which similarly responded to shifts in economic/occupational upheaval (post-Civil War), arguing that "[masculinity], instead of being measured mainly in relation to the traditional sex-linked virtues, [depended] on the display of a lifestyle similar to urban prototypes (e.g. innovated material culture...)" (Hadjikyriacou 30).

The interpretation of a fading Street Style at the hands of a non-existent yet masculine-defining material culture today is brilliant, and is symbolized in the characters' occupational situations, the title of the film literally translating from Italian to "labor" or "manpower." The entirety of the piece is composed of a cutting back and forth between their day jobs as construction workers and a deep, ongoing discussion of the meaning of life they share at dusk atop a hill on the outskirts of town. The fact that they work construction alludes to the remnant "toughness" and appropriate wardrobe of the Street Style, their faces pouty and silent, while their evening dialogue embodies their being forced to redefine as a result of the crisis: what one does when everything material, societal, and personally identifiable is stripped of you, or a retreat to your core to recreate yourself through philosophizing. The film opens on a man silently breaking down a wall with a hammer and peering into the darkness of the hole. He stares into the emptiness, almost as if looking through a mirror. The fact that the men then reconstruct the walls they knock down, while simultaneously reconstructing their notions of masculine identity through success and failure just hours later, is a perfect statement of the stagnant, re-familiarizing state the lack of identity has placed on Greek masculinity since its arrival, the film ending on a shot of their newly constructed apartment complex erected from a sea of outdated homes.

The camera work complements and furthers this contrast as well, as was the case with Park, and plays a major role in providing the viewer with an

almost poetic visual aid. For example, during the day, the cracked, worn, and expressionless faces of the characters are made visible in harsh lighting with minimal dialogue, almost like the purposelessness of the abandoned Olympic grounds. At night, however, or within the confines of the secluded locker room/Olympic field, as the characters debate the significance of accomplishment versus passion, their faces are shrouded in darkness, physically unidentifiable to the audience, indicating how the reconstruction requires a dialogue from within the privacy of the self to combat stagnancy.

Together, both Park and Manodopera demonstrate the necessary relationship between identity and culture essential when observing the change economic crisis in Greece has brought to modern masculinity. Through exemplifications of the loss of society's once-traditional prescriptions of manhood, both the physical and mental lack of direction in Greece's children/youth showcase a Greece learning once again to become herself; a re-assimilation.

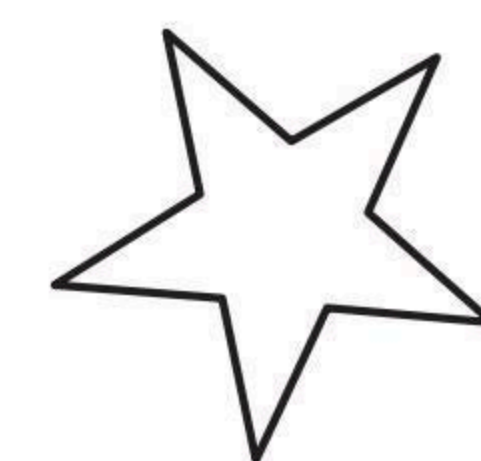
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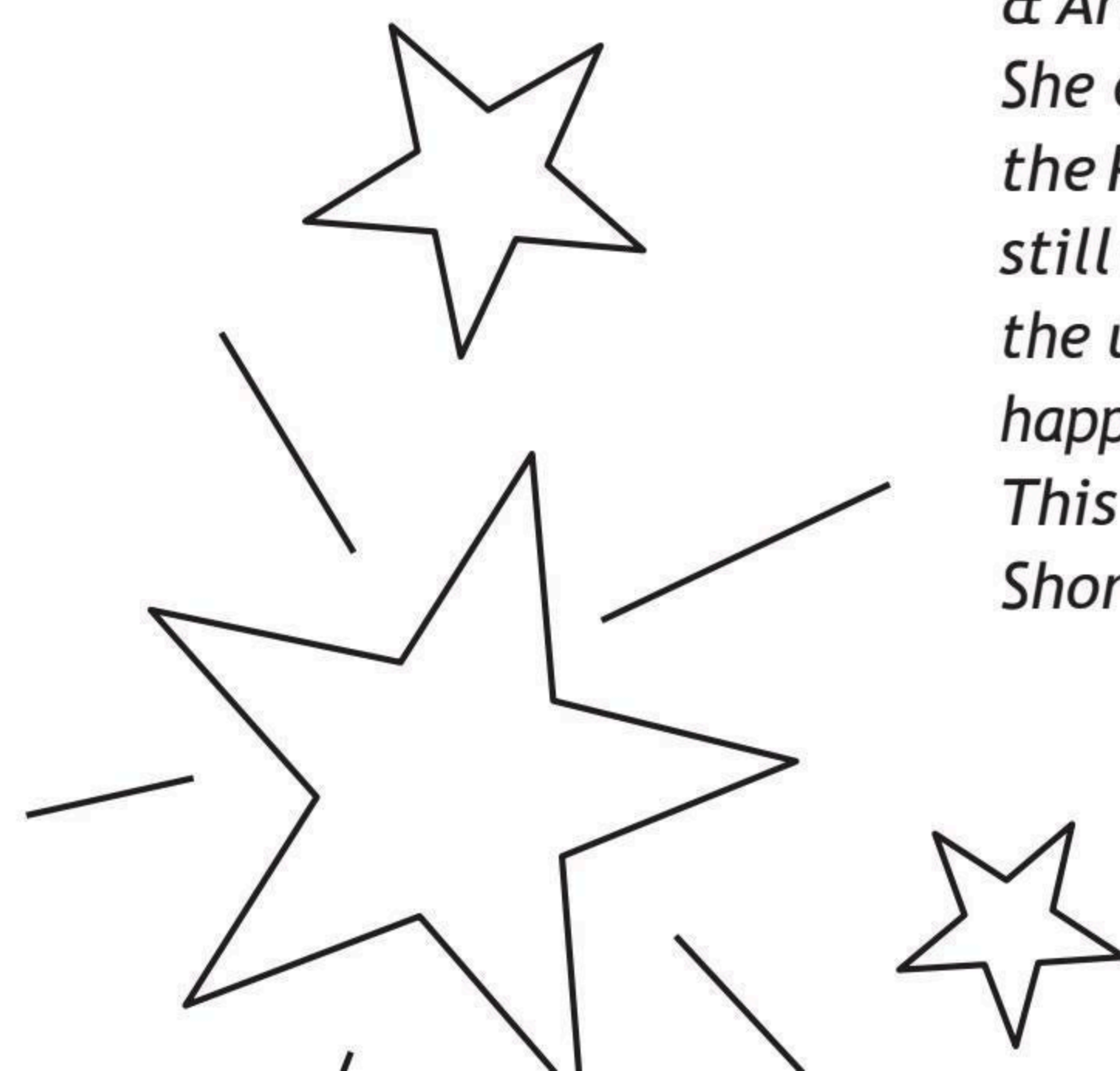
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**Soldiers in Love:
Polarity of Ideals in “The Things
They Carried” and “Distant Stars”**

By Rachel Mullens

*Rachel Mullens is a member of the Class of 2018, studying English and Dance. Her proudest achievements to date include her forthcoming co-authored historical narrative with the working title *Stolen Prince* and overseeing this *Criterion* issue as Editor-in-Chief. Her works have been published in *Criterion*, *L.A. Miscellany*, and on the blog of the *L.A. Review of Books*. Although she considers herself an amateur artist, her relief print “In Absence” was selected for the William H. Hannon Library’s Spring Archives and Special Collections Exhibition, “Meeting Christ in Faith & Art” and can be viewed until May 4, 2018. She excitedly anticipates her departure for the Prague Summer Program in June and is still working towards being comfortable with the unknown- essentially everything that will happen after her return from Prague in July. This essay was written for Dr. Robin Miskolcze’s Short Story class.*



The American narrative of the Vietnam War, during which the United States aided the effort of South Vietnam from 1965-1975, remains vexed by opposing arguments. The fact of the matter is, whether young men of this country were in support or not, they were drafted via lottery to fight. Some followed their sense of nationalistic duty to their grave, and others fled in resistance. Meanwhile, in the then divided country of Vietnam, women were volunteering to fight in the spirit of social equity that was sweeping the North. Despite the outside aid that both sides were receiving from World Powers, fighters were needed regardless of their gender. The American women that volunteered their service, whose sacrifice was in no way less noble or life altering, were relegated to the role of nurses. Misogyny shaped the way in which wars were fought, and it continues to shape the way in which we talk about them. For instance, there is little published material in the English language about the experiences of female soldiers, particularly those of female Vietnamese soldiers. Patriarchal values influence the way in which male American soldiers, as seen in O'Brien's "The Things They Carried," and female Vietnamese soldiers, as seen in Khue's "Distant Stars," react to the same feelings of fear, creating a gendered dichotomy in their understanding of love.

The very structure of militarism, in any modern nation, is informed by a Social Darwinism that privileges soldiers who possess characteristics aligned with a constructed definition of masculinity. Fighters who are brave without exception, in control of their physiological responses to danger, and display no outward signs of fear serve as the archetype for the ideal soldier, and by extension the ideal man. Those that fail to meet these standards are categorized as weak, cowardly, and inherently feminine. Strong fighters will survive, be awarded medals, and rise through the ranks while those who die do so because of their own inadequacies, merely becoming a statistic. This preference for behavior that is categorized as masculine in turn has equal effect on its counterpart of feminine behavior. As much as masculinity is valued, femininity is devalued. The military is not solely to blame for this paradigm, and neither is war; both are extensions of our societal structures. Jacqueline E. Lawson, Assistant Professor of English at University of Michigan-Dearborn who specializes in veterans' narratives, suggests that "the need of some men to adopt super-masculine persona may thus be compensatory, a means of blunting the

fear of emasculation" (56-57). Extreme bravery, even falsely manifested as rash violence, is better than the admittance of human vulnerability. Tim O'Brien's "The Things They Carried" examines the irony of fearing cowardice through outward displays of hyper masculinity.

"The Things They Carried" is told from the point of view of a third person narrator, focusing on the death of Ted Lavender and the distant romance rooted in fantasy that engages First Lieutenant Jimmy Cross' attention. The men in the platoon are characterized first and foremost by the objects in their packs. The narrator provides sparse yet adequate information, just enough for the reader to form a personal attachment to these soldiers. We are meeting real men, but their qualities are vague enough to be shared by the thousands of other foot soldiers in the dense jungles of Vietnam. Along with the physical objects that these men carry, they are also burdened by emotional traumas and regrets from their life before the war. Perhaps the heaviest burden, the one that continues to grow heavier with every round of fire and fallen comrade, is fear: not just fear for their lives, but fear that they will be discovered in their vulnerabilities and failures to meet the ideal of courage in its masculine extreme. O'Brien writes, "They carried the soldier's greatest fear, which was the fear of blushing... They died so as not to die of embarrassment" (1248).

Courage is elevated to an unrealistic caliber which practically guarantees failure. The struggle to align with these ideals of hyper masculinity is aided by the use of language that degrades images associated with femininity and elevates those that convey virile strength. When the narrator contemplates those who intentionally shoot their extremities to be taken to a hospital, away from the front lines, he acknowledges their reputation as "pussies" and "candy-asses" (O'Brien 1249). This contrasts with the language used to describe tasks and actions, which denote a masculinity. "Hump" meant both to walk and carry depending on its usage, "grunts" meant legs, "R & R" stood for "Rape and Ruin." The participation in combat shared the nature of "a protracted and brutal act of sexual intercourse" (Lawson 59). Lieutenant Cross' relationship with Martha, albeit distant and mostly fictional, exemplifies violent elements of this toxic misogyny. Misogyny encompasses a broader meaning than woman-hating, as its consequences affect both sexes. Men are compelled to reject their feminine

qualities, which all humans possess, and attempt to fulfill the unrealistic expectations of an ideal soldier.

When recounting the night that he and Martha went to the movies before his deployment, he thinks to himself, "Right then, he thought, he should've done something brave. He should've carried her up the stairs to her room and tied her to the bed and touched that left knee all night long. He should've risked it" (O'Brien 1240). Cross' perceptions of love and bravery are permeated by the restrictions placed on his gender to be domineering and aggressive. The soldier is accustomed to taking what he is ordered, by extension what he wants, by force. It is inexcusable, but it makes sense that he is unable to separate this mentality from his romantic pursuits. Cross acknowledges that his fantasies involving Martha are just that, imaginary, but he keeps returning to the same thought patterns because love, at least prior to Ted Lavender's death, serves as an escape from his hellish surroundings. Only after Ted Lavender is shot does Cross realize the futility of his desire for Martha, and the irreversible consequences for his lack of focus. Love then becomes a distraction, a liability, something that results in death. Cross, after sobbing in the bottom of the rude grave he digs for Lavender, resolves to "be a man" and "show strength" by "distancing himself" (O'Brien 1250).

The three girls in Khue's "Distant Stars," the narrator Dinh, Thao, and Nho, respond differently to their fear than the soldiers in Cross' platoon, ultimately subverting the notion of strength offered by traditional militarism. Unlike the majority of American forces in the war who were drafted, the girls in "Distant Stars" voluntarily enlisted. The work that they performed for the North Vietnamese cause is distinctly separate from the acts of foot soldiers in Cross' platoon. Rather than directly participating in killing their enemies, Dinh, Thao, and Nho struggle around the clock and through multiple injuries to prevent more deaths on their own side. Their protective efforts, coupled with the cavernous images of their living quarters, imbue the work with a maternal tone. This maternal quality extends to the way in which the girls interact with one another, informing the manner in which they respond to the fear one encounters constantly in war. Dinh, Thao, and Nho allow their vulnerabilities to be exposed while in the confines of their cave, which they call home. Catharsis of emotion when confiding in one another empowers them to be fearless in the presence of danger while detonating bombs outside

of their home. The girls are not exempt from the expectations of an ideal soldier, however. The way in which they release their emotions is influenced by the enforced standards of masculinity. Crying, in particular, was considered shameful; as Dinh states: "Anyone who shed a tear while we needed strength from each other would be seen as guilty of self-debasement. Nobody said it but we read it in each other's eyes" (Khue 1114). Not one of the girls openly cries, but they still express care and concern for one another through their actions. When Nho gets badly injured in an explosion, "Thao sobbed, but she had no tears" (1113). The aversion to crying is a result of the patriarchal values in the military that the girls cannot escape, despite their radical maternal strength.

This radical interpretation of strength can be seen most clearly in the character of Nho. She would "force her eyes shut and her face would turn white" whenever she saw blood or a leech, but this did not impact her reputation nor her ability to perform her job (Khue 1111). According to Dinh, Nho "showed determination and daring" (1111). After being injured by shrapnel, Nho refuses to be taken to the hospital. She comments on the possibility of being a "spoiled brat lying in a bed" and asserts that it is "naive" of the construction workers to think that they can persuade her to leave her station (1118). Nho fails to hide her inability to tolerate gore, but that does not impact her prowess and does not reduce her in the eyes of her comrades. Her refusal to leave and be treated in a hospital contrasts with the mentality of Jimmy Cross, who dreams of being airlifted to freedom, away from the torments of marching through enemy territory. While the expression of emotion is still checked by the masculine ideal in "Distant Stars," the girls are more fully their genuine selves. War reduces men to animals in its widespread violence and bloodshed, and it permanently alters the emotional health of soldiers. Due to the relative emotional freedom of Nho, Thao, and Dinh in comparison to the soldiers in Jimmy Cross' platoon, they have a more complex understanding of love.

The girls in "Distant Stars" differentiate romantic love from love of everyone. The first is less fulfilling and is fleeting. Dinh details the unanimous decision they made to avoid marriage and rather live a life that prioritizes independence, fun, and leisure time to read books. She makes it clear that this would not include a vow of celibacy; romantic love is their goal, without the commitment or emotional labor of marriage. This pessimism does not negatively

impact the girls' other relationships. In fact, Dinh experiences a much deeper sense of appreciation for and attachment to her comrades on their dirt hill full of bomb craters. She reflects,

I loved everyone, with a passionate love, a love beyond words, that only someone who had stood on that hill in those moments, as I did, could understand fully... That was the love of people in smoke and fire, the people of war. It was a selfless, passionate, carefree love, only found in the hearts of soldiers. (1119)

The girls' resistance to the pressures of the masculine ideal allows them to form their own gendered notion of love. In the selected works, the female soldier's concept of love, both in a romantic and broad sense, centers around the idea of sharing. The male soldier's concept of love is dependent upon his need to compensate for underlying insecurities, and centers around the idea of taking.

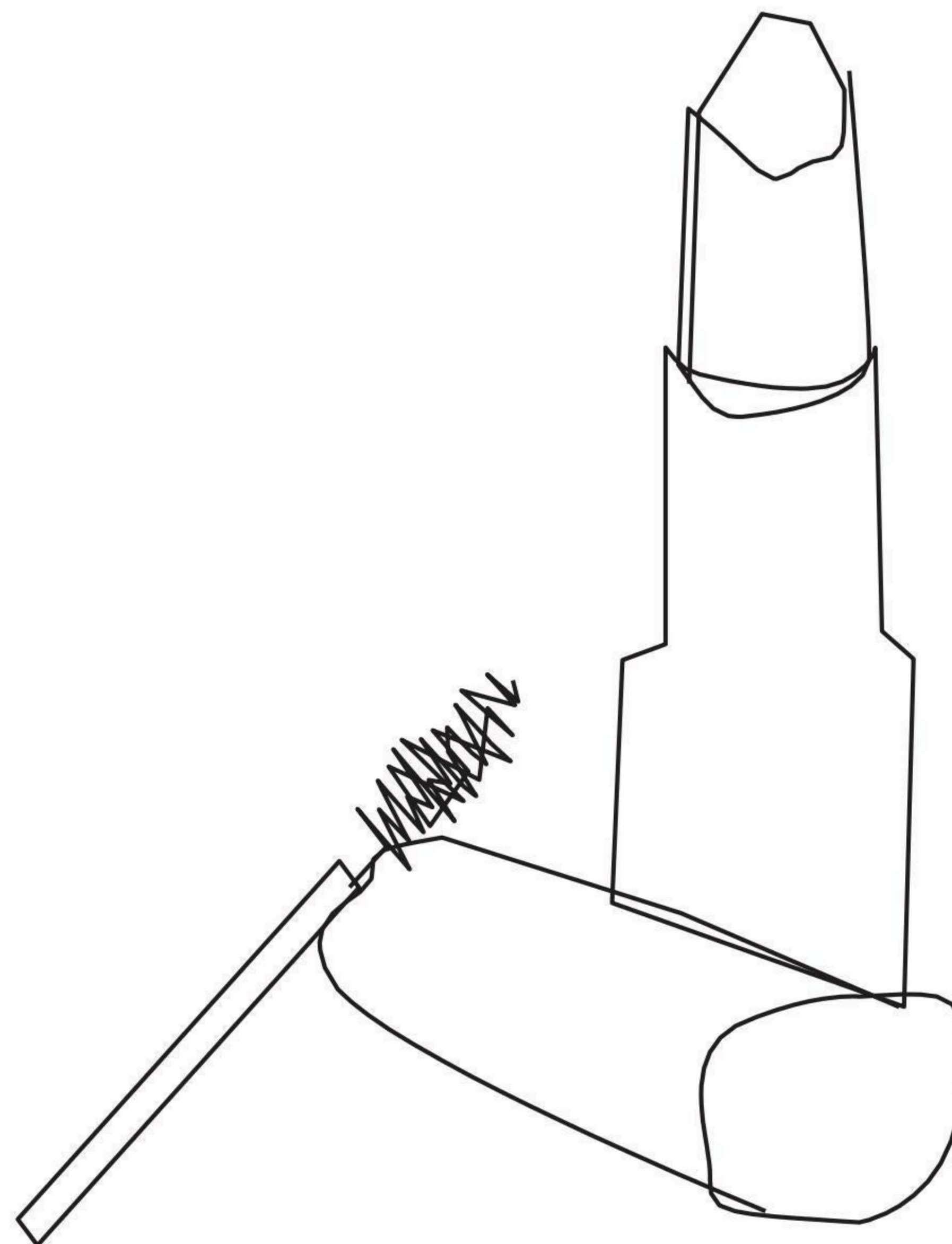
The preferred mode of behavior in militarism is one that conforms to the ideals of masculinity upheld by a world of patriarchal structures. The soldiers in "The Things They Carried" and "Distant Stars" make a choice as a result of this misogyny. They must either attempt to meet the standards of the ideal soldier and lose the full capacity to love, or resist and face criticism, but find solace in the fact that they acted according to their humanity. The varying limitations placed on both genders weave a complicated web of oppression, and the same soldiers that face the horrors of war are too often dehumanized by unrealistic expectations for their performance and emotional regulation. Much like the issue of world peace, gender equity and the emotional health of servicemen and servicewomen lack simple solutions. Perhaps creating a line of open discourse about these topics will be the first step towards creating a better world, one in which constructed ideals do not define identity and war is a reality only known in retrospect. If anything can be gleaned from Khue, love for everyone is a possibility when we allow it.

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Gender Performativity as a Symptom of Social Dysfunction in “The Lottery” & “Battle Royal”

By Meghan Mariani

Meghan Mariani is a sophomore English major from San Mateo, California. Meghan has always loved writing and storytelling, and has a strong interest in social justice and female empowerment, and looks for any excuse she can to include these passions in her writing. She wrote this paper for Dr. Miskolcze’s Genres: Fiction class, and was inspired by the social implications of gender she learned about in her Women’s and Gender Studies class while drafting her thesis. Meghan is the Director of News at ROAR, the Video Editor at the Loyolan, and a member of Alpha Chi Omega sorority. Meghan hopes to keep writing for the rest of her life, and dreams of landing the prophesied “paid writing internship” over the summer.

The term gender performativity was first coined by gender theorist Judith Butler in her book, *Gender Trouble*, asserting that mainstream society creates and perpetuates gender roles, which are then prescribed as the ideal for those falling within a specific gender category (6). To conform to this ideal, individuals are forced to act out or adopt characteristics that are assigned to their specific gender—constricting men to attributes seen as inherently “male,” and women to attributes seen as “female.” This performance is compulsive, intrinsic, and dangerous—as Butler argues that gender performativity fuels the damaging sentiments of our patriarchal society, and limits individuality. While this theory was revolutionary to the field of gender studies, many academics criticized Butler for her lack of intersectional inclusion—claiming that her theory dealt exclusively with the white experience of gender. Instead, many gender theorists argue that racial stereotypes inform gender performativity—especially in post-slavery America. Similarly, in both “Battle Royal” and “The Lottery,” Ralph Ellison and Shirley Jackson juxtapose forced gender performativity with instances of intense violence, arguing that socially enforced conformity is symptomatic of a society that is prone to devolve into brutality.

“...individuals are forced to act out or adopt characteristics that are assigned to their specific gender—constricting men to attributes seen as inherently “male,” and women to attributes seen as “female.”

In “The Lottery,” overt examples of sexism, manifesting themselves in gender performativity, crescendo into an instance of ritualized brutality that controls this dystopian society—ultimately arguing that forced conformity is a symptom of social dysfunction on a larger scale. As the story opens, Shirley Jackson asserts that in this fictional society, closely mirroring an ideal American small town existence, men are the bread-winners while women are cloistered to the home. Jackson describes all of the women in her story as wearing a similar uniform, of, “faded house dresses and sweaters” (166). The modifier “house” reinforces that these women are limited to the cult of domesticity—seen as the feminine ideal in 1960’s American. While this narrative is not far from the typical domestic

existence, Jackson implies that all women are limited to the home—performing the role of the care-giver and home-maker. The women within this society desperately cling to this performatism—as it is the totality of their identities. Jackson satirizes this concept, as Mrs. Hutchinson arrives late to the event that is essentially life-or-death to complete housework, as she excuses her absence by remarking, “‘Wouldn’t have me leave m’ dishes in the sink, now, would you, Joe?’” (169). While we cannot be certain that this is the true reason behind her absence—she could have easily been unable to leave her home due to fear or anxiety of the event—the fact that this excuse was accepted, and even honored, reveals the parallels between performatism and respect in this society.

When women in this society flip the narrative around their identities, seeking to adopt “male” characteristics of authority, they are persuaded otherwise. Due to the strict rules of the lottery, the men of each household must draw ballots for their family—thus casting the man as the authoritarian of the family unit. However, if the household consists of a single mother and a boy under the age of sixteen, the mother must draw the ballot. Instead of the mother similarly being recognized and adhered to as the head of household, she is instead pitied by the intact, nuclear families around her. This phenomenon can be observed when Mrs. Dunbar drew her own ballot, as her husband was home with a broken leg. Jackson writes, “Mr. Summers turned to look at her. ‘Don’t you have a grown boy to draw for you, Janey?’” (169). By referring to Mrs. Dunbar as “Janey,” Mr. Summers is diminishing her authority as an adult with autonomy—as he infantilizes her by removing her married name, the source of her social power as a woman in this patriarchal society. Furthermore, this question reveals the socially enforced narratives that have been built around the female gender—that they are too fragile, weak, and ill-equipped to participate in the drawing of the lottery. However, this logic is in itself a satirical jab, as women are not seen as too fragile to participate in the ritualistic killing at the end of the lottery ceremony. In this sense, the façade of “compassion” behind sparing women from the act of drawing ballots is completely destroyed—as evidenced in the equal inclusion of

men and women in the lottery's outcome. Instead, this exclusion is another tool in forcing men into the role of the authoritarian provider, and women into a submissive role.

Furthermore, the very traditional mechanisms of the annual lottery seek to subjugate women as the subject, and men as the authority figures—in accordance with “traditional” gender roles. The entire ritual is controlled by men, and the women—who are just as involved in the outcome of the lottery—are forced into passivity. In “The Lottery: A Misogynistic Parable,” Gayle Whittier comments on this patriarchal structuring, writing, “Men— Mr. Summers and Mr. Graves—conduct the lottery, a head of household, typically male, selects the first ballot. Men have choice; women choose only when they are already at risk in the lottery pattern” (354). Furthermore, based off of the theory that the lottery is a warning against submitting to the patriarchy, the ceremony of marriage itself is perverted into a method of female objectification. Whittier writes, “Marriage, the patriarchal purchase and renaming of women, preempts blood, so that any married daughter draws her lot within her husband's clan” (354). In “The Lottery,” marriage is portrayed in its most primal roots—an exchange of a woman between two men, from father to husband, for exchange of money, alliance, or in this society—to adhere to a gendered expectation. In this society, young men and women don't enter marriages as a symbol of love, but instead to perpetuate the cyclical fulfillment of gender expectations—as the women have children and enter the cult of domesticity, and the men fulfill the masculine role as their family's provider.

Within the confines of these marriages, women are dehumanized and de-individualized, seen more as participants in tradition than human beings. For example, when the Hutchinson family was chosen in the lottery, Mrs. Hutchinson called for her married daughter to be forced to participate in the second drawing. Jackson writes, “'There's Don and Eva,' Mrs. Hutchinson yelled. 'Make them take their chance!' 'Daughters drew with their husbands' families, Tessie,' Mr. Summers said gently. 'You know that as well as anyone else'” (172). Since marriage has been simplified to an exchange of goods from one party to another, Mrs. Hutchinson has no qualms about risking her

daughter's life in favor of her own, as the gendered dialogue surrounding her daughter has reduced her to an object. This attitude completely contradicts the trope of the mother-daughter bond, that insists that a mother would sacrifice anything for her children. Through this inconsistency, Jackson portrays the deadly consequences of a society that relies on gender performativity to maintain social order. This mandated performativity eventually leads to the loss of individuality, which allows for the abandonment of empathy as the line between human and object blurs in a world of mandated conformity.

In “Battle Royal,” gender roles are similarly reinforced; however, the intersections of forced machismo and racial dynamics are much more prevalent. This imposed combination of racial stereotyping and gender expectations limit African American males to a constrictive and hostile archetype—often stemming from the damaging narratives of slavery. According to the article “Racial Stereotypes from the Days of American Slavery: A Continuing Legacy,” researcher Tyrone Williams conducted a telephone survey to determine if the racist dialogues spread throughout the period of slavery—that, “blacks were inferior, unevolved, and ape-like,”—still persist in contemporary society (Williams 796). After the survey was completed, Williams discovered that the majority of respondents responded “true” to the statement, “Whites tend to be more sensitive than blacks when it comes to pain” (809). Williams theorizes that this idea that African Americans do not feel pain—both physical

“Marriage, the patriarchal purchase and renaming of women, preempts blood, so that any married daughter draws her lot within her husband's clan”

and emotional—as intensely as Caucasians can be connected to the stereotype of African Americans as a physically aggressive and ape-like race, when according to Williams, this line of thought has “no scientific basis” (807). While this sentiment was introduced during the 1600's, the aftershocks of this prejudice are still prevalent in contemporary American society.

Similarly, in the beginning of the “Battle Royal,” traditional sexual dynamics casting the man as the

aggressor are violently demanded of the young black boys at the conference, and this expectation is compounded by racial stereotypes. The white men leading the conference, “bankers, lawyers, judges, doctors, fire chiefs, teachers, and merchants” (Ellison 155), signifying that they are symbols of power and authority in society, start the conference by instructing a naked blonde woman to dance in the center of the circle of boys, while the men, “threatened [them] if they looked, while others threatened if they did not” (Ellison 155). While the woman danced, the narrator himself struggled with whether he would conform to the performativity of the sexual aggressor, or treat her with compassion, as Ellison writes, “I wanted at one and the same time... to feel her soft thighs, to caress her and destroy her, to love her and murder her” (155). While the narrator’s first instinct was to, “go to her and cover her from [his] eyes and the eyes of others with [his] body,” the narrator felt forced to abandon his innate compassion in favor of brutish machismo— instead valuing the women as a purely sexual object, rather than a person (Ellison 155). Similarly, the young boys accompanying the narrator reacted outside of racialized and gendered expectations, as, “one boy fainted... another boy began to plead to go home” (Ellison 156). Seeing this adversity to the masculine performativity, the drunk, older white men descend into sexual violence to reinforce a machismo image. They began exhibiting their aggression on the female dancer, as, “they caught her just as she reached the door, raised her from the floor, and tossed her as college boys are tossed at a hazing” (156). In this abrupt and savage shift in behavior, Ellison contradicts the expectation of the black boys as the sexual aggressors—as they appear passive and helpless while the white men attempt to incite sexual violence from them, seeking to force them into a gendered and racialized performance. When this expected performativity was not fulfilled, however, the white men’s paradigm of stereotypical black male behavior was shattered— reducing their society to a barbarous state of chaos.

Furthermore, while the racialized and gendered expectation of the black boys was to act as the sexual aggressor, the nameless woman featured in the chapter was forced into the gendered performance of the thoughtless, sexual object. In

“Battle Royal,” Ellison makes the choice to not give the woman dancing “stark-naked,” for the male gaze a name or any description beyond her sexualized, perceivable appearance (154). Like the black boys forced into fighting, the only reason for her presence in the conference, otherwise dominated by white men, was as a source of entertainment. In the article, “Female Iconography in *Invisible Man*,” Shelly Eversley comments on this phenomenon, writing, “The novel’s description frames her visually, and her subjectivity first appears through the male eyes that look at her body. Her humanity seems to disappear as her body submits to the voyeuristic gaze that renders her a pornographic sex object. She is invisible” (176). The woman was expected to perform and fulfill the ideal of the feminine sexual object, which Eversley theorizes, originated from the cultural emergence and adoption of mainstream pornography. In fact, Eversley even links this historical development to the formation of Ellison’s novel, writing, “In 1953, Hugh Hefner launched his men’s magazine, *Playboy*. The magazine’s centerfold featured a nude Marilyn Monroe. The photograph was taken in 1949 as Ellison was working diligently on the novel, and it became a quintessential example of American femininity, an icon of American cultural history” (172). Essentially, this sexualized image, immortalized as American iconography, became the ultimate ideal for the female existence. Simultaneously, it made the essence of femininity synonymous to sexuality. Ultimately, this gave society the permission to view women as objects instead of people— similar to the stereotype-driven objectification African Americans suffered in post-slavery America.

Expanding off of the theory that Ellison was producing commentary on the objectification of women fueled by “*Playboy*,” the nameless woman in “Battle Royal” and Marilyn Monroe share many striking commonalities in their appearance. Like Monroe, the woman was described as being a “magnificent blonde,” (155) with, “a face heavily powdered and rouged, the eyes hollow and smeared a cold blue” (155). As a result of her striking similarities to the female sex symbol of the time period—as well as the fulfillment of the female identity as a sexualized object—the dancing woman in *Battle Royal* was violently pursued by the white men controlling the

conference. However, as soon as the woman deviated from this expectation— not enjoying the “pawing” (156) and degrading comments from the white men— her true identity below her performativity was revealed to the narrator, as “above her red fixed-smiling lips I saw terror and disgust in her eyes” (156). This deviation from her prescribed “role” as the female sexual object inspired anger and brutality from her “admirers,” as they chased and assaulted the woman until she escaped the room. Through this scene, Ellison argues that the stereotype-fueled society white men have created for themselves is so fragile, that any deviation from conformity completely shatters their reality— reducing these “established” members of society into a state of brutality.

In both “The Lottery” and “Battle Royal,” gender performativity is dramatized and magnified to serve as an indication of a society prone to inhuman atrocities. In both texts, the concepts of masculinity and femininity are strictly defined as opposites— creating the binary of women as the subject, the passive, and the homemaker, and men as the authoritarian, the aggressor, and the provider. The characters in “The Lottery” and “Battle Royal” were forced to sacrifice their individuality— and eventually, their empathy— to conform to these strict binaries, which ultimately led to the disintegration of their civilizations into thoughtless savagery. However, while both texts argue that conforming to an unrealistic ideal leads to the sacrifice of empathy, Ellison and Jackson execute their arguments in different ways. For example, in “The Lottery,” Jackson focuses on how gender performativity affects a society that closely resembles our own— focusing on the cult of domesticity and the “tradition” of belittling women in favor of elevating men to create what critic Gayle Whittier calls a “misogynistic parable” (1). Ultimately, the mandate for women to embody the trope of the “perfect housewife” and the men to enact their providers leads to a loss of individuality which makes it impossible for members of this society to recognize humanity in their neighbors— even within the family unit. It is this lack of human compassion that makes it so simple for little Davy Hutchinson, the son of Mrs. Hutchinson, to aid the town in stoning his own mother to death. Conversely, in “Battle Royal,” Ellison frames his criticism around a nightmarish, worst-case

scenario—portraying a society that readers would have trouble relating to. This society dramatizes the injustices of sexist and racist stereotyping in contemporary society, focusing on issues of female objectification, the idea of the man as the sexual aggressor, and unlike Jackson— zeroing in on race politics in post-slavery America. Ellison argues that white men— the group that arguably holds the most power in America— force women and minorities into predetermined roles based off of their identities, and when they refuse to conform, resort to violence to re-enforce these stereotypes.

Regardless of stylistic differences, in both “Battle Royal” and “The Lottery,” authors Ralph Ellison and Shirley Jackson juxtapose societies that enforce gender performativity with acts of savage violence— indicating that societies that adhere to these constrictive gender roles are, in themselves, barbarous. Through the magnification of gender performativity, Ellison and Jackson warn against the sacrifice of human empathy for conformity required by patriarchal powers. In essence, both “Battle Royal” and “The Lottery,” act as fables against a compulsive obedience to the status-quo— indicating social disobedience as a necessary evil to avoid the loss of humanity.

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The Merchant of Venice and Christian Cultural Superiority

By Mattie Norman

Mattie Norman is a junior English and screenwriting double major. “The Merchant of Venice and Christian Cultural Superiority” was written for Dr. Park’s comparative Shakespeare and Marlowe class. Currently, she works at the Academic Resource Center as a writing tutor. With an equal passion for creative and academic writing, Mattie hopes to be doing either of those things upon graduation.

The Merchant of Venice is a notoriously problematic play not only for its refusal to adhere to a traditional Shakespearean genre by toeing the line between comedy and tragedy, but also for the way in which it depicts the globalized and often intolerant world of Venice. The cultural biases in this play are dependent on the setting: a commercialized port city that sees all sorts of people and relationships on a day-to-day basis. Rather than showing the diverse groups of people in an accepting and worldly manner, Shakespeare makes them visible through polarization. He establishes social structures in this mercantile world and places them in direct opposition to one another, creating dichotomies. By defining groups as the opposite sides of the same spectrum, Shakespeare presents a bold critique of Venetian society—an ethnically varied population ironically wrought with prejudice based on difference, specifically in the case of Christians and Jews. Shakespeare's criticism of the hypocrisy of Venetian society starts with an assessment of their values and what is most important to them, which is business relationships and commerce. Through the use of social dichotomies and relationships, The Merchant of Venice attempts to expose Venetian society in order to show that the Christian morality which justifies the discrimination against Jews is privileged based on cultural superiority and convenience.

Throughout The Merchant of Venice, Shakespeare makes an effort to show the different types of relationships that the people in Venice share. Specifically, he presents his audience with a contrasting view of business relationships and personal or romantic relationships. Shakespeare makes sure to define these relationships in an effort to expose the first layer of hypocrisy that lies in Venice. From the start of the play, the audience is clued into the characters' desires for various relationships: Bassanio wants a romantic relationship with Portia, which leads him to a business relationship with Antonio, which in turn makes Antonio seek a business relationship with Shylock, all whilst Lorenzo yearns for a romantic relationship with Jessica, and so on. Shakespeare makes the audience aware of the types of relationships that the characters are pursuing and their expectations for these relationships. In doing so, he establishes Venetian society as a place in which these relationships are exclusive.

However, Shakespeare draws these exclusive lines not to follow them, but to cross them.

He complicates the idea of relationships being strictly one type or another by intentionally crossing his pre-established line between business and romance. Business relationships between men verge on romantic, while romantic relationships between men and women sound akin to a corporate conversation. For example, Portia explains her desire to wed Bassanio by stating: "I might in virtues, beauties, livings, friends, / Exceed account. But the full sum of me / Is sum of something, which, to term in gross, / Is an unlesioned girl, unschooled, unpracticed" (3.2 156- 159). She uses words like "account," "sum," and "gross," which are distinctly business and economically oriented, acknowledging the fact that she is seen as a business opportunity and that she is no different from the capital that runs Venice. Similarly, Lorenzo views his marriage to Jessica, a Jew, as an opportunity to gain wealth. When Jessica explains her plan to escape her father's home and run away with Lorenzo, Lorenzo states, "She hath directed / How I shall take her from her father's house, / What gold and jewels she is furnished with" (2.4 29-31). He decides to marry Jessica because it is beneficial to him; he has something to gain from this relationship that is material, which outweighs the shame that Lorenzo suffers due to the fact that Jessica is Jewish.

Ironically, while romantic relationships are often dealt with in a business-like manner, many business relationships are dealt with in a romantic or personal manner. This is showcased most ardently through Bassanio and Antonio's relationship. Bassanio approaches and asks Antonio to vouch him in order to get enough money to marry Portia. This exchange is a traditional business interaction that takes more of a romantic turn than any of the conversations about actual romance. For example, when Antonio agrees to help Bassanio, he says, "My purse, my person, my extremest means / Lie all unlocked to your occasions" (1.1 137-138). This statement has a noticeably more romantic air than Bassanio's interaction with Portia, with Antonio pledging his entire personhood to Bassanio's cause. Bassanio and Antonio's relationship should be strictly business, but, as shown by their exchange, that is not the case.

Later, when Antonio is asked for his last words before losing a pound of flesh to Shylock, he instructs Bassanio what to tell Portia. He states: "Say how I loved you, speak me fair in death; / And, when the tale is told, bid her be judge / Whether Bassanio had not once a love" (4.1 270-272). After professing

his love in front of the entire courtroom, Bassanio replies, "Antonio, I am married to a wife / Which is as dear to me as life itself; / But life itself, my wife, and all the world / Are not with me esteemed above thy life" (4.1 277-280). In Antonio's final plea, he makes his affections towards Bassanio painfully clear; he confesses his love and only cares that Bassanio knows that his love is true. Bassanio, in turn, returns these affections by directly comparing his love for Antonio to his love for Portia. He blatantly says that he holds no one in as high esteem as Antonio—not even his wife, with whom he shares an established romantic relationship. In fact, he even uses the word "which" instead of "who" in reference to Portia. This choice in phrasing disregards Portia's status as a person who is worth loving and demotes her to an object that is simply "dear" and not held in as high esteem as Antonio. Portia is merchandise disguised as a romantic relationship while Antonio is a lover disguised as a business opportunity.

Shakespeare presents this dichotomy as an effort to make sense of the globalized world of Venice—a world in which business is the first priority. Other aspects of life such as love and faith come in second behind business. This concept is shown again by Shylock, who speaks of his own daughter's disappearance in business terms. When Jessica runs away with Lorenzo, Shylock exclaims, "My daughter! O, my ducats! O, my daughter! / Flew with a Christian! O, my Christian ducats! / Justice! The law! My ducats, and my daughter!" (2.8 15-17). Rather than simply lamenting for his daughter, Shylock is unable to separate her from the ducats that she took as well. She is regarded as a lost business opportunity. Nothing—not even a father's love—can come above the value of business. Even the fact that Jessica ran off with a Christian comes after the mention of the stolen ducats in Shylock's rationale.

The contrasting view of relationships illustrates difference in an extreme manner, proving that the values of a Venetian are not found within a person, but within their relationships with one another. Relationships are representative of various opportunities in Venice. First, they present the opportunity to gain wealth. Second, and perhaps more noticeably, they present an opportunity to exert power. This other kind of relationship is shown most clearly through the polarizing disparities and prejudice shared between Christians and Jews. This dichotomy is one filled with blatant bigotry and hatred - it is about more than simply differing

religions. Over the course of the play, it becomes evident that Christians are deemed civil and moral while Jews are depicted as barbaric or immoral. Theoretically, Christians are defined by their kind and compassionate nature. In Venice, Christians are nothing more than an ethnic majority. They are not known for the moral guidelines that they practice. In fact, most of the Christians do not adhere to any sort of morality other than self-preservation. The hypocrisy of the Christian in *The Merchant of Venice* is due to the fact that, in spite of the obvious flaws of each Christian character, being a Christian is still synonymous with civility. Christian characters often act in a selfish manner in an effort to promote their own agendas, but they are still referred to as the pinnacle of morality. Certain traits are seen as exclusive to the Christian, even when they are shown through the Jewish characters.

The Christian dominance of certain traits is shown through the ways that the Christian merchants speak to Shylock and Jessica. They speak in a haughty manner, thus verbally asserting their cultural dominance. For example, after Shylock agrees to accept Antonio's bond, Antonio declares, "Hie thee, gentle Jew. / The Hebrew will turn Christian; he grows kind" (1.3 169-170). Rather than thanking Shylock, Antonio asserts that the reason behind his kindness is that he has turned Christian. The virtue of kindness is distinctly Christian in Venice - the barbaric Jews are seen as lacking any virtue or civility, and it is assumed that being kind must be foreign to them. This is also shown through Jessica, Shylock's daughter who is a Jew. Lorenzo, a Christian merchant in Venice, justifies his want for Jessica as a wife by denying her Jewish faith. He declares, "Most beautiful pagan, most sweet Jew! If a Christian did not play the knave and get thee, I am much deceived" (2.3 10-12). In this statement, Lorenzo insists that Jessica must have Christian blood in her, that it is impossible for her to be a Jew because she is too beautiful and sweet. Beautiful and sweet are virtues applied exclusively to Christians—not Jews. Jessica feeds into this, replying, "But though I am a daughter to his blood, / I am not to his manners" (2.3 17-18), and adding that she will convert to Christianity in order to be with Lorenzo. Jessica asserts that, while her blood may be inherently Jewish, she is not the stereotype that follows. She is Shylock's daughter by chance. She was born into the Jewish faith, but she is allowing Lorenzo to convert her into a Christian. She yearns to lead a civilized life over a barbaric, hedonistic one.

The hypocritical prejudice towards Jews is made painfully clear by many characters throughout the play, but it is made clearest through Shylock's low class servant Launcelot. Launcelot speaks lowly of his master, stating, "My master's a very Jew. Give him a present? Give him a halter!" (2.279-80). He has such a strong distaste toward Shylock for his Jewish faith that he would rather him dead. Even though Launcelot is low on the Venetian socio-economic ladder, he still has an advantage over Shylock because he is not a Jew. Launcelot goes on to explain to Gobbo how he is not cared for by Shylock, explaining that his master is too cheap to buy him new clothes. Launcelot concludes his appeal, begging, "If I serve not him, I will run as far as God has any ground. O rare fortune! Here comes the man. To him, Father, for I am a Jew if I serve the Jew any longer" (2.283-85). If Launcelot can be freed from his Jewish master, he will do whatever it takes to improve his life in God's eyes. However, his mission is morally problematic. His main issue with Shylock is that he does not buy him new clothes. This kind of greed is at odds with the Christian faith, yet, it is what pushes Launcelot to find a Christian master. He believes that a Christian master, namely Bassanio, will be more giving towards him. He expects a Christian to behave in the way that a Christian is expected to behave, but he does not do the same. He shows Christian hypocrisy in the most basic form by demanding compassion and generosity while showing none.

Additionally, Launcelot shows a strong distaste in being labeled a Jew, as he feels that he is seen as a Jew as long as he is serving one. He is not embarrassed or even bothered by his common standing as a servant, but only by the faith to which his job attaches him as he shows no desire to move up any economic ladder. This hypocrisy displayed by Launcelot is intrinsic to the Venetian social structure. No matter how much money someone has, being a Jew irrevocably places him or her in the lowest social class. Shylock is a well-off man to whom Christians come to for money, but due to his faith as a Jew, he is seen as barbaric by even his lowly servant.

This tricky concept of Christian morality leads to the final dichotomy of the play between justice and mercy. The Merchant of Venice gives its audience two distinct ideas of what constitutes justice and what constitutes mercy. Justice is given to the minority by the majority, while mercy is given to the majority by the minority. Essentially, Jews are

given justice and Christians are given mercy based on convenience. It is always the Christian's decision of whether to enact justice or mercy, and this decision is informed by prejudice and superiority; Jews are expected to be merciful because they are inferior. In Venice, a Jew should realize that he is wrong in any circumstance because of his faith, while Christians are expected to be merciful because of their moral doctrines. However, Christians are at the top of the social ladder and thereby have a choice to make: whether to be good Christians and be merciful, or to exercise their power as a majority and be driven by self-interest.

This dichotomy between justice and mercy is shown most clearly in the courtroom scene. Portia, dressed as a male doctor, has the final say in how the case will end: either with Shylock taking one pound of flesh from Antonio, or with Antonio walking free after Bassanio repays his debt with Portia's money. The bond originally states that Shylock will be awarded one pound of Antonio's flesh if Antonio does not repay the bond. Justice, then, is the pound of flesh for Shylock. Shylock demands justice throughout the scene, refusing to take Bassanio's offer of ducats in replacement for Antonio's flesh. Shylock states, "If every ducat in six thousand ducats / Were in six parts, and every part a ducat, / I would not draw them. I would have my bond" (4.185-87). Shylock is out for justice and only that. Money is clearly no object, for, as he makes clear, even if the amount was multiplied by six he would not accept the ducats. His refusal to accept a money payment shows his commitment to justice.

Shylock continues to fight for what he deems to be a lawful, objective justice. In reference to the pound of flesh he was promised, Shylock argues, "If you deny me, fie upon your law! / There is no force in the decrees of Venice. / I stand for judgment. Answer: shall I have it?" (4.1101-103). Shylock addresses the entire society of Venice and demands respect. He refuses the Christian notion of convenient mercy because he is not given mercy at any other point during the play. He is treated ruthlessly and it is deemed just. The prejudice thrust upon him is seen as completely warranted. The Christians expect Shylock to fall victim to their demands because that would be convenient for them. Once they receive the slightest push-back, mercy becomes inconvenient and all niceties are disregarded. Justice is the clear choice now, but it is not a just choice. It is the choice that exhibits the

most power and control. It proves once again that the Christians are pulling the strings.

In the end, Shylock does not get the true justice that he desires. Portia gifts him with a hard justice—a justice brought about by prejudice and ulterior motives. Shakespeare uses this harsh justice to showcase the greatest hypocrisy of Venice. Portia encourages Shylock to be merciful and take the money, but when he refuses, she says that he can only have flesh and no blood. Later, when Shylock realizes that exacting his bond is impossible, he offers to accept the money. At this point, Portia chooses to act justly, saying “He shall have merely justice and his bond” (4.1 334). Portia defines mercy and justice as gifts given by the majority race whenever convenient. This sentiment still stands in the modern world in which countries are seen as a polarized mix of the majority and countless minorities. The majority has the power to use virtues like justice and mercy as they see fit, regardless of religious doctrine. Shylock ends up with nothing and he is even punished. They force him to convert to Christianity and to gift his daughter Jessica and her new Christian husband Lorenzo with money. They take away the only things he has: his money and his faith. There is no Christian mercy, only mercy for the Christian.

The Merchant of Venice is a play which presents cultural superiority in an honest light. Shakespeare paints the culturally superior Christian majority as purely self-serving. These Christians seek out relationships that will be advantageous in terms of business and wealth, place minority characters as morally and socially beneath them, and use their power to exact mercy or justice on these minority groups. They act out of self-interest and convenience exclusively. There is no Christian kindness or mercy—only kindness and mercy given to the Christians by the groups that they oppress in order to assert their power. This play is problematic - Not only does it show bold prejudice, but it also shows that morality is justifiable. Rather than coming from faith, it is often used and abused in the name of expediency and racial dominance, which is what makes Venetian society so hypocritical.

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**Cultural Fear in “Where Are You
Going, Where Have You Been?”**

By Rena Gallagher

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essay was written for Robin Miskolcze’s Genres:
Fiction course.*

On "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue," the closing song of his 1965 album *Bringing It All Back Home*, Bob Dylan croons a folk lament to an unnamed subject: "Forget the dead you've left, they will not follow you/ The vagabond who's rapping at your door/ Is standing in the clothes that you once wore/ Strike another match, go start anew..." The song evokes a feeling of instability and uncertain direction. It is the song that inspired Joyce Carol Oates to write her frequently anthologized short-story, "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?", published in 1966, which she dedicated to the songwriter.

Connie, a fifteen-year-old girl in a nameless town, argues with her mother and disdains her older sister. She delights in her prettiness and dreams of boys. It is not such an uncommon coming-of-age tale, at its opening, until a man appears in her driveway and beckons her to come with him. His arrival turns ominous quickly. By the story's close, Connie answers his call and readers are left guessing what specific doom she's met. Music and pop culture is a pervasive feature of the story, and the dedication marries it to a specific context. Bob Dylan was a figurehead of the Counterculture, emblematic of a moment in American history that was in cultural turmoil (*The Times They Are A-Changin'* was the title of his 1964 album). The evil of Arnold Friend is linked to the uncertainty of 1960s America. While much has been written about the ambiguities of the story, the identity of Arnold Friend and the feminist implications of the invasion on Connie, the story is truly about fear in a time of cultural tumult, particularly concerning the direction of the youth of the country. Connie is grounded neither in her family, her community, nor concrete dreams for the future, and as a result has been transformed into prey for a predator like Arnold Friend.

The 1960s in America is a decade that maintains a mythical grandeur. The cultural and political events of the times created an intersection of fear and promise. Race conflicts were threatening the status quo and barreling towards the violent necessity of the Civil Rights Movement. America was in an increasingly unpopular war in South Vietnam and had instituted a draft. The first birth control pill was approved by the FDA and released in 1960, coinciding with second-wave feminism and the subsequent sexual liberation. The generation gap seemed wider than ever before, as the values that held the nuclear family together after the second world war seemed to be eroding. While these issues are not specifically

mentioned in "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?", traces of the American cultural climate are threaded throughout—in Connie's inability to connect to her family, in the suburban stretch that has replaced genuine community, in her budding sexuality, and ultimately in her vulnerability to be taken in by the demonic Arnold Friend. In 1970, Joyce Carol Oates was awarded the National Book Award for her 1969 novel *Them*, and she addressed her own trepidation with the values of the era: "The style of the new decade is accelerated and deathly. Those of us who are also university teachers can see clearly, in some of our best students, the dangers of the new religion, of the ethic of the unconsciousness: a certain aimlessness, a distrust, a fear of the future that seems to them either forbidding or unimaginable." Writers, she says, are responsible for "an assessment of where we are going and where we have come from." The qualities that she describes in her students are reminiscent of those in Connie, and it is important to consider her as a representation of her generation as we turn to the text.

Connie's disconnection from her family offers readers insight into her aimlessness and, by extension, the aimlessness of her generation. Her appearance takes the place of her identity, and though she is constantly checking her reflection, the best she can do is catch sight of "a shadowy vision of herself", which she glimpses as she "look[s] right through her mother" (Oates 258). As a result, both women are less than corporeal—there is a sense that there is nothing solid neither individually nor in the mother-daughter relationship. The father's presence in the narrative is even less secure, he is given just a few lines of description throughout the story: "Their father was away at work most of the time and when he came home he wanted supper and he read the newspaper at supper and after supper he went to bed. He didn't bother talking much to them" (259). Oates describes the father once more as "quiet," and this emphasis on his silence points to a failure in what he has been able to instill in Connie (261). The mother's chief method of communication is to scold, though even this is without authentic intention: "The two of them kept up a pretense of exasperation, a sense that they were tugging and struggling over something of little value to either of them" (261). Critic James Cruise writes in his essay "'Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?' and Cold War Hermeneutics," "What some may read as ageless generational strife in this relationship, however,

does not escape the culture that shrouds it and the hermeneutics that defines it. Fear and a final yielding to it embalm the relationship between mother and daughter" (100). Cruise is referring to the culture of the Cold War, which has certainly earned its place by the time of its composition. While he is correct in classifying Connie's mother as a "Cold War mother and tutelary genius of domestic containment," Cruise neglects to examine, however, that these efforts of "containment" have already failed by the story's beginning (101).

Beyond the failure of the family to moor Connie to a particular set of values, the setting also serves to further demonstrate the breakdown of the spaces that traditionally provided moral grounding. The majority of the story occurs at the family's house, but Oates' first detailed descriptions of setting are of the adolescent-centric outings Connie takes with her friends. She describes the dine-in restaurant with a rotating figure of a boy holding a hamburger. One imagines the boy jutting into the sky the way a crucifix does from the steeple of a church, and indeed, the spaces take on a certain amount of holiness for the girls: "They went up through the maze of parked and cruising cars to the bright-lit, fly-infested restaurant, their faces pleased and expectant as if they were entering a sacred building that loomed out of the night to give them what haven and what blessing they yearned for" (Oates 260). A few lines later, the narrator compares the pop music that plays with "music at a church service, it was something to depend on" (260). It is not unusual for a fifteen-year-old girl to regard her friends and the spaces they inhabit with something akin to reverence, but this is not an effort to individuate by cultivating a life outside the family and community structure: as we are told on page 261, "none of them bothered with church." Her family as a whole does not attend church, leaving boys, pop culture and spinning- hamburger drive-ins as her primary and insufficient anchors.

This is demonstrated, more explicitly, in the way Oates undermines both the physical and metaphorical concept of home. Though the story opens with the family, the reader is not given a description of the house until well into the narrative, and when she does so it is within the framework of Connie's lack of association and connection to it. She wakes from a nap in her backyard and the structure is foreign:

"The asbestos 'ranch house' that was now three years old startled her—it looked small" (Oates 262).

No indication is given of where the family lived before its three years, so Connie's lack of familiarity with it is produced in the reader as Connie experiences it herself. Indeed, the word "home" in the story never aligns with our typical association of safety, warmth, and stability. Its first use describes June, who Connie disdains, precisely because, at twenty-four, she "still lived at home" (258). Its next occurrence is on page 259, to describe Connie: "Everything about her had two sides to it, one for home and one for anywhere that was not home." These two distinct spaces, "home" and "not home", highlight Connie's lack of integration, as well as reiterate the fact that the concept of "home" as a grounding space does not exist for her. The next usage comes as a contemptuous utterance from Connie's mother, who tells her to "Stay home alone then," which does nothing to bolster the "home" as a space of warmth and connection (261). The final use of the word "home" comes by way of Arnold Friend, and its conceptual perversion is complete: "'you'd come runnin' out into my arms, right into my arms an' safe at home'" (270).

As the situation with Arnold Friend grows more desperate, Connie does begin to turn to the house for comfort, to false threats that her father will return. Cruise writes, "In her unraveling, neither house nor home nor hearth can protect Connie," but I propose that Oates has set this up (home as protection) as an utter impossibility in the landscape of 1960s America (Cruise 106). Cruise states, "Connie could perhaps have avoided the fate Arnold leads her towards, if she had only waited him out" because "barbeques only last so long, and parents eventually do return home" (105). In the context of the story, and in the wider culture that it operates within, home as we know it, has ceased to exist.

Joan Didion's famous *Life Magazine* piece, "Slouching Towards Bethlehem", offers a collection of scenes from her time spent with young "hippies" in San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district in the spring of 1967, because it was "where the social hemorrhaging was showing up" (Didion). She writes: At some point between 1945 and 1967 we had somehow neglected to tell these children the rules of the game we happened to be playing. Maybe we had stopped believing in the rules ourselves, maybe we were having a failure of nerve about the game.

Maybe there were just too few people around to do the telling. These were children who grew up cut loose from the web of cousins and great-aunts and family doctors and lifelong neighbors who had traditionally suggested and enforced the society's values.

There is nothing in "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" that points to a specific connection to The Hippie Movement (although the Bob Dylan dedication certainly ties the story contextually to the counterculture), but there was a pervasive national concern about the atomization of traditional family and communities, that something had been lost in translation that was destabilizing the younger generation. In Connie's case, she is vulnerable when a predator arrives in her driveway. Certainly no one was present as moral guide to offer the rules to her and demonstrate why they were worth following. Development of a young woman's sexuality is classically a treacherous period, and made even more so by the era in which the story is written. In Oates' 1970 National Book Award acceptance speech, she refers to the new decade wherein "all this emphasis upon sensation ... is a speeding up of death." We see this connection in her first interaction with Arnold Friend: "She drew her shoulders up and sucked in her breath with the pure pleasure of being alive, and just at that moment she happened to glance at a face just a few feet from hers" (Oates 260). Oates links this "pure pleasure" with the "glance", and in doing so, suggests it is no coincidence at all. This "emphasis upon sensation" that we see playing out in Connie, in what we can extrapolate as many young women in her generation in that time, allows for critic Joyce Wegs' interpretation: "The forces of her society, her family, and her self combine to make her fate inescapable" (72).

Arnold Friend's precise identity has been the subject of decades of critical debate, and remains indiscernible, because, ultimately, the most important question is not what kind of evil he is, but why Connie cannot resist succumbing to it. With no parental guidance and an atomized society rife with turmoil, she is unable to ignore his call. This prevailing fear has borne fruit by the time Joan Didion is writing her piece on The Hippies. She reports the text of a flier she sees hanging along Haight Street: "Pretty little 16-year-old middle-class chick comes to the Haight to see what it's all about & gets picked up by a 17-year-old street dealer (...) raffles off her temporarily unemployed body for the biggest Haight

Street gangbang since the night before last. The politics and ethics of ecstasy. Rape is as common as bullshit on Haight Street." When Arnold Friend arrives in her driveway, there is a sense that Connie, too, wants to "see what it's all about." The suspense builds as realization dawns that her adolescent fantasies are not materializing, he is in fact an evil force, supernatural or human, bearing the grotesque disguise of the culture in which she has found her religion. As a result of the breakdown of her own family as guiding force, her body also becomes "unemployed", leaving her defenseless against this threat. When, at story's end, she "watched herself push the door slowly open as if she were back safe somewhere," this fracture is complete, and we, as readers, understand why Oates employs the vague term "somewhere"—because for Connie, in 1960s America, this "somewhere" was always theoretical (Oates 273). It never existed.

An older generation fearing for the direction and moral fortitude of the younger generation does not belong to any specific time. "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" does not assign blame on the parents, nor on Connie herself. Rather, Oates writes a story about the widening chasm through which the evils can encroach, making it all the more treacherous for its mundane and innocent opening. The chasm is in the instability, the cracks in the families and in the communities. We will never know who Arnold Friend is, or where he is taking her. The title of this story are two questions, about the past and the future. Ultimately, reading Oates' story is not about answering those questions, because the most frightening interpretation is that they are unanswerable.

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Beat Deafness: The Polyrhythm of *Paradiso*'s Chapter XII

By Yoán Moreno

Yoán Moreno was born in Miami, Florida, and is of Cuban and Colombian heritage. His critical work, which freely draws from cultural practices and objects beyond writing, is presently focused on Caribbean literature. It is no accident, however, that his studies often lead back to Europeans, Africans, and Indigenous, since he begins from the contact zone. Having previously taught Spanish and presently a graduate Teaching Fellow at Loyola Marymount University, he is also interested in the pedagogical applications of his theoretical work, especially with regard to rhetoric and ideology. "Beat Deafness," is the result of an invitation to pursue any topic of interest in Dr. Julia Lee's *Critical Methodology*, a graduate class dedicated to the theory and practice of research. Initially posed as a racial question, the object of study was simply too untidy and Dr. Lee's demand of a formulaic abstract helped him focus on a single, enigmatic chapter of the novel. Ultimately, the paper came out of the recognition that *Paradiso*'s critics had (dis)missed the subaltern elements of the novel; while they are undoubtedly present throughout, he found them in Chapter XII—a comparatively unremarked chapter. He thanks Dr. Lee, and is indebted to the work of Antonio Benítez-Rojo, Dafnis Prieto, and especially the *rumberos* of Leimert Park.

The Caribbean machine ... is something more: ... a metamachine of differences whose poetic mechanism cannot be diagrammed in conventional dimensions, and whose user's manual is found dispersed in a state of plasma within the chaos of its own network of codes and subcodes. (Benítez Rojo 18)

In 1966, the poet José Lezama Lima published the novel *Paradiso*. Within ten years, it had been edited for various republications throughout the hispanophone world and beyond. In 1979, three years after Lezama Lima's death, Justo C. Ulloa counted 323 bibliographical and critical compilations, books, theses, reviews, homages, etc., dealing with Lezama's work.¹ Though the criticism of his work has moved over time toward consensus, its initial reception was mixed. In his 1989 "Invitación a *Paradiso*," which introduces the first Cuban reprinting of the novel, Cintio Vitier recalls that readers judged the novel to be either a scandal for its homoerotic eighth chapter, or an inaccessible work, due to its sustained lyricism, extensive allusions, and idiosyncratic treatment of time. In either case, Vitier notes that, as a result, the text was read "en su integridad por muy pocos lectores" [in its entirety by very few readers] (xxiii). It was Julio Cortázar, enjoying a wide readership as a figurehead of the Latin American Boom (from his Parisian home), who in his essay "To Reach Lezama" (1967), popularized the writer outside of Cuba; this resulted in the aforementioned republications. Cortázar's essay, like most others about Lezama fails to perform a serious reading of the novel as a Caribbean text, i.e., as a (post) colonial, mixed or mulatto novel. His critics tend to situate the text solely as an inheritor of European intellectual history—even while they claim its uniqueness—and come up short in discussing the subaltern elements of his text, e.g., the African.

Cortázar's essay places *Paradiso* in the company of works by writers like Raymond Roussel and Herman Broch.² But in speaking to the work's Cubanness, a container of elements for which he cannot fully account, Cortázar can do no more than suggest that "Lezama wakes up on his island with a preadamite happiness, without a fig leaf, innocent of any direct tradition ... His incredible gifts, like his deficiencies, spring out of this innocent freedom, this free innocence" (Cortázar 147-8). But how can

Lezama, already compared to Roussel, be a writer "who work[s] the limits" (142) in a tradition-less and, therefore, limit-less culture? Cortázar misses the point: *Paradiso* and its author exist in a twentieth-century contact zone, and the traditions Cortázar cannot read push his critique into a fantastical, pre-historical, or pagan realms. It is not that Lezama has no direct traditions—he has more than Cortázar can imagine; but what Cortázar cannot catalogue he relegates to the space of unintelligible noise.

This form of reading *Paradiso*, with only a sensitivity to its European elements, is typical of the consensus to which I have been referring. My primary concern, here, is to address the lack of consideration of *Paradiso* as a Caribbean text, as one that incontrovertibly contains African elements. Few readings of this kind have been performed, and they are recent. Alicia E. Badillo's 2001 "La Santería Como Base Epistemológica De Algunos Personajes Homoeróticos En *Paradiso*" is a lonely example of an Afro-conscious reading. In this work, Badillo reads four secondary characters in the novel as orishas, or 'gods' from the west-African pantheon that in Cuban popular culture syncretize with the Catholic saints.³ Her reading, done from the University of Puerto Rico, i.e., from another Caribbean contact zone, represents a long overdue local reading. It is to this critical endeavor that I intend to contribute a reading of chapter XII in *Paradiso*, which is typically dismissed as noise. Cortázar cautions the would-be reader that Lezama "interjects a chapter-long story that seems to have nothing to do with the rest of the novel, although its atmosphere and impact are the same" (150-1). Again, we should be wary of Cortázar's mis(s)reading of elements he cannot see, but we should consider that he can feel their ghosts—the chapter somehow maintains the novel's "atmosphere and impact."

After weighing the scant discussion, I will argue that this chapter—its content and structure—is not superfluous, but rather indicative of the novel's mixture: chapter XII, replete with musical and performative allusions, is structurally a polyrhythm—it is a layering of multiple contrasting rhythms, whose cohesion is revealed when played cyclically to an underlying, unmarked pulse. My argument, playing with structure and content, will theorize the chapter as a rumba⁴ that assigns to each character an instrument and corresponding function: an Afro-Cuban song in the depths of the novel. To the uninitiated, like Cortázar, or those who wish to

¹ "Contribución A La Bibliografía De Y Sobre José Lezama Lima" contains 612 citations, 289 of which were authored by Lezama himself. The critique of Lezama is saturated with and, in large part, based upon his own essays; this has created a closed interpretive circuit, ultimately accounting for the murky consensus about his elusive work.

² The references Cortázar chooses are particular to his palette—the reader of his essay will also learn that his cat is named Theodor W. Adorno. More commonly, Lezama is compared with Proust and Joyce.

quickly join the consensus, this has only registered as 'noise.' And this is nothing more than proof of their ignoring of the African elements in *Paradiso*, of their beat deafness in the contact zone.

For all of the critique Ulloa recorded in his bibliography, and that has since proliferated, Chapter XII has been treated sparingly. The three clearest examples belong to Raymond D. Souza, Olga Karman Mendell, and Irlema Chiampi Cortez. Since the plot and its story can be difficult to appreciate in medias res, their shared starting point is a retrospective, panoramic summary. In Souza's Major Cuban Novelists, he clarifies that "[t]here are four separate stories in the chapter, and they are presented in alternating segments that make it difficult for the reader to follow the sequence of events" (66). The sequence, which becomes clear only after a pattern emerges (i.e., by the second pass), then becomes more difficult to follow because by the third pass the demarcations of its segments disappear, and by the fourth pass, the segments collapse into one—all the chronicles meet. Additionally, the chapter closes with a loosely related, but further removed scene. I have mapped the structure of the chapter in this way:

First pass: A, B, NS, JL;

Second pass: A, B, NS, JL;

Third pass: A, B, NS (+B), JL;

Fourth pass: A; B+NS+JL+A;

? X

By definition, a pattern, like rhythm,⁶ cannot be established without repetition; we begin here. There are four elements (A, B, NS, JL) that are given the status of pattern because they appear twice in that order. I have labeled each repetition a 'pass' in my chart; the final line, labeled '?,' is a more complex sign and will be taken up at the end of this section. Since the content of the chapter is inextricable from its form and my argument, the reader must know the following: 'A' is Atrio Flaminio, a fearless and brilliant Roman general, who in ancient times leads his troops into battle with men and spirits, only to die of a sudden fever; 'B' is a sickly boy, who, while watched over by his grandmother, repeatedly breaks a vase that is repaired or replaced, and who also dies; 'NS' is a night stroller, who is nightly awoken by a "trio" (Lezama 381) of noises, and who then walks the Havana night; 'JL' is Juan Longo, a venerated music

critic that is put into a "cataleptic trance" (Souza 68) by his wife, and who ultimately also dies when his sleeping body is paraded, his trance broken. Each pass reveals more of each character's story.

This is where the aforementioned critics stop. They view this structure as nothing more than an obstacle to be undone; explicated and left aside, they pursue particular images and symbols in each of the fragments. Both Souza and Mendell, for instance, fixate on the image of an old man sewing a stocking, out of which he pulls an egg, in one of the *Night Stroller's* segments (pass 2). Souza says "[t]he act of sewing could symbolize creation ... ; and the egg, the mystery of life or the egg of the world" (67); for Karman Mendell, the egg is a representation of "una serie de significados posibles" [a series of possible meanings] that "trasciende lo cotidiano" [transcend the quotidian] (283). Their readings treat the structure as a maze—another visual metaphor for noise, like the puzzle—and their summaries allow them to ignore the functions of that structure in the chapter.

Chiampi Cortez gets closer to function in her essay "La Proliferación Barroca en *Paradiso*." She is concerned with the mechanics of Lezama's writing, rather than the images that are incidental to it (e.g., the egg). Cortez names and discusses four baroque processes of proliferation (syntactic, narrational, verbal, semantic) that characterize Lezama's style, and concludes with a brief section on the "macro-proliferation" in Chapter XII—she believes this chapter to be a concentration of Lezama's style. I should point out that the work of Cortez, and the paired works of Souza and Mendell invalidate each other in that they each treat the other's focus as immaterial to the chapter's significance: the one bypasses form, and the other, content.

Our argument, which relies on the entanglement of form and content, is served by Cortez's reading in that it points toward a cyclical, or looped structure: "el lenguaje se retuerce para evitar una lectura dirigida hacia un fin o un comienzo, se cierra sobre sí mismo al agrandar y estallar el espacio textual" [the language twists in order to avoid a reading directed toward an end or a beginning, it closes on itself as it enlarges and explodes the textual space] (84). This is crucial to our understanding as it points out that *Paradiso*, and its concentrated twelfth chapter, does not operate like a traditional, Western text: there is no origin, no climax. The novel, which constantly reaches back in search

³These diverse belief systems (*Lucumí*, *Abakuá*, *Palo*, etc.) are often simply referred to as *Santería* due to the European conception that the indistinguishable believers are foolishly fixated on the Catholic saints (instead of Jesus Christ).

⁴While many of these rhythms have been transcribed and taught in music academies, their primary mode of transmission is oral instruction and mimicked performance. *Rumba* refers not only to the styles of music performed, but to the very meeting itself of drummers, singers, dancers and worshippers where this learning takes place. While the reader might treat my information as anecdotal, I would invite them to accept that, be that as it may, it is but one node in a trans-Atlantic network stretching back hundreds of years, and to any of the other nodes, would simply be common knowledge. The best hope for the positivist seeking citation—an absurd notion in this collective-anonymous tradition—would be vinyl records, streaming platforms, or the works of Fernando Ortiz, Lydia Cabrera, and Robin D. Moore.

⁵The first instance of Vitier's "interruption," or as Souza calls them, with specific reference to the boy: "bridges that connect the four sections" (67). Vitier, directly influenced by the author, talks about the chapter as "cuatro sueños que se interrumpen y entrelazan entre sí, formando una especie de rompecabezas" [four dreams that interrupt each other and interlace, forming a kind of puzzle] (xxxviii). Incidentally, a puzzle is attempted with the knowledge that there is an order to be discovered; its patterns will be made visible by the sequencing of its pieces.

of a beginning,⁷ ends with the words “now we can begin” (Lezama 466).⁸ The protagonist José Cemí’s ultimate initiation into the poetic works like a musical repeat sign that invites us to begin the novel again.⁹ Not only is this how Chapter XII works by virtue of its final scene, it is exactly how Rumba works—it has no climax, and its beginning and end are necessitated only by its human performers. The final scene (X) is the repeat sign. Our argument, a metonymic one, is that the chapter turns the fragments and their characters into the instrumentation and performers for a rumba along these lines: José Cemí is the unmarked pulse; Juan Longo’s wife is the clave; Juan Longo is the catá; Atrio Flaminio is the tres golpes; the Boy is the salidor; the Night Stroller, the quinto. As stated above, the final scene (X) is the repeat sign that would invite the performers to continue, or one to re-read the chapter.

We must begin with José Cemí, who does not once appear in the chapter and yet whose presence is continually felt—recall Cortázar. Cemí is the underlying, unmarked ordering force—in Vitier’s puzzle analogy, Cemí would be the perimeter, i.e., the part by which all other parts are relatively defined. The reason for this is that the characters (A, B, NS) are ultimately relatable to his story:

En la historia de Atrio Flaminio reaparecen motivos que recuerdan la vida del padre de Cemí.... El paseante recuerda a Cemí durante sus años universitarios... El niño en su ropón ... recuerda a Cemí en el capítulo I ... [In the story of Atrio Flaminio, motifs that recall Cemí’s father’s life reappear The Night Stroller recalls Cemí during his years at university The boy in his gown ... recalls Cemí in chapter I...]. (Mendell 280)

The boy’s (B) grandmother, and even Juan Longo, can be related to Cemí, but the aforementioned already does enough to evoke his presence throughout the chapter in which he does not once appear. As stated above, in Rumba there is an underlying, but unmarked pulse that no instrument keeps—it is only implied by, and bound to, all the other rhythms that float around it. Cemí is only implied by the characters in Chapter XII, but his implication is the mechanism through which Chapter XII can belong to the rest of *Paradiso*.

Juan Longo offers a point of resistance to our theorizing of Cemí as the pulse if we cannot take direction from content as well as structure, given his total absence. If the content of Juan Longo’s segments is indeed “una versión paródica del tema

del tiempo” [a parodic version of the theme of time] (Mendell 280), then we need to discuss the meaning of time, and the connotative possibilities of the word “parodic.” In Juan Longo’s story, he is a widower who at age 70 remarries a younger woman. The new wife becomes neurotically obsessed with keeping him from dying, and chooses to preserve him in a state of “dormition”:

[The wife] stretched out her right hand, pretending to stroke his throat, while she pressed on the carotids to deepen his catalepsy. The music critic lost the irrigation of his nervous centers ...; he fell into a state almost indistinguishable from death. The wife corked up the air holes of the nostrils and ears. (Lezama 384)

Juan Longo is kept on the brink of death in “a glass casket” (393) until his 114th year, when other critics come looking for him. It is no wonder that this is treated as parody. But let us take the position that, in parodying time, we are playing with it, as opposed to ridiculing it. (The 44 years that elapse in Juan Longo’s story are nothing compared to the thousands of years Atrio Flaminio will jump to appear in Longo’s glass casket; there is more to this than a push toward atemporality.)

Rumba is itself a game of time. The clock that guides it (the pulse, José Cemí) is inaudible, and the musicians play autonomous patterns that call to each other without becoming subdivisions of one another (i.e., patterns subject to, and given significance by, another pattern). In the establishment of an audible clock, what emerges is the clave—in our argument, this is Juan Longo’s wife.

In Guaguancó (the most popular form of Rumba, and the one to which I will limit myself for the remainder of this paper) the clave plays first, in time with an unmarked pulse; the other musicians begin on the second pass, once its pace and pattern is established. The clave pattern (3:2 or 2:3) is an asymmetrical one—three longer hits and two shorter hits. Regardless of which side initiates (3 or 2), the other musicians must follow the cues of the clave.¹⁰ But the pattern is playful in and of itself, so much so that it toys with its own already-asymmetrical order: on the 3-side, the third hit is played late, deviating from its own expected pattern, and on the 2-side, the hits come closer to each other, completely differing from the 3-side. Clave, the first audible rhythm, is a “parodic version of the theme of time,” if that theme of time is chronology, the symmetrical pulse (1, 2, 3,

⁶ *Rhythm entails pattern or, at the very least, a signifying framework for a potential pattern.*

⁷ *This is done through flashbacks, family history and legend. This unending process of reaching-back to find an origin is typical of any child of the contact zone.*

⁸ *All quotations from the novel itself are taken from Gregory Rabassa’s 1974 English translation.*

⁹ *With regard to autobiographical or meta-narrative readings, if Cemí is a stand-in for Lezama, as the consensus dictates, it would mean that Lezama in finishing *Paradiso* became ready to begin *Paradiso*. In any case, the idea of a loop stands.*

4; Cemí) that the clave player is playing around. In the chapter, there is no clearer manipulator of time than Juan Longo's wife; she puts the music critic in a trance¹¹ to play with the fixed chronology of time where everything is otherwise perfectly subdivided—birth, life, death; years, months, weeks, days, hours. The wife is the clave, only that in the end she will lose control and the chapter will collapse in on itself—something for which a player would be ridiculed. She is the clave, thus Longo is the catá—these easily stand in the same binary relation as husband and wife. These two patterns, played with and on sticks of different sizes (and tones), are intimately related, but independent patterns. The catá is the more complicated of the two, in that it plays more beats. With respect to the clave, the catá mostly fills its empty spaces; beyond an obvious sexual parallel, their social roles are echoed: the wife, who is not even given a name, literally establishes the husband's pace of life, and yet, Juan Longo is more audible—the others come searching for him, not her.

There is also the manner in which Longo is awakened, by his wife (clave) from his trance. Longo, well-versed in the European traditions (Lezama 377) like any music critic would be, is awoken for his visitors not with the music of Mozart, but with Rumba:

[T]he wife fetched a deafening record out of a cabinet, one in which the most primitive percussion instruments almost split their heated skins to prolong the sound through valleys and hills. This band of Yoruba drums rattled the crystal glasses exhumed for the reception. The sleeper's pallor was acquiring circular rhythm, caused by the blood impelled ever so lightly by the sharpness of the percussion.

(Lezama 394, emphasis mine)

For all of Longo's training in the European arts, what calls him forth, as a Cuban, is Rumba, initiated by his wife, the clave. The circular, looped rhythms of the Rumba to which I have been referring are likened here to the critic's very blood. Even leaving aside the obvious parallel with the cardiovascular system, we may treat blood as a metonym for culture, and Rumba as a constitutive part of Longo's and Lezama's. The next rhythms are Atrio Flaminio and the Boy, tres golpes and salidor.¹² Both of these drums play complementary, but fully independent patterns. To the reader of *Paradiso*, the link here is between José Cemí and his father, José Eugenio Cemí, a

well-respected colonel who dies in Chapter VI, when José Cemí is still very young. These patterns signify more—they go beyond a parody of time—in that they are not atonal (like the clave and catá). There is here a melodic, emotive relationship of elements, two mid- and low-tones that interlock and deviate from each other in a circular rhythm.

Again, the content of Chapter XII reveals itself to be entangled with its structure. The images of Atrio and the Boy, not only remind us of the father and son of *Paradiso*, but of the orishas Changó and Babalú Ayé.¹³ In the case of Atrio, the comparison is overt: an exalted, strong warrior who is immortalized in life and in death—Atrio syncretizes with the Colonel (José Cemí's father) and with Changó, a flesh-and-blood Yoruba warrior-king that was so fierce he became deified (i.e., sanctified). Changó is one of the most visible orishas in the Cuban context, and can be compared to Hercules or Zeus in the realm of European literary allusion.

The Boy's echo is more subtle. He is a sick boy, "swaddled in a white wool overcoat with a cap of the same material having a soft blue ribbon trim, precautions resulting from the amount he had coughed the night before" (Lezama 389). The reader of *Paradiso* immediately recognizes in the Boy the figure of the asthmatic José Cemí; the afro-conscious reader immediately recognizes the reference to Babalú Ayé, the healer of the sick, and bearer of sickness.¹⁴ Babalú Ayé's colors are white and blue—all orishas have colors, most visible in the necklaces (elekes) of their worshippers. The image of the ribbon trim is particularly striking as the eleke in question is a string of white beads, each interrupted by one thin blue line. These African elements, be they in the content or structure, are undeniably pervasive. It is not within the scope of this paper to elaborate the history of Afro-Cuban religion and its ceremonial music; nevertheless, the reader should proceed in the knowledge that Rumba comes directly from it. (Changó is also the god of drums; to speak of Atrio is to speak of the Colonel, and the macho/tres golpes. The boy's linkage is not so clean, but where the filter of content fails to carry us, the structure will support us.)

We come finally to the only instrument that, while constrained by the others, is allowed the freedom to improvise: the quinto. This instrument and its performer find their analogue in the Night Stroller, the most unpredictable of the characters. His scenes

¹⁰ *Clave* means 'key' in Spanish.

¹¹ I wonder if this is not the spell cast by the clave on any listener or critic unfamiliar with the (peri)meters of Rumba.

¹² What in the West are typically called "Congas" have many names, and are traditionally made in three sizes. The lowest-pitched, widest drum is called the *salidor*, *tumba* or *hembra* (female); the mid-pitched, medium-sized is called the *tres golpes*, *conga* or *macho* (male); the *quinto*, to be discussed later, is the slimmest, highest-pitched drum—the only one with no fixed pattern, allowed to wander and improvise.

¹³ These two are bound by Yemayá who was the wife of Changó, and who raised Babalú Ayé.

often begin with a description of the “midnight trio” (Lezama 390) that awakens him. The trio is an enigmatic combination of an open door, a rocking chair, and distant laughter that he can hear. While this is unlike Longo’s explicit awakening with a rumba record, it nonetheless demonstrates a foregrounding of a musical consciousness in the characters—the trio format is not foreign to Rumba either, where one talented performer may play the three drums (tres golpes, salidor, and quinto), leaving two others to play the clave and catá. In any case, the function of the quinto is to improvise and to make connections between the other rhythms.¹⁵ In the chapter, this is precisely what the Night Stroller does. It is during his segments that the demarcations of the dreams fade and we recognize a totality: a polyrhythm. In the third pass, for example, he (NS) sees for the first time the face of the boy from the preceding segment (B). The Night Stroller puts “his face between two spears ... ; he [can] see that at the far side of the circle there [is] a child of three or four years old, wrapped in a woolen overcoat that only [shows] his face” (Lezama 392). This is only the first glimpse of polyrhythm, i.e., the first time we can capture two contrasting rhythms in collaboration. The noise begins to resemble music as our idea of separateness and disorder begins to shift.

The fourth and final pass is where the intersection of all rhythms occurs and we can confirm that we are looking at a polyrhythm. After we have read the death of Atrio Flaminio (4A), another set of intersections originate with the Night Stroller: he delivers an unbroken vase to the boy, stumbles upon Longo’s funeral procession, and ultimately sees the boy again, dead in the casket. Each one of these intersections represents a consolidation of difference—what we originally conceive of as disparate chronologies, or rhythms, show themselves to be intimately related. We will treat these individually.

In the fourth pass, the Night Stroller delivers a vase we know will be shattered (again) to the boy in the “white overcoat trimmed with soft blue taffeta ribbon” (Lezama 400):

The face of the boy who had opened the door for him was the same one he had glimpsed, now fully revealed, inside the iron fence around the moat. This was the vision that had forced his face between each pair of the spears that formed the fence. (Lezama 400)

The references to death are clear, and compounded

by the color reference to Babalú Ayé.

When he leaves, disoriented by his second vision of the boy, the night stroller is attracted to an “immensely long procession of people” which he follows “in the knowledge that these rounds were a fragment of the quantity assigned to him in that nocturne” (Lezama 400). His mobility reminds us of the quinto’s role in the otherwise structured Rumba. The link to Longo made (via the procession), he approaches the casket expecting to see an old music critic, but is instead faced with another rhythm:

His turn came and he presented his face with natural indifference. A slow shudder petrified him, coursed through him like a lightning bolt racing through his nervous system. He saw the boy who had opened the door for him, gathering up the Danish vase. (Lezama 401)

This scene—B+NS+JL+A in the map above—is of total mixture, where the four segments meet. The loose ends are tied by Longo’s wife, the clave. Unaware her husband’s body had been taken, she comes to the casket in a desperate search, but is also faced with another rhythm:

When she put her face to the casket such a shriek was heard that the night was splintered and the guardian of sleep infinitely extending descended to gloomy Erebus.¹⁶ What had she seen on looking into the casket? The face of a Roman warrior, twisted in an expression of infinite desperation, trying to reach with his hands the capes, the boots, the swords of the legionaries who were passing him by, on their way to wars in distant lands. (Lezama 403)

At this point all chronologies are accounted for; the quinto (Night Stroller) has called forth the salidor (Boy) from the catá (Juan Longo), and the clave (the Wife) has called forth the tres golpes (Atrio Flaminio), again from the catá (Juan Longo). Cemí, as the pulse, has never been absent, only unmarked. The level of distinction and the degree of interpolation among each of the chronologies is the logical reason we can catalogue this as a polyrhythm; the Cuban context of the novel is what demands we bear this lens in mind when considering it.

The final episode (X) is unique in that, though it recalls Atrio Flaminio’s world, it is not part of any of the four major sequences, and its features none of the characters we have discussed—its

¹⁴ Orishas are often hermaphroditic, have multiple avatars or “paths,” and generally contain dualities.

¹⁵ Another of its functions is to guide or echo the dancer; in this context, the Night Stroller would then be guiding the reader/dancer. Again, in accord with the scope of this paper, we will forgo this line of argument.

¹⁶ It is worth pointing out that if Lezama is using Erebus as a reference for the underworld, he did not have an Afro-Cuban option. The dead remain, in spiritual form, on Earth in the Afro-Cuban religions.

function is different. 'X' serves as the repeat sign at the end of the movements we have ascribed to the characters, sending us back to the start of the chapter, to the start of the Rumba. In spite of the aforementioned, the Rumba would not be truly recognizable without this expectation of repetition on the grounds that repetition is what defines pattern and rhythm, and what gives to the music its circular rhythm—cycles are what define pattern, (poly)rhythm, and music. The reader of *Paradiso* will remember that the last lines of the novel, too, direct us to begin the novel once more.

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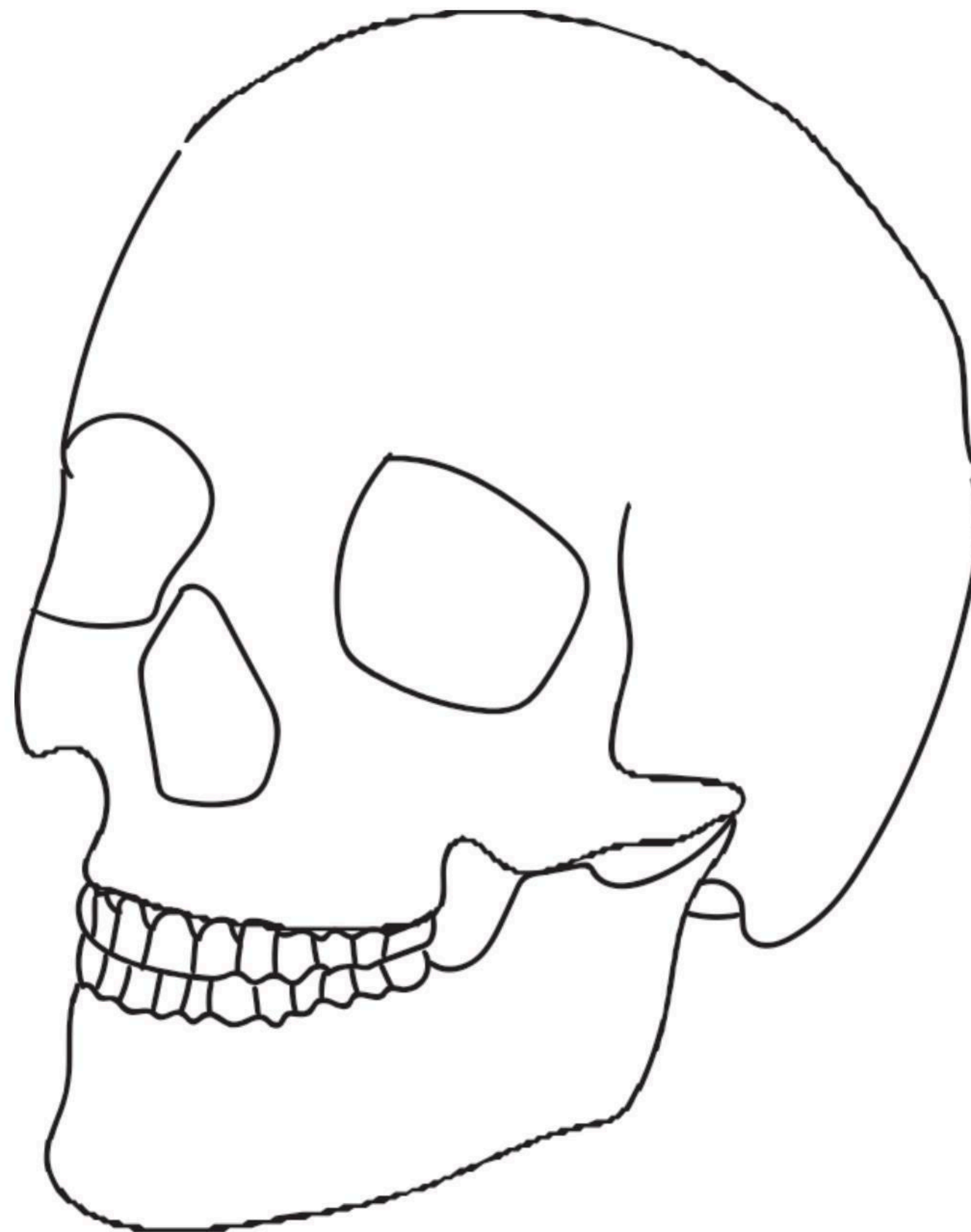
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The Art of Nox

By Brooke Duplantier

Brooke Duplantier is a junior English and Political Science double major at LMU. She naturally spends a lot of time reading and writing, with a specialization in multi-ethnic literature. She is from New Orleans, Louisiana and finds herself constantly inspired by the history and culture of her home. At LMU, she is a part of Sursum Corda Service Organization and the University Honors Program. She works as a second year Resident Advisor and as the Food Pantry Coordinator for the Center of Service and Action. She hopes to find a happy medium between her love of literature and her love of politics to one day pursue a Ph.D. This essay was written for Sarah Maclay and Katerina Zacharia's course "Anne Carson: Classic Iconoclast". Anne Carson's work blends genres of prose and poetry to discuss themes of love, loss, and identity, while relying on Greek mythology and tradition. Of all the work read by Anne Carson, Brooke most enjoyed Nox, Carson's deeply personal book of poetry, which her essay explores.

Death is (left) inaccessible to our human understanding of existence. Yet, art becomes an exercise in this understanding and an outlet for our pain. We are able to process the physical loss of a person by recreating their physical existence in our art. In *Economy of the Unlost*, Anne Carson speaks of the "grave" as a means of the "visible and the invisible lock[ed] together" (53). The visible, as described by Carson, is the physical reality that is "present, active, and accessible to us" (57). The invisible is the "inward" turn into our internal selves (58). It is just as real as the visible, "although different and inaccessible" to us without art (58). In *Nox*, Anne Carson uses art to make material the invisibility of her dead brother, Michael, through narrative, scraps of writing, collage, and photography, and more. Each of these storytelling techniques is layered and corrupted, reflecting the complications of life and the impact of invisible things upon the visible life lived. In this essay, I will elucidate Carson's attempts to understand her brother by creating a physical representation of his death in *Nox*. I will explore the handwritten letters and the etchings, showing how Carson uses the physical to cope and make her brother once again visible.

The letters of her brother display his invisible thoughts, feelings, and struggles through the visible form of his letters and his handwriting. Letters are fundamentally personal and intimate because they are a hand-written text, which brings the internal life to the page in a physical form. Letter writing makes the invisible – thoughts, feelings, emotions – visible. In *Nox*, Carson explains that handwritten letters were the primary way of communication between Carson, her mother, and Michael. They were the only glimpse of his life that they were given. These letters hold his voice, inaccessible in death. Yet, they retain the trauma and experience of his life. This is translated through handwriting, which is unique to each person's identity. Handwriting changes as people change, both physically and through experience. Handwriting appears differently in different years of life, in different states of being, and on different writing surfaces. Upon opening *Nox*, the reader finds the first instance of handwriting in the work, with the writing of "Michael" six times on the page. As writer Eleni Sikelianos suggests in "Sentences on *Nox*," the reader experiences this writing as Carson's own handwriting

(148). Through the physical act of writing his name, she brings his memory to life on the page. It passes through her own hand and in her own handwriting, representing how the portrayal of Michael in *Nox* is through her perspective. Carson recreates Michael's letters and uses handwriting to reveal aspects of the invisible.

In section 2.2, Carson shares Michael's touching letter to their mother about the woman he loved. She does so in cut up sections of the letter, keeping whole sentences and meanings elusive to the reader, just as Michael was elusive to her. While Carson's own writing is repeated in the span of these four pages, the letter changes. This repetition and separation makes the reader attempt to put the story together, just as Carson did. It also expresses the amount of times Carson and her mother would have read over and treasured this letter, since it is the only letter her mother asks to keep with her on her deathbed (2.1). The letter itself is written on yellowed paper, with the impression of being old and worn (2.2). Additionally, though Michael's handwriting is messy and hard to interpret, Carson does not transcribe pieces of the letter for the reader until several pages later. If anything, Carson makes the interpretation more difficult, as she breaks up the sentences and folds the letter to hide words. This technique creates further distance between Michael and the reader, making him harder to grasp. The first section cuts off full sentences, with phrases such as "I'll never know how she" (2.2). This effect prevents closure for the reader. The only full phrase Carson presents to the reader is "I went crazy," an indication of his mental state at the time (2.2). The next section becomes more ominous, with phrases like "group of head shrinkers," "weak people," "dead," and "have no choice" (2.2). Here, the page is folded on top of other writing, which creates a non-linear experience for the reader who is trying to interpret the events (2.2). The next page pieces together the first two excerpts to dispel further meaning and complete the sentences. This gradual reveal mirrors the way that Carson has come to understand her brother and the events of his life – received in fragments and broken translations, concerning and yet comforting to know. The final page that comes after only holds his written phrase "have no choice" (2.2). The repetition of this excerpt connects Michael's feelings of isolation to his inability to escape. Carson does not explain why she presents separate tears of his writing from this letter. In the "Art of Poetry" interview with Will Aitken, Carson

points to a quotation from Jacques Lacan: "The reason we go to poetry is not for wisdom, but for the dismantling of wisdom" (201). While she speaks of this in the context of the Catullus poem, it can also be applied to her "dismantling" of Michael's letters. The experiences of Michael's life lie in his letters. The "dismantling" of them parallels the dismantled information that Carson has about Michael's life. This "dismantling" leaves the reader to piece together Nox to reach the internal "wisdom."

The letter from Carson's mother in response to Michael shows her own grief and desperation to make him visible to her even while he was still alive. This letter, contrary to Michael's, is typed in two different formats of paper and font. The only handwriting Carson leaves is her signature, "Mother," written in a shaky script. This is the only physical representation of the mother's grief in the letter. Carson also pastes another paper on top of a few words of the letter. This gives the impression that Carson has revised or edited the letter's original copy, as a rewriting of what transpired. The letter is without punctuation and in all capital letters, to display her outpouring of emotion to her son – her happiness to hear from him and her sadness in knowing the trauma he has been through. Furthermore, the last excerpt of a letter comes at the end of Nox: "Love you. Love you. – Michael." This excerpt acts as a final goodbye between Carson, her mother, and Michael. It is the only physical reminder of his love for them, bringing both reassurance and pain. While they are reassured of his love, this love is inaccessible to them in his life and his death. The letter unfolds under the course of three pages, each time revealing more of the paper and writing. The first two times it is shown, it features an excerpt from Herodotus, stating "I have to say what is said. I don't have to believe it myself" (7.152.3). This disappears once the letter is unfolded completely. The significance of the excerpt on this letter cannot be ignored. In some form, it implies that Michael's "love you" is said because he "has to" say it. On the other hand, Carson, as receiver of the letter, does not have to "believe it." The quotation also suggests that Michael may not have meant it himself. With this combination of the quote and the letter, Carson searches for the truth of Michael's love for their family, a love that was largely invisible to Carson.

Carson's etching approach works like an epitaph, by negating the black shading to create letters and reveal meaning. According to Carson in

Economy of the Unlost, the epitaph entrusts the poet to carry the voice "from those who can no longer speak to those who may yet read" (75). This is precisely Carson's vision in Nox, as she provides Michael's voice after he has died. With her etching technique, the same carving away of the epitaph takes place, as Carson "seeks to construct a moment of attention by cutting away... what is irrelevant so as to leave a meaning exposed on the surface" (113). Therefore, Carson's etchings are a physical act of erasure to reveal the invisible.

This technique first comes in a penciling of the words "who were you" (Carson 2.1). This appears desperate, in capital letters and an eerie rhetorical question. The childlike handwriting suggests that this may have been an actual relic of either Michael's or Carson's own handwriting as a child. Perhaps, Carson fabricates the writing to impress the idea that her search for Michael spanned throughout her life, drive by her first desire as a child to understand him. The question "who were you" is Carson's question throughout Nox. This etching can stand as Carson's epitaph on the tomb of Michael, who remained distant to her in life and death.

Another example of this etching is the full-page "I HAD TO" following the word "parentum." This phrase appears almost violent and chaotic, seemingly created by the use of force. It is in response to the entry on the previous page, which ends "put the past away you have to." It appears that this is Michael's advice to Carson in the face of their mother's death, especially with the lexicon "parentum" adjoining the two pages. This etching, therefore, conveys the grief with which Carson attempts to "put the past away." She cries out, "I HAD TO," in reference to the sorrow she had to endure for both her mother and Michael's death. Carson, however, is not able to disregard the past; instead, she must memorialize it in Nox.

Carson's Nox uses varying techniques in an attempt to make Michael's invisible life visible to her. She accomplishes this through letters, handwriting, and etchings. She utilizes the physical form of art to bring forth what cannot be seen or experienced after death. Greater than her expression of grief is Carson's profound ability to transcend death through art. Though we cannot fully understand the nature of death, we can grieve and search for meaning through our art.